



Initiating and delivering news of the day: Interactional competence as joint-development

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Initiating and Delivering News of the Day: Interactional Competence as Joint-Development

Abstract

Co-members of a family (or similar group) often initiate *news-of-the-day tellings*, such as "How was your day?", to discuss events that have happened to them during the period they have been apart. Sequentially, such tellings involve a specific form of topic initiation, a type-suited response, and possible post-expansion sequences. Focusing on dinner-table talk recorded on four separate occasions, this longitudinal Conversation Analytic study explores how one family group socializes a guest L2 English speaker into their version of this interactional practice. In each case a member of the family initiates the news-of-the-day sequence. In the earlier recordings, the L2 speaker's responses are brief and contain only basic narratives, leading the family to initiate post-expansion sequences that prompt him to extend the topic. Over time, his responses become fuller, smoother and are formulated more recognizably as a narrative. The paper argues this change in participant framework demonstrates his growing familiarity with this interactional routine. The analysis also outlines changes in how the expert speakers adapt their practices for the novice as he becomes more familiar with the interactional routine. The study contributes to burgeoning longitudinal CA-SLA research into the joint development of interactional competence in study abroad contexts, particularly with regard to speakers' growing ability to initiate and design news-tellings in a recognizable interactional context.

Introduction

One common interactional activity that forms part of the nightly ritual in many family groups involves delivering *news of the day*, such as when co-members of a family or a similar group tell each other stories concerning matters and events that have happened to them during the hours they have been apart (Gardner, 2001). In addition to the immediate interactional work of eliciting an

initial topic of conversation (Button & Casey, 1984, 1985; Jefferson, 1978), these narratives ultimately serve the significant social function of maintaining group ties and reinforcing identities. Family groups tend to have their own routines and rituals for accomplishing these stories, and newcomers to the group may have to negotiate the details of these practices over time. This study focuses on the development of one second language (L2) English speaker's interactional competence in relation to news-of-the-day tellings during a short-term homestay program, and explores how he and his host family adjust their co-accomplishment of this recurring interactional practice over the three-week period. As such, it highlights both the initiation and the delivery of these news-of-the-day tellings in order to track changes in the participants' achievement of such socio-pragmatic actions throughout the course of the homestay.

Although a storyteller can self-initiate a narrative with a story preface (Sacks, 1974), in the sequences examined in this study, each of the news-of-the-day tellings is first initiated by another person, in this case the host, such as with a formulation like, “How was your day?” One of the interactional aims of news-of-the-day initiations is to start a conversation where none exists, and as a result they often come toward the start of the meal or after a lapse in the talk. In multi-party conversation, they can also be used to elicit talk with a co-present member who has been relatively inactive up until that point (Author et al, 2008). With regard to their sequential organization, Speaker A's initiation in turn 1 usually leads Speaker B to produce assessments, reportables or story-tellings, or indeed a combination of these actions. After that, Speaker A provides various forms of uptake, often interspersed throughout the narrative, and this usually leads to further topic expansion during the ongoing talk.

The ability to produce a timely and meaningful contribution within such a sequence relies on the participants' interactional competence (Hall, Hellermann, & Pekarek Doehler, 2011). One of the basic tenets of interactional competence is that it is jointly accomplished, meaning that one challenge for researchers is to demonstrate how development of interactional competence involves not just the

novice but also adjustments in the way the expert speakers interact in a series of conversations. As a consequence, there is a need to focus on the development of the practice, not just in terms of the language, but also as both participants' familiarity with the trajectory of actions, as demonstrated through the growing fluency of the responses. The aim of this study is to consider how expert language users adjust the interactional focus of their initiations and how, over time, a novice speaker becomes increasingly proficient at participating in the routine of *talking about news* at a particular point in the conversation. To this end, the guiding questions for this study are twofold and involve both the novice and the expert: (1) How does a novice English speaker adapt his news-of-the-day tellings over time? and (2) How do relative experts adapt their news-of-the-day initiations over the same period? The study contributes to longitudinal Conversation Analysis for Second Language Acquisition (CA-SLA) research into the joint development of interactional competence in study abroad contexts, particularly with regard to speakers' growing ability to initiate and design news-tellings in a context-sensitive manner.

Longitudinal Conversation Analysis and the Development of Interactional Competence

Although the vast majority of conversation analytic (CA) research aims at either accounting for generic interactional practices across contexts or applying and extending such findings to various institutional settings (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013), applied linguists who investigate the development of second language (L2) interactional competence (IC) have also been using CA longitudinally (and to a lesser extent also cross-sectionally) to compare changes in individuals' interactional practices across episodes of naturally occurring talk (e.g., Author, 2016, 2017; Author et al 2017; Brouwer & Wagner, 2004; Cekaite, 2007; Dings, 2014; Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger, 2015; Hall, Hellermann, & Pekarek Doehler, 2011; Pekarek Doehler, Wagner, & González-Martínez, 2018). Hellermann, 2007, 2018; Lee & Hellermann, 2014; Markee, 2008; Markee & Kunitz, 2013). Such studies are also in a sense "micro-longitudinal" (Markee, 2011), in that they aim to uncover the

temporal turn-by-turn unfolding of an interactional phenomenon within a given instance of talk, as well as "macro-longitudinal" in that they compare the participants' interactional practices across instances and over longer spans of time. Pekarek Doehler and Berger consider that "(t)he longitudinal study of social interaction therefore calls for a research design suitable for tracking specific conversational actions of practices over a period within specifiable and comparable (or, if possible, identical) sequential environments, speech exchange systems, and more generally social settings" (2016, p. 4). CA studies of IC are well equipped to account for the micro-details of a given instance of talk and then also consider it in relation to later cases of the same phenomenon in order to establish a case for increasing familiarity and the growing ability to participate in the routines that surround that practice (Author, 2017).

Inquiry into IC is concerned with "the development of 'methods' for action..., that is, systematic procedures (of turn-taking, repairing, opening or closing a conversation, and so on) by which members of a group organize their interactional conduct in mutually understandable and accountable ways" (Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2016, p. 2), and longitudinal CA studies of IC have examined the development of both linguistic resources (Hauser, 2013; Ishida, 2009) and interactional practices (e.g., Hellermann, 2011; Nguyen, 2012; Pekarek Doehler, & Pochon-Berger, 2015; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2016). Interactants recalibrate and diversify their methods and routines as they adapt to the local conditions and to the actions of others that they encounter in the L2 environment, and this involves the ability to recipient design their conversation and use context-sensitive conduct (Pekarek Doehler, & Pochon-Berger, 2015).

Young (2011) notes that one of the aspects of IC that distinguishes it from related notions like communicative competence (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972) is that "IC is the construction of a shared mental context through the collaboration of all interactional partners" (p. 440). In other words, in addition to its focus on pragmatics and context in spoken interaction, a sensitivity to the co-constructed nature of talk underpins research into interactional competence.

The act of "telling" is one area of IC research that has received particular attention, including CA-SLA research into changes in story-telling practices over time (Berger & Pekarek Doehler, 2015; Pekarek Doehler & Berger, 2016), routine inquiries (Waring, 2013), topic management (Mori & Matsunaga, 2017), and post-telling reciprocity and assessment (Hellermann, 2008; Ishida, 2017). Set in both classroom and mundane interactional contexts, these studies focus on participants' diversifying the methods and procedures they use to co-accomplish narratives in their second language. Of specific relevance to the present discussion is Waring's study (2013), which uses longitudinal CA to examine the development and learning of routine inquiries within an adult ESL classroom setting, including sequences in which the teacher asks about the students' weekend. In some instances the teacher orients to certain student responses as inadequate and on some occasions the inquiries lead to moments of direct teaching of interactional routines, such as the phrase "What's up?", which the analysis shows to be successfully incorporated into subsequent iterations of the opening sequences in later classes. Waring's study therefore demonstrates that such pre-class small talk affords both opportunities for authentic language use and a slot for explicit teaching where it is warranted. The homestay setting offers the visiting student similar opportunities and the host family members can at times view themselves in the role of language teacher, but to a large extent, feedback on the interactional routine is often implicit, and improvement only becomes visible via the careful examination of multiple instances of similar interactional situations.

Background to the Data

Data collection for the current study took place in a house in Brisbane, Australia from February to March, 2015. Ryo, a 19 year-old undergraduate student from Japan, was taking part in a three-week study abroad tour at an Australian university. The homestay family members were immigrants from Mexico who spoke both Spanish and English. The core family group consisted of two parents and two children, Axel (11) and Luis (6). In the first excerpt two additional guests, Gran and Uncle Juan,

were also present at the meal. The participants' pseudonyms and seating arrangement during the first recording are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Seating arrangement during the first recording

The dataset is part of a more extensive corpus of homestay dinner table conversation. The participants agreed to record their mealtime conversations once or twice a week at their convenience. In the current data, each meal was video-recorded by the focal participant (Ryo), and the researcher was not present in the house at any time.

As outlined in Table 1, this section consists of four conversations of approximately 20 minutes each, recorded on four occasions and totaling approximately 1 hr 18 min. The initial conversation (T1) was recorded on Ryo's third night staying with the family, with two recordings during the second week (T2 and T3) and the final conversation (T4) recorded towards the end of his 3-week stay.

Table 1. *An overview of the dataset*

<i>Recording</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of people present</i>	<i>Recording length</i>
T1	Feb 24	7	19 min 00 sec

T2	Mar 2	5	19 min 30 sec
T3	Mar 4	5	22 min 41 sec
T4	Mar 10	4	18 min 20 sec

The data have been transcribed according to the conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (2004), and embodied aspects of the talk have been indicated below the talk in an unnumbered sub-tier rendered in gray font. The onset of the action is indicated in the talk via a vertical bar. Where particularly relevant to the analysis, embodied actions are also noted relative to the talk tier with a vertical bar and tracked across turns via arrows in the manner used by Mondada (2012).

Analysis

As outlined above, the analysis will focus on sequences of news-of-the-day tellings within the dataset, in particular those that were initiated by a member of the family and directed toward the homestay visitor Ryo. Adopting a longitudinal CA approach, the analysis will account for how these sequences were accomplished on each occasion as well as compare the participants' interaction across the four cases.

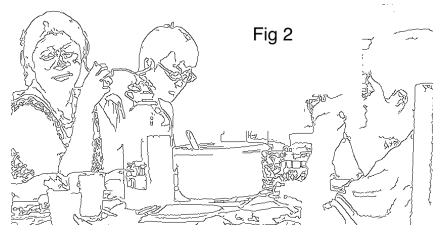
The analysis begins with the interaction in T1 (Excerpt 1), an evening in which there were two other guests at the table, Gran and Uncle Juan. The excerpt starts at 6 min 10 sec into the meal, at a point when the family has been talking a great deal, but Ryo has yet to make a significant contribution. Immediately prior to the excerpt, Juan has been teasing Axel in Spanish in a friendly way and there has been general laughter, which is followed by a brief lapse of talk in line 4.

Excerpt 1. T1 (Feb 24)

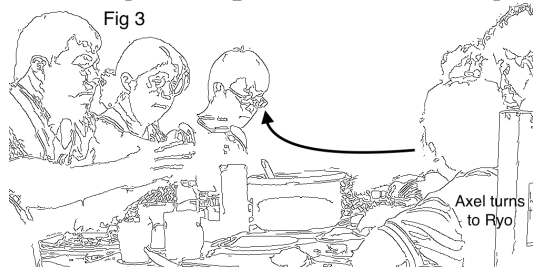
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01 MUM      ((laughing)) a hn hn hn hn
02          ((plates clattering))
03 AXEL     °( )°(0.5)°( )°
04          | (2.3)
           |all eating, Axel drinks then puts down cup (Fig 2)

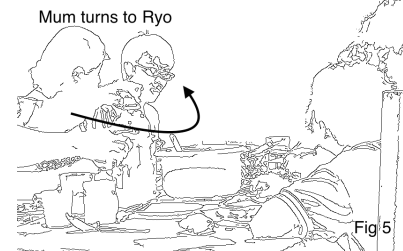
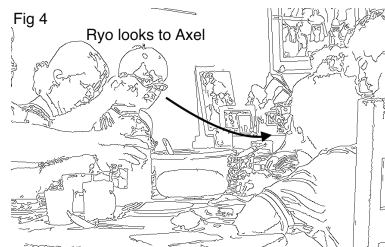
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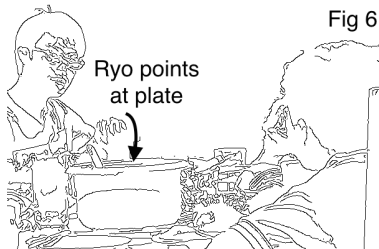
05 AXEL |how was your day.
|looking at Ryo, Mum looking at Ryo (Fig 3)



06 | (0.8)
| Ryo looks to Axel (fig 4), Mum turns to Ryo (Fig 5)



07 AXEL at school.
08 (0.6)
09 RYO |(on)/(want) this?
|points at his plate (Fig 6)



10 AXEL [|no, how wz] school.
|shakes right hand
11 MUM [(how was yo-)]
12 |(0.8)
|Ryo turns from Mum to Axel
13 MUM h[ow w]as your day?
14 RYO [um:]
15 |(0.7)
|Ryo pushes his glasses up
16 RYO |>how was yo-< ah my day?
|looks at Axel, then at Mum, nods
17 MUM |mh:m
|nods
18 (0.7)
19 RYO yes(ta) °un° |it was good.
|Ryo looks to Axel

20 | (0.9)
 |Axel nods
 21 e::|ah::n (0.4) I: (0.2)
 |rolls hand
 22 the ↑class start- started? |from- |from today.
 |rolls hand
 |nodding
 23 MUM from today?
 24 RYO |yes
 |nods
 25 (0.5)
 26 RYO the teacher is ve:ry::, very interesting
 27 >very nice, very funny.<
 28 MUM mhm mm
 29 RYO [yes]
 30 DAD [mmm]
 31 AXEL |is this cordial?
 |pointing at bottle
 32 DAD i:n uh(m)
 33 AXEL papi |is this cordial?
 |pointing again
 34 (0.3)
 35 DAD yes
 36 AXEL °oh.°
 37 (0.7)
 38 DAD it's |umm:
 |looks to Ryo
 39 (0.8)
 40 |what (0.5) level are you in or what grade?
 |Ryo turns to Dad
 41 | (1.3) | (1.0) | (1.0)
 |Ryo looks to plate, eats
 |Ryo looks back to Dad
 |Ryo points to chest

After the lapse that followed a teasing sequence directed at him (line 4), Axel works to shift the topic by deflecting the talk toward Ryo, who has not been participating in the tease, with "How way your day?" (line 5). Since this abrupt shift in the participation structure is not marked with a "so-preface" (Bolden, 2006, 2008), Axel's news-of-the-day initiation in line 5 does not receive immediate uptake from Ryo and he adds an increment in line 7 "at school" that helps clarify the time setting. Note that in the intervening silence in line 6, Ryo looks to Axel, displaying a possible understanding that he has been selected. In line 9 he initiates repair while pointing to his plate and saying "this", which is hearably misaligned since it is obviously unrelated to Axel's question. This leads Axel to repeat his

news-of-the-day initiation in line 10, via a third turn repair (Schegloff, 1997), simplifying the formulation of his turn to "How was school?"

At the same time, Mum also asks "How was your day?", first in overlap in line 11 and then again in the clear in line 13. It is possible to view Mum's participation here as a kind of brokering or third-person repair (Bolden, 2012), in that she is interceding as an intermediary in order to help solve the problem of understanding. Even though she does not really add anything to Axel's version, it seems this third iteration enables Ryo to finally understand the question. In line 16 he repeats the question with upward intonation and Mum confirms it. It is worth noting that the news-of-the-day telling here is initiated via a WH interrogative that ostensibly requests an assessment, but which can also be understood to be opening up a slot for a story-telling or reporting of something noteworthy that happened during the day. That is, a question like "How was your day?" can and should be met with an assessment followed by a reportable, such as "Not bad. We got this new shipment in from India, which was exciting."

Ryo's response in lines 19-22 displays that he understands this to be the case. He begins with a general assessment that conforms to the format of the topic initiation and then moves on to something reportable, that his classes started that day (line 22) and then moves to a specified assessment concerning his teacher (lines 26-27). Although his initial response was delayed possibly because he had not realised he was selected due to Axel's abrupt topic shift, Ryo demonstrates that he is able to formulate an appropriate new-of-the-day telling. However one point worth considering is the gap of silence in line 20, which comes immediately after Ryo's initial assessment. Are the recipients hearing it as a story preface that will lead to further expansion, or expecting a more detailed account? Axel nods at this point, but does not ask any questions, and that allows Ryo a moment to formulate his expansion.

Finally, note that Ryo's news-of-the-day telling later leads to further post-expansions like Dad's "what level are you in?" in line 40, which begins an extended sequence of stepwise topic shift

(Jefferson, 1993). In short, the news-of-the-day tellings have an important role in getting a conversation started.

The second excerpt was taken a week later. In this case, we see that Mum first offers Ryo a glass of water, selecting him by name, before asking him about his day.

Excerpt 2. T2 (Mar 2)

```

01          (1.0)
02 MUM      #Ryo would you like some water?
           ryo  #chewing----->
03          #(0.9)
           ryo  #--->
04 RYO      #ah- |(0.6) thank you
           ryo  #----->
                |nods
                |hands Mum his glass
05 MUM      ↑so |how was your day today.
                |pouring water
06          |#(1.2)
           dad  |looks to Ryo
           ryo  #--->
07 DAD      °mm°.
08          |(1.0)
           ryo  |nods, swallows
09 RYO      it was nice.
10          (1.5)
11 MUM      what did you do?
12          |(1.2)
                |Mum hands Ryo a glass
13 RYO      mm. (.) after school, (0.3)
14          I went to: the ↑garden city.
15 MUM      >you went to garden city?< (.) with who?
16          |(0.5)
                |takes a glass
17 RYO      um:: with my:: [(0.5) fri]ends. two friends=
18 LUIS?          [ ( ) ]
19 MUM      =°with ( )°
20          (2.4)
21 MUM      (is) this the first ↑time you're going
22          °to garden city°=↓you want |(.) |water?
                                   |cup gesture
           ryo                    |Ryo nods

```

23 (0.8)
 24 RYO yes. |°mm°
 |nods
 25 AXEL did you |go: in |the shopping?
 ryo |Ryo looks to Axel
 axel |Axel points to left, both hands
 26 RYO |ye- yes.
 |nods
 27 (1.0)
 28 RYO shopping.
 29 LUIS what did you ↑bu:y.
 30 | (1.8)
 |Mum places bottle on table
 31 RYO |°mm° I:: don- >I didn't< (0.2) buy (0.2) anything.
 |looks to Luis
 32 |I didn't bu:y.
 |nods
 33 MUM okay. (but) your friend[s?]
 34 DAD | [did] you eat?
 |looks to Ryo
 35 | (1.3)
 |Dad looks down
 36 DAD |did ↑you eat.
 |looks to Ryo
 37 RYO eat. ah:::: | (1.8) |ah!- I forgot.
 |looks right
 |looks back
 38 >I forgot< eh ah: >°|nandakke°<
 what was it?
 |rolls hand
 39 [I- I bough]t-
 40 AXEL [plea:se] ((to Mum))
 41 DAD food=
 42 RYO =food. yes. food.
 43 DAD yeah.
 44 MUM what did you buy.
 45 RYO um:: (1.0) gumi?
 46 (1.0)
 47 RYO gu[(mmy)?]
 48 MUM [(in) ja-] japanese?
 49 (0.8)
 50 RYO a::h ja: ja:many?
 51 MUM germany. ah: o[kay?]
 52 RYO [do you] know: (.) haribo?

53 MUM haribo? yes;
 54 RYO I bought haribo.
 55 | (0.7)
 |Mum places bottle on table

In this case there is no hesitation related to speaker selection issues as there was in T1, but there is some delay due to the fact that Ryo has food in his mouth. Ryo is chewing as Mum offers him some water (lines 2-3) and this likely delays his acceptance of his offer.

It is at this point, while pouring the water, that Mum initiates a news-of-the-day telling, formulating it in line 5 with the WH interrogative “so, how was your day”. As in the first excerpt, a response that is type-fitted to this formulation would begin with an assessment. Ryo’s assessment comes in line 9 with “it was nice”, but beyond that he does not immediately produce any subsequent expansions, such as an account, a reportable or a storytelling, and a gap of silence ensues in line 10. This leads Mum to self-select in line 11 to produce a post-expansion that initiates a story more directly with “what did you do?” Ryo’s response in lines 13 and 14 seems aligned to Mum’s question, delivering what is hearable as the start of a story: his turn consists of a time and setting orientation, but at this point the recipients do not orient to it as a complete story, and they self-select to initiate a number of post-expanding questions about his trip to Garden City (a local shopping mall). After Mum’s first follow-up question “with who?”, Ryo provides a response in line 17 which he treats as complete by taking a bite, although Mum and the others ask more follow up questions that seem to seek a newsworthy response. In line 21 Mum asks Ryo if this was the first time he went there, a post-expanding initiation that occasions a slot for a more newsworthy telling.

Axel and Luis’s follow-up questions likewise develop the topic by giving Ryo an opportunity to report on something newsworthy, but Ryo’s answers are either minimal, like the “yes, shopping” in line 26 and 28, work to close down the topic rather than expanding it, like the block in lines 31-32. In line 33, Mum tries to revive the thread by asking about what Ryo’s friends bought and in lines 34 and 36, Dad asks “Did you eat?”, and this finally affords Ryo with an opportunity to tell something

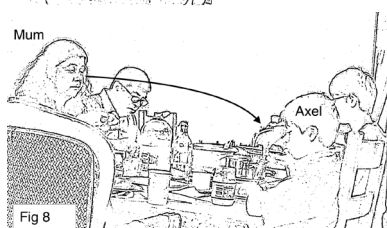
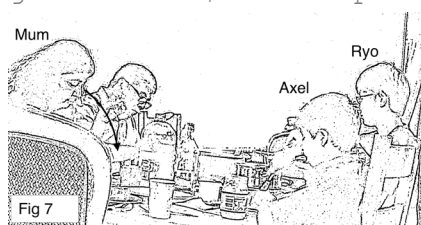
newsworthy. In this way the family have helped Ryo expand his original taciturn response “I went to Garden City” into a story that involves more details, and this ultimately leads to some rich topic negotiation and even opportunities for vocabulary learning.

The third excerpt, which takes place two days later, shares a number of similar features with the first two. As in the first excerpt, this sequence takes place after an extended period of talk in Spanish that involved a subset of the participants (not shown), which effectively excludes Ryo by virtue of the fact that he does not speak that language. Mum has been scolding Luis, telling him to drink his water, after which there is a brief lapse before she deflects the conversation away from Luis by asking Ryo “Did you have a good day today?”

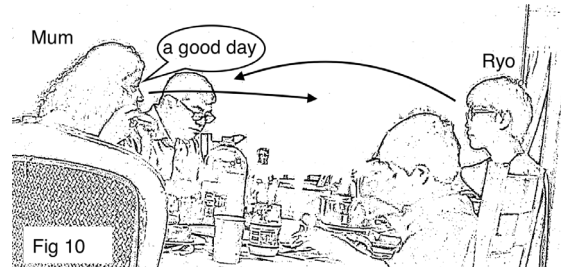
Excerpt 3. T3 (Mar 4)

Mum has just been scolding Luis in Spanish telling him to eat his bread, after which there is a 5 sec silence.

01 AXEL | I don't | (undershtand)
 | puts knife in mayonnaise, pushes away
 mum | gaze down | looks up to Axel



02 MUM | (did) you have a | good day today?
 | turns head toward Ryo
 ryo | looks to Mum



- 03 RYO |yes: (.) |
|3 nods |
- 04 MUM couldju |talk t- much to your friends?|
|RH finger wave |
- 05 (1.1)+| (0.9)
mum |"talk" gesture, opens and closes thumb and
fingers
- 06 RYO uhm wi:(th) japane:se friends
- 07 MUM uh [huh]
- 08 RYO [and] also:: (0.2) i talked wi::th
- 09 a:h (0.7) university students?
- 10 MUM °yeah°
- 11 RYO a::h from >other countries<
- 12 MUM \$↑oh really?\$
- 13 RYO yes
- 14 MUM like from ↑china::, n' korea?
- 15 RYO ye:s ah: just |ask questions?
|points away, then to self
- 16 MUM |mhm
|((Ryo nods))
- 17 DAD |what other country have you (.) °talked (to)°
|eating
- 18 RYO um::m I'm not sure >because< I:::
- 19 MUM >you don't as[k]?<
- 20 RYO [d]id- ah din't ask(ed) about a:
- 21 AXEL >what did they look like.< asian?
or: (0.7) a::h like >middle eastern?<
- 22 RYO mm:m some (0.3) some looks like (w)ih: ah: (1.5) ah:
23 |western or australian [or::] (1.0) english speaking?
|rolls RH
- 24 MUM [°mm°]

25 MUM |mm[m]
|nods

26 RYO [a]:nd also:: another person: looked like
27 (0.4) ah: h↑m:::n comes |fro:mu:: sou: south
|looks up

28 (0.2) |ea- (1.0) |east asia?
|looks left
|looks to Mum

29 MUM oh okay. |(1.2)
|drinks water

As mentioned above, this spate of talk comes just after there has been a scolding in Spanish, and then in line 2 the scolder (Mum) switches to English and turns toward Ryo to initiate a news-of-the-day telling, therefore ending one sequence of action and starting another. In this sense, we can see how these topic initiations can be used to strategically manage contentious moments in the talk. The way Mum initiates the telling here contrasts with Excerpt 2 in that it is not so-prefaced in anyway. The just prior lapse (not shown) and her combined codeswitch and gaze shift toward Ryo make it clear that it is him who is being selected, even before she has finished her turn (Figures 9-10). Mum's use of a polar question in this case may also make it easier for Ryo to respond in a timely manner, and in line 3 Ryo responds quickly with "yes". Mum follows up with another yes-no post-expansion that specifies a reportable action "could you talk with your friends?". Ryo's response this time is delayed and Mum repeats her talk gesture. In line 6, Ryo's response specifies that the friends he spoke to were Japanese, which also implies that he spoke in Japanese, an activity that is counter to his purpose of learning English.

Mum receipts this, but Ryo goes on to extend his turn with something reportable, namely that he spoke to “university students from other countries”, which mum subsequently treats as newsworthy in line 12. In line 14 she then goes on to proffer an expansion to the story by suggesting two categories of people that would require Ryo to use English, though not necessarily as expert speakers and therefore also hearable as incumbent in the category that Ryo has occasioned. This

leads Dad and Axel to ask further follow up questions on the same topic, although Ryo's responses are evasive on epistemic grounds: In lines 18 to 20, for example, he says he does not know where the students are from because he did not ask them. Note that in line 19, Mum co-completes Ryo's turn at a point where it becomes projectable and Ryo then ratifies her completion in line 20, showing that Mum has begun to take on a more active role in scaffolding his talk.

In the fourth and final excerpt, taken in the third week, Ryo responds to Mum's news-of-the-day initiation with something that is more clearly like a story, suggesting that he has come to recognize the initiation as a sequential slot in which more than just an assessment is done. One important reason for this is that Mum's question is unmistakably formulated as a story initiation. This time, Dad is absent and Mum has ordered pizza. The excerpt comes from the very start of the meal: the family has just said the blessing and are helping themselves to the pizza.

Excerpt 4. T4 (Mar 10)

Ryo has just finished saying grace and has begun dishing out the pizza.

01 | (1.4)
 |Mum gives Axel a slice of pizza
02 MUM so what happened to you today.
03 RYO |okay: |eh::: (0.9) |toda:y I went to: (0.3)
 |stands
 |reaches to box
 |takes slice
04 the |university of |queensland.
 |looks to Mum
 |nods
05 | (0.7)
 ryo |nods twice
06 MUM ↑[o h]:::..
07 RYO [(yeah)]
08 | (0.9)
 mum |nods
09 RYO |yes.
 |looks to Mum
10 | (0.9)
 mum |does video gesture to Axel

11 MUM (give ten minute) everybody, he |needs to record.
|waves toward camera

12 MUM (Axel) why did you leave. won't be able to record.
13 | (0.5)
axel |returns to table

14 RYO A:Nd a:::h | (1.9) ah: ↑I:: (1.3)
15 axel |sits
16 and ah: (0.6) on my: ↑>way home<
17 (0.4) I:::, (0.3) I took the bu:s:
18 at (2.2) >queensland university<?
19 MUM >°mhm°<=
20 RYO =and in my ↑plan I was going to: (0.3) take off
21 the bus at | (1.5) |o:ne bus stop.
|looks upper right
|looks back to Mum

22 | (0.3)
mum |nods

23 RYO however, ↑I:: (0.6) I could not ↑notice
24 (0.3) th(at) bus stop.
25 | (0.4)
ryo |nods

26 MUM [oh]
27 RYO [be]↑caus:e ah::: because no::: s[ignal]
28 MUM [no sign]=
29 RYO =|no sign. |yes.
|nods
|looks down, smiling

30 (2.0)
31 RYO no one- no one |tell me.
|smiles, nods

32 (0.4)
33 MUM °mm°
34 RYO |no one told me.
|nodding

35 MUM =°mh[m]°
36 RYO ↑[s]o:: I::: (.) missed |the bus stop.
|nods

37 MUM ↑so (0.5) whe:re did you get off.
38 | (1.6)
ryo |bites tip of pizza, looks at Mum

39 RYO u:::n, (1.2) I: have- >I had< to get off at
40 (1.9) |bardon? ° ah I know.°
|shakes head

41 (.)

42 RYO °the name.°
 43 (.)
 44 RYO >°sorry.°<=
 45 MUM =very ↑fa::r
 46 (1.1)
 47 MUM bardo[n].
 48 RYO [b]a?
 49 MUM >bard[on]<
 50 RYO | [ba]? ba? ah:: maybe

Notice that Mum initiates the news-of-the-day with “So what happened to you today?” rather than “did you have a good day?”, which more directly occasions a storytelling rather than an assessment.¹ This could be just coincidence, but it may also suggest that Mum is becoming more aware of Ryo’s responses, and is therefore initiating the telling more clearly for him. In fact his story goes more smoothly than those in the earlier excerpts, with a time and place orientation (in lines 3 and 4 respectively), that later moves on to a troubles telling (Jefferson, 1988) and its resolution.

Before examining the rest of the story in detail, it is worth briefly focusing on Ryo’s turn-initial “okay” in line 3. This seems to be receipting Mum’s initiation, indicating that he has understood the sort of action he is required to produce, much like the uptake oral test candidates provide on receipt of the tester’s initiation of a spoken task (Kasper, 2013). This is not something that Ryo did in the earlier excerpts, and I would suggest that it is indicative of his increasing interactional competence in being able to project that Mum is going to ask him about his day. It is not that there has been any great change to his grammar or pronunciation over the 3 weeks, but he has developed interactionally in that he has become more aware of how to participate in the meal. By receipting Mum’s turn with “okay” in line 3, Ryo is able to gain a moment to prepare the story with his hesitation marker “ehh” and a pause. The “okay” lets Mum know that he understands her question and is working on the answer.

Space precludes a detailed analysis of Ryo’s story in this excerpt, but it features setting talk (line 16), a motivating goal (lines 20-21) and a problematic situation (lines 23-36) that he was able to overcome (lines 39-40), which are all typical features of a story. Note also that Mum and the others

orient to it more as a story than they did in the earlier excerpts, providing mainly small uptake tokens and receipt through repetition, rather than post-expanding questions, which allows Ryo to take a more extended turn at talk.

Table 2. *Mum's initiation of news-of-the-day tellings across the four episodes*

Episode (line)	Formulation	Procedural consequentiality
T1 (13)	how was your day.	invites assessment
T2 (5)	So how was your day today.	invites assessment
T3 (3)	(did) you have a good day today?	invites assessment
T4 (2)	so what happened to you today.	initiates a story

Finally, it is worth considering Mum's news-of-the-day initiations across the four excerpts, as shown in Table 2. In T1, T2 and T3, they all invite assessment, at least turn-initially, although there is an implicit expectation that the recipient will go on to expand the turn with a reportable or a story-telling of some kind (Button & Casey, 1984). In these excerpts Ryo's responses did indeed respond to the form of the questions, though his stories were delayed, which led Mum and the others to help him along with follow up questions, and that may have in fact made it more difficult to formulate the story in his own way. In the final excerpt, however, Mum formulates the initiation turn as "so what happened to you today?", which is more clearly a storytelling initiation, and this allows Ryo to take an extended turn at talk. In short, it is not just that Ryo has become more familiar with the practice of delivering news of the day, but also that the expert speakers have come to ask about his day via interactional practices that change the way he delivers that news.

Mum prefaces two of her turns (T2 and T4) with “so”, a transition marker which Bolden (2006, 2008) demonstrates to be routinely found in these news-eliciting environments and when launching in to the main business of a telephone call. In fact, “so” is such a routine part of news elicitors that it is worth considering what kind of sequential context allowed Mum omit it on the other two occasions (T1 and T3). In both of these instances, the initiations come across as somewhat abrupt, and perhaps serve a secondary purpose of closing down a previous thread of talk by diverting the topic to Ryo (as someone who was not involved in the prior talk). In T3, for instance, Mum has been reprimanding Luis in Spanish (a language choice that excludes Ryo as addressed recipient), before quickly turning to Ryo and asking “Did you have a good day?” Similarly, in T1, Axel has been the butt of the others’ jokes and prior to the excerpt everyone except Ryo has been laughing. By turning to Ryo and asking “How was your day?”, Axel changes the participation structure as well as the topic, and therefore skillfully manages to close down a thread that is problematic for him. When Mum repeats Axel’s formulation in line 13 for Ryo, she again does so without the “so”.

Discussion

The dinner table is a key site for socialization (Blum-Kulka, 2008; Ochs & Shohet, 2006), and the sequential analysis in this study has uncovered evidence of such socialization via observable changes in the methods the participants use to initiate and deliver news-of-the-day tellings across the three weeks of a short-term study abroad program. Although there were initial delays in their delivery, the homestay student came to recognize the initiation of these tellings as a junction in which he was being allocated an extended turn to tell a story rather than just give an assessment. In the earlier excerpts, his responses were briefer and the host family treated these as inapposite by holding him accountable with post-expansions in cases where the homestay student did not move from an assessment to a story. As time progressed, it appears that the guest became more familiar with the routines of this family's evening meal. By the final excerpt the learner's response showed a clear

expectation that a news-of-the-day telling would be occasioned, and he launched into a telling that was both detailed and story-like.

It is clearly not the case that he had no understanding of topic-initiating utterances or story-telling practices prior to the homestay. He was obviously competent in these routines in his first language (see Kecskes, Sanders, & Pomerantz, 2018), and had probably already at least some knowledge of them in English as well, as evidenced by the fact that he was able to formulate basic reportables in the first excerpt. What does point to Ryo's development throughout the 3-week homestay though was the increasingly prompt and complete way he was able to formulate his news-of-the-day, which suggests he was able to anticipate this question as part of the regular mealtime rituals, just as he learned that the family were in the habit of blessing the food before they ate (Author, 2018).

However, there is one feature of this form of topic elicitation sequences that complicates this analysis.² As Button and Casey (1984) point out, news-of-the-day initiations are open inquiries and therefore do not nominate a specific topic. As such, even among proficient speakers they are frequently met with brief delays, sound stretches and perturbations in the second pair part as the respondent searches for a newsworthy tellable. Even though the elicitor's open inquiry in the first turn initiates a news report from the recipient in a general sense, the topicalization of any particular candidate topic requires both parties to orient to that topic as newsworthy. That being the case, the second turns in these sequences are routinely designed as partial reports, and before the teller elaborates on the reportable, the news initiator must first endorse the candidate topic. In short, news-of-the-day tellings are often "designedly taciturn", even among proficient interactants.

A challenge for the current study then is to account for any disfluencies in Ryo's responses both in terms of the natural unfolding of the talk and in terms of his developing interactional competence. In fact, to a certain extent it could be argued that Ryo's decreasing use of hesitation markers can be seen as an atypical manner of responding in this sequential locus. Recall in T4 line 3

how Ryo prefaces his response with “okay” immediately after Mum asks him “So what happened to you today?”, promptly receipting her question before going on to deliver an extended telling. This suggests that Ryo may have been ready with a story in the knowledge that the news-of-the-day elicitors were a regular feature of the dinnertime talk in this family, or is at least displaying an awareness that he is likely to be asked about his day at some point during the dinner. This somewhat paradoxical outcome may have therefore been a result of his rehearsal and growing ability to plan and pre-enact (Leyland, 2017) familiar elements of the interaction. Although the limitations of the dataset preclude discussion beyond speculation, it is entirely possible that such rehearsal served as a support mechanism at this stage and would decrease over time, reverting to the more normative format of delay-marking perturbations.

In addition, the study highlights the co-constructed nature of interactional competence as something that is not just the responsibility of the novice language user. The initiations became more clearly story-telling initiations, perhaps as recipient accommodations or growing familiarity with the practice. The changes in the way the tellings were initiated afford the learner with an opportunity to develop interactional competence. The post-expansions orient to Ryo’s assessments as not entirely apposite responses.

These changes parallel the findings of Waring (2013) in her L2 classroom-based study of routine inquiries in which initially brief student responses to questions like “How was your weekend?” were treated by the teacher as inadequate and subsequently occasioned follow-up questions like “Did you go anywhere special?” The host mother in the current study responded in a similar way by posing specifying questions that prompted a longer telling (Excerpt 2, line 11 “What did you do?”, Excerpt 3, line 4 “Could you talk to your friends?”). These instances suggest that treating short responses to such routine enquiries as inapposite is something observable beyond the classroom context.

I would like to offer two further observations on the data extracts, albeit in a broader fashion. First, note that on no occasion does Ryo reciprocate these tellings by initiating news-of-the-day from the family. It is commonly found that a first story frequently occasions a second story (Jefferson, 1978), and that a first-pair part is often redirected back to the initiator on completion of the sequence as a reciprocal or exchange sequence (Schegloff, 2007, p. 95). Secondly, Mum's news-of-the-day initiations with other family members are more finely adjusted to what she knows about them, such as when she asks her younger son Luis, "What did y- oh you had piano today, right?" (in data not shown), or what Button and Casey (1985) term an *itemised news inquiry*. Here it seems Mum was going to initiate a non-specific inquiry with "What did you do today?", but abandoned her question mid-turn to replace it with a more precise formulation that demonstrates her prior knowledge of Luis' day, and therefore both proffers a possible response for the truncated inquiry and projects a trajectory for the ongoing talk. Mum's familiarity with Luis' routine has had consequences for that moment of the interaction in a way that is arguably not possible for her to do with Ryo, at least at the beginning of his stay (In Excerpt 1 line 13, for example, she treats Ryo's news-of-the-day telling as previously unknown information by repeating it with upward intonation).

These recalibrated versions of the practice demonstrate learning as changes in the way Ryo participates in the conversation over time (Young & Miller, 2004), but also show the family's growing understanding of the way Ryo participates in the conversation, as evidenced by the minor modifications to the way they initiate the news-of-the-day tellings to make it clearer that a story is sequentially due in the ongoing talk. In short, it is not just that interactional competence is a concern for the novice/newcomer/learner, or even that the expert/local/teacher is partly responsible for the way that he formulates his response. The family members are adapting their practices to help accommodate their visitor, and can therefore be said to have developed their recipient design for this particular interlocutor, and therefore demonstrated changes in their interactional competence over time as well.

Finally, it would be remiss not to address some of the limitations of the analysis due to the co-constructed nature of interactional competence, namely that even though the same focal participants are interacting in a similar situation over a number of weeks, the details of each case hold the potential to constrain and alter the way news-of-the-day is delivered in each case. Although Ryo's news-elicited telling in Excerpt 1 is considerably delayed by both repair and silence (lines 6-18), he eventually comes up with something reportable about his day. In Excerpts 2 and 3, his responses are far more scaffolded by the other family members via post-expansive questions that make the telling even more co-constructed. This does not mean that he was not able to tell a story on his own, but that the recipients were treating his rather brief reportables as opportunities for generating further talk. Compare this with Excerpt 4, in which Ryo receipts Mum's initiation immediately in line 3 with "okay", suggesting much more immediate recognition that he has been occasioned a slot and understands the sort of action that he needs to undertake there. The familiarity and the development are therefore concerned with both Ryo's ability to predict and project a regularly occurring interactional routine and his growing fluency in providing a type-fitted response in a timely manner as well as the family's increasingly routinized initiation of news-of-the-day tellings with him at this point in the meal. Future longitudinal CA studies of interactional competence must likewise take into account the co-constructed nature of talk as a feature of their analytic claims.

A concluding note on pragmatic development and learner mobility

As a final remark, I would like to reflect briefly on the relevance of this analysis to the notion of pragmatic development and student mobility, which is the broader theme of this special issue. In our globalizing world, opportunities for overseas travel abound and study abroad has become a commonplace experience for many university students. Unlike the form-focused training that is found in many language classrooms, homestay offers students the chance to *use* language in

authentic interactional contexts "in the wild" (Hutchins, 1995), and this can be a harrowing yet profitable experience. Unlike theoretical knowledge of the target-language grammar or rote-learned lists of vocabulary, interaction entails the timely production of a relevant response in an appropriate slot (followed by any number of ensuing sequences), and this is something that involves not just linguistic knowledge, but also sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence. In short, it provides far greater opportunities to develop their interactional competence. To be sure, the classroom can also approximate and emulate these conditions, but situations like the one we have studied, in which a single learner is actively involved in communicating with multiple expert speakers about real-world matters provides a more genuine and unscripted style of interaction than that found in most language classrooms. In addition, repeating subsequent versions of the same experience, such as a dinnertime conversation (Author, 2017) or a survey interview task (Author, 2016), allow the learner to reflect on their interactional success and failures and to improve on them in subsequent iterations.

Note

¹ As one reviewer pointed out, the design of the host mother's question here might indicate that she is initiating an account, she has some evidence to suggest there was some problem (e.g., Ryo was late home) and she is asking him for an explanation. I can see how this could be an alternative interpretation based on the transcript alone, but the intonation with which she delivers this turn does not imply this (she does not stress "happened" or sound particularly concerned or worried as she says it). Moreover, while Ryo's response does include an explanation, it is more of a story than a reason, and it is not accompanied by any apologies or references to earlier talk that might support this interpretation.

² I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising this point.

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