

Speaking in turns and sequences: Interactional competence as a target construct in testing speaking

Language Testing
2018, Vol. 35(3) 331–355
© The Author(s) 2018
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0265532218758128
journals.sagepub.com/home/ltj



Carsten Roever 

Linguistics & Applied Linguistics, University of Melbourne, Australia

Gabriele Kasper

Department of Second Language Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, USA

Abstract

In the assessment of speaking, a psycholinguistically based speaking construct has predominated. In this paper, we argue for the integration of the construct of interactional competence (IC) in speaking assessments to broaden the range of defensible inferences from speaking tests. IC emphasizes the co-constructed nature of interaction and enables the rating of L2 users' ability to deploy interactional tools that lead to shared understandings. Recent work on IC shows that levels of development can be distinguished, for example, in the sequential organization of social actions such as requests and refusals. This can in turn inform interactionally specific ratings. Furthermore, an IC perspective allows a fine-grained analysis of interactions between examiners and test takers to detect effects of examiner talk. Apparent misunderstandings or disfluencies by test takers can be examiner-induced with the test taker's response actually demonstrating interactional ability rather than lack of proficiency. We argue that inclusion of IC as a construct in testing speaking opens new perspectives on oral proficiency and enhances the validity of speaking assessments.

Keywords

Conversation, interactional competence, repair, sequence organization, speaking, validity

Background

A speaking construct for language testing can be conceptualized from a primarily psycholinguistic-individualist perspective or a primarily sociolinguistic-interactional

Corresponding author:

Carsten Roever, Linguistics & Applied Linguistics, The University of Melbourne, Babel 607, Melbourne, Victoria 3010, Australia.

Email: carsten@unimelb.edu.au

perspective. The former emphasizes the individual speaker and their speaking ability, and assesses combinations of features such as fluency and pronunciation (Pearson Education, 2012), lexical resources and grammatical range (IELTS, 2017), and topic development (ETS, 2014). It reflects psycholinguistic models of language competence (e.g., De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, & Hulstijn, 2012, 2013; Levelt, 1989) with little attention to situational and social context of language use. The latter emphasizes the purposes of speakers' linguistic choices and their effects on interlocutors, and assesses the appropriateness, conventionality and effectiveness of their utterances (Grabowski, 2013; Roever, 2005; Youn, 2015). It reflects sociolinguistic models of language competence (rooted in Hymes, 1972) with a focus on situational and social aspects of language use.

Although these perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, tests have traditionally foregrounded one over the other, which directly impacts task design, administration and scoring as well as inferences that the test can defensibly support. Foregrounding a psycholinguistic-individualist perspective requires tasks that can elicit a ratable amount of language but does not require language use to be embedded in social interaction or situational contexts, thereby enabling computer-based testing of monologic speaking as implemented in TOEFL and PTE Academic. Even where face-to-face speaking tasks are administered, such as in IELTS Speaking or the ACTFL OPI, this perspective does not emphasize the measurement of interactional abilities but uses the interaction primarily as an elicitation tool to obtain a ratable sample of spoken language. Under this perspective, inferences regarding test takers' ability to use language in social interaction are difficult to support since social interaction is not part of the rating. This is a serious concern for the real-world use of test scores where speaking scores are usually interpreted by end users as indicating test takers' ability to interact in a variety of settings and with a variety of interlocutors and not just to produce context-free fluent, accurate and complex language.

By contrast, foregrounding a sociolinguistic-interactional perspective requires tasks that can elicit purposeful, interactive language use to provide evidence about test takers' ability to tailor their talk to their interlocutor and the situation (a principle known as "recipient design", e.g., Drew, 2013) and participate in interaction. This complicates test design and administration appreciably since it makes a physically or virtually co-present interlocutor indispensable. Also, since context in interaction is created dynamically by each utterance creating a discourse context for following ones (Heritage, 1984), this type of test poses serious challenges for standardization across test takers, interlocutors, and tasks. Rating is further complicated by the test taker's and interlocutor's interactional contributions being inextricably linked (Brown, 2003; McNamara, 1996), which is an issue to be taken up below. However, these tests allow inferences as to test takers' ability to engage in social interactions and therefore are more likely to support real-world uses that include the ability to deploy language in interactive situations for social purposes.

In this paper, we will outline how the speaking construct would benefit from a greater incorporation of a sociolinguistic-interactional perspective, which would allow tests to extend the range of inferences and real-world uses they can support. We will first outline the fundamental differences between (monologic) speaking and (dialogic) talking.

Speaking and talking

In real life, unlike in many language tests, speaking is not a solitary activity. Speakers always speak *to* and *for* others, and in the most fundamental form of speaking, they speak *with* others – they *talk*. In talk, participants switch between speaking and listening. In fact, in order to be a speaker in talk, participants have to listen to each other. Listening and understanding is a condition for making meaningful and consequential contributions to talk as speakers. Even when our academic interest is in speaking, it is therefore impossible to consider speaking in isolation from listening. In talk, speaking and listening are interdependent.

Furthermore, talking is a fundamentally purposeful activity. People talk in order to get things done, from the routine management of everyday life to highly specialized activities such as running tests in a science lab or performing surgery. Clearly these activities are also done by means other than talking – they crucially involve the body, objects, and spatial arrangements. Still, participants use language and other vocalizations to coordinate their activities. When we speak of talk we therefore speak of talk in, and as, *interaction*. The ability to participate in interaction is commonly called *interactional competence* (IC).

We will begin by delineating how IC is theorized in conversation analysis (CA), the academic discipline that specializes in the study of social interaction. We will then consider how IC has been addressed in research on second language use and development and in language testing. Next, we will select one generic practice, preliminaries, as a sample case to illustrate how levels of IC may be differentiated. Subsequently, we will outline some of the challenges involved in assessing IC, giving focus to the effect of examiner questions on examinees' answers. In conclusion, we will discuss implications of the analysis and propose some directions for future research.

Interactional competence

In contrast to the common competence-performance distinction originating with Chomsky (1965) and taken up by Hymes (1972), IC is not defined in opposition to performance. In CA, IC is considered both “the competence necessary for effective interaction” and “the competence that is available in the interaction between participants” (Mehan, 1979, p. 130). We will return to the question of *what* IC is and first consider *where* IC is found. As a competence that is observable only in the unfolding interaction, as hearable and visible actions, action trajectories, and practices (methods, procedures) that are socially consequential for the participants, IC cannot be separated from performance. Interaction is organized at a fine level of granularity and participants show sensitivity to minute details of conduct. Therefore, IC cannot be made observable and assessable through other methods than observing how co-participants jointly engage in talk. This requirement largely eliminates monological speaking tasks as assessment options.¹

To clarify what makes up “the competence necessary for effective interaction”, some consideration has to be given to the properties of interaction. As the “primordial site of sociality” (Schegloff, 2006), interaction anywhere, and for any purpose, confronts

participants with the same set of organizational problems: how to distribute turns at talk in an orderly fashion; how to design turns and perform actions so that they make up coherent sequences (e.g., question–answer, assessment–agreement); how to repair problems of speaking, hearing or understanding so that mutual understanding can be maintained or restored and the progression of the talk resumed; and how to organize larger units of interaction, such as openings and closings (Schegloff, 2006). Just as these interactional problems are shared across human societies, so are the methods for their solution. These methods are *context-free*; that is, they are generic and independent of a specific interactional context. For example, repair on another speaker’s talk can be initiated with various methods, from unspecific initiators that signal a problem in a prior speaker’s talk without indicating what that problem is (“sorry?”, “pardon?”, see the discussion on “open repair initiations” below), to initiations that locate the problem, such as question words (“who?”), repetition, and requests for confirmation and clarification (see the discussion on “restricted repair initiations” below and Dingemanse, Kendrick, & Enfield, 2016; Dingemanse, Roberts, & Baranova, 2015, for cross-linguistic evidence).

Such generic methods provide the foundation of IC, and they are at work whenever participants take or relinquish a turn, give an answer, show that they follow the current speaker’s talk, and so forth. At the same time, in any activity, at any moment, participants calibrate interactional methods and resources to the interactional goals and circumstances at hand. Their IC allows them to deploy these methods for *local, context sensitive* and *practice specific* use (Young & Miller, 2004) and the achievement of mutual understanding. Participants’ IC is their repertoire of methods and their ability to adapt them to the interactional context at hand. For example, the open repair initiations discussed below address problems of understanding in specific interactional contexts; namely after a previous speaker shifts topic in a sudden and unexpected fashion. The distinction between context-free methods and their context sensitive use is directly relevant for the assessment of IC. As Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2015) note, “The diversification of ‘methods’ for accomplishing social interaction essentially involves a growing ability to recipient design talk and to deploy context sensitive conduct, i.e. conduct that is better tailored to the local circumstantial details of the interaction” (p. 262).

For the design of assessment instruments and rubrics to measure second language (L2) speaker’s IC, several bodies of literature are readily available. To identify aspects of IC which can potentially be assessed, the extensive research literature on the interactional competencies of first language speakers offers benchmark descriptions for a wide variety of interactional methods and use of linguistic resources in talk. It includes comprehensive reference works, such as *The Handbook of Conversation Analysis* (Sidnell & Stivers, 2013), and increasingly cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies (Sidnell, 2009) of specific interactional methods, such as referring to persons (Enfield & Stivers, 2007), requesting (Drew & Couper-Kuhlen, 2014), and repair (Dingemanse et al. 2015, 2016; Hayashi, Raymond, & Sidnell, 2013).

In addition, studies showing how L2 speakers participate in ordinary conversations and interaction in various kinds of institutional settings shed light on a wide range of practices. This literature indicates that L2 speakers are “normal speakers” (Wagner & Gardner, 2004); that is, they manage their participation with the same fundamental interactional methods as L1 speakers do. This is even the case when the participants’ L2

repertoire is very limited, as can be seen when such speakers manage to precision-time their turn-taking (Carroll, 2000). However, limitations in linguistic resources constrain participants' full use of interactional methods and may slow the progression of the talk in various ways (Wong, 2000, 2004).

Most relevantly, there is a rapidly growing body of research on the *development* of L2 IC. These studies show how L2 speakers' methods and practices in particular languages, settings and activities become more sequentially sensitive, tightly aligned, and recipient designed over time, although (as is generally the case in language acquisition) not necessarily in a linear fashion. In a recent survey article synthesizing studies across target languages (English, French, German, Swedish, and Arabic) and settings (classroom talk, elicited conversation, role play, and casual talk), Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2015) review the evidence of how L2 speakers' use of the fundamental interactional organizations changes over time: turn-taking and participation, sequence organization in opening tasks and launching storytellings, self-initiating other-repair, and preference organization in disagreements. They show that beginning L2 speakers use a limited set of devices to achieve a particular action, regardless of local interactional fit (comparable to "overgeneralization" in SLA). As L2 speakers become more interactionally competent and expand their linguistic repertoire, methods of sequence organization and selection of linguistic resources gradually diversify, are increasingly adapted to local contingencies, and become more interactionally effective. Their participation is also characterized by more fine-tuned recipient design, turn organization with a view to preference organization, action projection through sequence organization and turn design, and fit with prior turns and actions. We will highlight some of these features in the following section.

It bears pointing out that these developmental trajectories are seen in the practices through which L2 users participate both as speakers and as recipients of talk. Effective alignment to a co-participant's talk – that is, responding in a locally fitting way – is critical for accomplishing understanding and moving the interaction forward. Several studies examine the developmental trajectories of reciprocity displays by L2 speakers of Japanese (Ishida, 2011) and L2 English speakers as story recipients (Kim, 2016).

Finally, research on the assessment of IC through different test formats reveals the interactional architecture of these activities (Kasper & Ross, 2013), their ability to produce evidence relevant to score use, and their efficacy in locating test takers at different levels of IC. Some common test formats include versions of language proficiency interviews (ACTFL: Kim & Suh, 1998; Tominaga, 2013, 2017; ETS: Kasper, 2013; Kasper & Ross, 2003, 2007; Ross, 1998, 2007, 2017; IST: Brown, 2003; Lazaraton, 2002; Seedhouse, 2012, 2013; Seedhouse & Egbert, 2006; Seedhouse & Supakorn, 2015; Young & Halleck, 1998), peer oral proficiency tests (Galaczi, 2014; Greer & Potter, 2008; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2011; Sandlund, Sundqvist, & Nyroos, 2016), and roleplay (Grabowski, 2013; Kasper & Youn, 2017; Okada, 2010; Okada & Greer, 2013; Walters, 2009, 2013; Ross & O'Connell, 2013; Youn, 2015).

Although these activities differ in their interactional organization and the presence or absence of a participating examiner, they have in common that participants' contributions unavoidably enable and constrain each other. A turn only works as an answer because it comes in response to a question, and in order to be a relevant answer, it has to address the topical content of that particular question. The normative dependency

between certain kinds of action may be obvious enough, but it points to the more general tenet that IC is “jointly constructed by all participants” (He & Young, 1998, p. 7). IC’s property of co-construction has profound consequences for IC as an object of language assessment (Kasper & Ross, 2013). It requires that, in locating aspects of test takers’ interactional conduct as targets for individual assessment, consideration should be given to actions and turn formats that can be implemented in alternative ways in the same sequential context. In the following section, we will illustrate one feature that allows conclusions as to IC development: the use of preliminaries in role plays.

Preliminaries as an indicator of IC

One aspect of interactive spoken production where a developmental pathway for IC has been found that allows distinguishable levels of ability to be determined is the use of pre-sequences and same-turn prefaces as preliminaries to the main action (Schegloff, 2007). As their name suggests, such preliminaries precede many kinds of initiating actions, such as pre-sequences to invitations, announcements, or requests, and prefaces in responding actions such as disagreements or refusals, and they expectably occur with these actions. An important function of pre-sequences is for the speaker to explore whether relevant conditions for the main action are met, for instance whether the recipient has time to talk, or go out, or possesses the thing the speaker wants to borrow, and so on. Structurally, pre-sequences and prefaces delay the action they are preliminary to. Because of this structural property, preliminaries are regularly (but by no means exclusively) used to mark actions as “dispreferred”; that is, departing from the course of action that the co-participant pursues (e.g., refusing a request, disagreeing with an opinion), or imposing on the recipient in some way (requesting). In this section, we examine how L2 speakers use preliminaries in request and refusal sequences.

The following two excerpts show request interactions with and without preliminaries.

Excerpt 1 is the beginning of a role play where a beginning-level L2 English speaker (BEG) plays the role of a student and asks an interlocutor (INT), who plays the role of a professor, for lecture handouts after missing a class:

Excerpt 1: ESL request, beginning L2 speaker (BEG) (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2013, p. 421)

- 1 BEG: Hi doctor.
- 2 INT: Hello.
- 3 BEG: Give me handouts.
- 4 INT: You want the handouts for the last lecture?

In this simple conversation, the L2 English speaker (BEG) produces the request, which is formatted as an imperative, immediately after a greeting exchange, without any preliminary moves. This is followed by a clarification request (other-initiation of repair, see below) on the part of the interlocutor and the conversation continues (not shown here for reasons of space). Alternatively, the request could be made as in

Low-level speakers

At a low level of IC, L2 speakers' production frequently lacks preliminaries. The core social action is produced early on in the interaction, commonly right after a greeting. It is frequently formatted explicitly and lacks background information, accounts or explanations, as in Excerpt 1. The tendency of low-level L2 speakers to obviate preliminary moves also holds for other languages. For example, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2014) obtained similar findings for requests in L2 Arabic, as shown in Excerpt 3 where an L2 speaker of Arabic (BEG) makes a real-life request of a university administrator (ADM).

Excerpt 3: L2 Arabic request, low-level L2 speaker (BEG) (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2014, p. 634)

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| 1 | BEG: | as-salaam-u 'alaykum
peace upon you
<i>Hello</i> |
| 2 | ADM: | 'alaykum-u as-salaam (.) tafadal
upon you peace. (.) come in
<i>Hello (.) Come in</i> |
| 3 | BEG: | óriid-u al-muħaaðarah (0.2) šabaa:ħa-n
I want the lecture (0.2) morning
<i>I want the lecture (0.2) in the morning</i> |
| 4 | ADM: | turiid-u maažaa?
want what
<i>What do you want?</i> |
| 5 | BEG: | al-muħaa::ðarah (0.1) šabaaħa-n
the lecture (0.1) morning
<i>The lecture (0.1) in the morning</i> |

Similar to Excerpt 1, the L2 speaker (BEG) makes the request in line 3, immediately after a greeting sequence in lines 1 and 2. The interlocutor (ADM) then asks a clarification question in line 4, which prompts BEG to repeat the key information in line 5. There are no preliminary moves, inter-turn delays, and only a minor intra-turn delay in line 3.

In Excerpt 4, from Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2011) role-play data, the same immediacy is found in a second-pair part, a refusal following a request from one beginning-level L2 speaker to another to borrow a car.

Excerpt 4: ESL refusal, low-level L2 speakers (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011)

- | | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | BEG1: | good evening |
| 2 | BEG2: | good evening |
| 3 | BEG1: | I please this car I want to airport |
| 4 | BEG2: | no I can't I have presentation |

After the greeting sequence in lines 1 and 2, BEG1 immediately produces his request, adding an account in line 3 to which BEG2 replies with an explicit refusal and an account

in line 4. Although the fronting and explicitness of the refusal is indicative of a low level of interactional ability, the subsequent addition of an account foreshadows the next level of development where the account is pre-posed and thus delays the core action.

Intermediate speakers. As L2 speakers' ability increases, so does the occurrence of preliminaries, beginning with the provision of limited preliminary materials (e.g., a single prefacing action in the same turn before the core action). For example, in Excerpt 5, an intermediate-level L2 English speaker (IMD) in Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2012) role plays prefaced his request for handouts in line 3 with a reason.

Excerpt 5: ESL request, intermediate-level ESL speaker (IMD) (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2012, p. 54)

- 1 IMD: excuse me doctor
- 2 INT: yes (.) come in
- 3 IMD: I wa::s absent (.2) since last two wee::ks (.) I want handout

Similarly, in Excerpt 6 from Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2014) L2 Arabic data, a low-intermediate speaker produces a preliminary move before the core request (preceding greeting sequence omitted).

Excerpt 6: L2 Arabic request, low-intermediate level L2 speaker (LOW) (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2014, p. 630)

- 1 LOW: al- jadwal taǧiir-a mina aš-šabaah élaa al-masaa
the timetable changed from the morning to the evening
The timetable has been changed from the morning to the evening.
- 2 ADM: na'am. šahiih
Yes true
Yes, true
- 3 LOW: ánaa ábǧaa šabaa:h (0.2) ↑faqt.
I want morning (0.2) only
I want morning (0.2) only.

In line 1, LOW first provides background to the upcoming request and after confirmation from ADM, puts the request explicitly on record.

The tendency to use minimal preliminary work is also apparent with a refusal in Excerpt 7 from Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011) with two intermediate-level L2 English speakers. IMD1 wants to borrow IMD2's laptop.

Excerpt 7: ESL refusal, intermediate-level L2 speakers (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011)

- 1 IMD1: hi
- 2 IMD2: hi welcome ((first name)) welcome

- 3 IMD1: I have some problems with my laptop. Can I borrow your laptop
 4 for a moment because I have necessary homework I have to solve
 5 this homework
 6 IMD2: yeah but I'm sorry for that because I have work now and I
 7 can't give it to you because I'm working now. I'm still working
 8 so I can give it to you after when I finish

After greetings in lines 1 and 2, IMD1 requests IMD2's laptop in lines 3–5, using a minimal preface (background), a permission request, and an account. IMD2 replies with a refusal formatted in the common “yeah but” format, which is followed by an account and the explicit refusal in line 7, accompanied by a reiteration of the account. Subsequently, an alternative is suggested in lines 7 and 8. Although IMD2 uses a conventional refusal opening (“yeah but”), delay of his refusal is otherwise limited. Only two preliminary moves in close succession delay the main refusal action, which is done explicitly, whereas refusals are typically not put on record, as is the case with advanced speakers.

Advanced speakers

At an advanced level of IC, L2 speakers' production shows delay of the main action through preliminary moves and implicitness of the main action or even complete omission. This is exemplified in Excerpt 2 above, but can also be found for other languages and actions. For example, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2014) found this tendency for a request by their high-level L2 Arabic participants as shown in Excerpt 8 where an advanced L2 Arabic speaker (AVC) makes a request of a university administrator (ADM) in a real-life setting.

Excerpt 8: L2 Arabic request, advanced L2 speaker (AVC) (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2014, p. 622)

- 1 AVC: law-samaht. (0.2) nahn-u ladaynaa munaaqashah,
 please (0.2) we have discussion
 Please (0.2) we need to discuss
 2 qaliilah ma'ak.
 little with you
 something with you
 3 ADM: °tafaḍal°
 welcome
 Go ahead
 4 AVC: áxbaranaa ós:taaz al-qawaa:'id án-a (.) al-jadwal
 told us teacher grammar that (.) the timetable
 The Grammar teacher told us that (.) the timetable
 5 sawf-a (0.1) ↑yataḡayar=
 will (0.1) change
 will change

- 6 ADM: =šahii:h
true
true
- 7 AVC: wa:: sawf-a nadrus al-qawaa'id
and will we study the grammar
And we will study Grammar
- 8 fii al-ma[saa]=
in the evening
in the evening
- 9 ADM: [na'am]
Yes
Yes
- 10 AVC: =wa laa áhad min at-tulaab uriid-u žaalik.
and no one from the students want that
and none of the students wants that
- 11 (0.3)
- 12 ADM: na'am
yes
yes
- 13 AVC: fa::qaal-a lanaa al-óstaaž án >nátii
so said to us the teacher to come
So the teacher told us to go
- 14 élayka< (0.2) ħataa nashrah lakum al-mush:kilaah
to you (0.2) so we explain to you the problem
to you (0.2) and explain the problem to you
- 15 ADM: na'am, al-muħaađarah sawf-a †tantaqil
yes the lecture will move
Yes the lecture will move
- 16 élaa al-masaa
to the evening
to the evening

After a greeting sequence (omitted here), AVC starts off with a pre-pre² (Schegloff, 2007) in lines 1 and 2 followed by ADM's go-ahead response in line 3. After this short pre-sequence, AVC proceeds to outline the situation in lines 4–8 and in line 10 highlights the conflict between the planned teaching schedule and the students' preferences. This would be an opportunity for ADM to react but he provides a go-ahead signal in line 12, after which AVC emphasizes ADM's role in solving the issue in lines 13 and 14. However, in lines 15 and 16, ADM confirms the schedule change, not explicitly engaging with the request or AVC's report of students' discontent. It is worth noting that AVC implies the request of changing the schedule by outlining the situation and mentioning the conflict with the students' wishes though he does not explicitly request a change of lecture time, unlike the lower-level speakers. Even though the request is not immediately granted (in fact, there is further negotiation not shown here), AVC delays the main social action by giving background and implying the request.

The same holds true with responses to social actions, such as refusals. Advanced L2 speakers employ ample accounts and explanations without ever explicitly refusing, as in the role play example from Al-Gahtani and Roever (2011) in Excerpt 9 between two advanced ESL speakers (ADV1 and ADV2).

Excerpt 9: ESL refusal, advanced L2 speakers (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2011)

- [10 lines omitted]
- 1 ADV1: Just I can u if I just would like to use your laptop (0.7)
 2 to: finish my assignment if if you are if you are free and
 3 you don't have anything to do
 4 ADV2: oh:: (0.8) I'm really sorry ((name)) I'm really sorry because
 5 I have an assignment due tomorrow at 8 o'clock in the morning
 6 ADV1: [Oh]
 7 ADV2: [It's] already midnight now and (0.6) still have another
 8 two three hours to finish my assignment
 9 ADV1: [Oh]
 10 ADV2: [An] I'm really really tired an' I have to (send) it in
 11 tomorrow like I have to submit it tomorrow man
 12 ADV1: Ok [so]
 13 ADV2: [So] I'm really really sorry
 14 ADV1: Ok that's [me-]
 15 ADV2: [If you] could come back within (.) four hours?
 16 maybe? Cos probably I will finish within two three hours
 17 so come back after 4 hours

The excerpt begins with ADV1's request in lines 1–3. ADV2's response starts off with the change-of-state token “oh” indicating that he understands the interlocutor's predicament, followed by an ominous .8 second pause, the first element of a likely refusal in the response. He then apologizes and repeats his apology before providing accounts for his refusal up to line 11, concluding in line 13 with another apology. In line 14, ADV1 seems to accept the refusal but is cut off by ADV2 in line 15, making a suggestion for a resolution. As in Excerpt 8, ADV2 never outright refuses but lets the organization of his talk do the work of making it clear to the interlocutor that a refusal is being performed.

We have outlined preliminaries as a feature that can serve to distinguish different levels of IC qualitatively. There is also quantitative support for a developmental pathway for preliminaries. For example, Al-Gahtani and Roever (2014) compared four L2 Arabic proficiency groups undertaking a two-year intensive Arabic program, and found a steady increase in the occurrence of preliminaries in request interactions. Such preliminaries occurred in 21% of interactions with beginning-level speakers, 46% with intermediate-level speakers, 78% with high-intermediate speakers, and 96% with advanced speakers. Roever and Al-Gahtani (2017) showed that there was a significant and strong association ($\chi^2(6) = 41.07, p < .0001, V = .51$) between proficiency of ESL learners and three types of preliminaries: none, minimal, and extended. The majority of speakers at the beginning and low-intermediate levels did not use any preliminaries, whereas the majority at the

intermediate and advanced levels used extended preliminaries. Similarly, in a classroom study on disagreements with high-school age speakers of French as a second language, Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger (2011) found that advanced speakers were more likely to delay their disagreements through hesitations and prefaces whereas lower-level speakers invariably performed the disagreement immediately after the statement they disagreed with.

Although these findings support the existence of a developmental pathway for preliminaries, it is important to note that developmental levels are not categorical and L2 speakers may display performance at different developmental levels, which is typical of L2 development. This tendency, together with the grouping of L2 speakers by proficiency level, also points to a proficiency effect in the development of IC. The exact extent of overlap between proficiency and IC is uncertain, but Roever and Al-Gahtani's (2017) findings indicate a noteworthy (but by no means deterministic) relationship, with proficiency accounting for 51% of variance in preliminary moves. Although we caution against over-extending these findings, it is in principle possible to ascertain and assess levels of IC. Since such an assessment by necessity needs to happen through interaction, and since interaction is co-constructed between test takers and examiners, the examiner effect requires closer scrutiny.

Challenges of assessing IC: Examiner effects and co-construction

Studies of various forms of oral language interview have examined how these activities are organized and how effective they are as instruments of language assessment. Although the limitations of the interview format are widely acknowledged (van Lier, 1989; Young & He, 1998), language proficiency interviews (LPI) continue to be extensively used.³ One key research topic centers on how the interview format and the examiner's actions shape candidates' participation and consequently their opportunities for displaying IC (Brown, 2003; Lazaraton, 2002; Ross, 2007; Kasper & Ross, 2007).⁴ For example, one earlier line of research found that practices of interviewer accommodation predicted the awarded scores at the high and low range of proficiency (Ross, 1992, 2017; Ross & Berwick, 1992). Excerpt 10 shows how both parties work to solve a problem with the candidate's (C) understanding of the interviewer's (I) question.

Excerpt 10: Interviewer accommodation in LPI (Kasper & Ross, 2007, p. 2053-2054)

- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | I: | well >where are you from originally Mr Y.< |
| 2 | | (1.0) |
| 3 | I: | >where are you from originally.< |
| 4 | C: | regionally. |
| 5 | I: | uh hum |
| 6 | C: | what regionally means? |
| 7 | I: | your hometown |

Here the problem with understanding persists after the interviewer repeats the core question verbatim. The candidate's first response shows a mishearing of "originally", but the interviewer confirms the candidate's hearing and so lets the mishearing pass. This, however, does not solve the problem with understanding as the candidate then requests clarification of the word "regionally", which the interviewer provides with a paraphrase. It is apparent here that the candidate's other-initiations of repair reveal two lexical problems. Although the first may be a hearing problem, the second clearly indicates a gap in his L2 lexicon. The candidate deals with these problems by using two practices of "restricted repair initiations", repetition and an explicit request for clarification. "Restricted repair initiations" specifically locate the problem (Dingemans, Kendrick, & Enfield, 2016). He also uses the two practices in an ordered fashion; first a weaker version (which leaves it open whether the problem is one of hearing or understanding) and then, when that attempt fails, a stronger version that identifies the problem as one of understanding (Svennevig, 2008).

One important take-away from this excerpt, and the large literature on other-initiated repair sequences in L2 talk (Gardner & Wagner, 2004; Hellermann, 2011; Kurhila, 2004), and LPIs specifically (Kasper & Ross, 2007; Kim & Suh, 1998), is that language knowledge and IC are kinds of competence. The L2 speaker's problems of understanding indicate limitations in his English lexicon, that is, his L2 linguistic knowledge. The two repair initiations show that he recruits relevant methods from his IC, that is, the generic, language independent repair apparatus, to address those problems. It can therefore be argued that Excerpt 10 supports multicomponent models of communicative competence, which also consider linguistic competence as being distinct from other components. As Carroll (2004) notes, "'interactional competence' lies at a deeper, more foundational level than does traditionally defined linguistic competence and may well represent the crucible within which linguistic skills are forged" (p. 212).⁵

Excerpt 10 illustrates yet another regular feature of candidate's other-initiations of repair in LPIs, which is that such initiations typically come in the response space following interviewer questions (Kim & Suh, 1998). The problem, then, has something to do with that question, and it must be addressed so that the question can be answered. But the problem is not always lexical, and indeed does not have to be related to the candidate's lack of relevant knowledge, linguistic or other, at all. Instead it can be found in the sequential organization of the talk, such as unexpected topic shifts, or in a particular question format. Excerpts 11 and 12 offer some examples. Excerpt 11 comes from an in-house corporate LPI.

Excerpt 11: Interviewer topic shift in LPI (Ross LPI Corpus, unpublished data)

- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| 1 | I: | Are you >going to:< eat anything <u>special</u> (.) for |
| 2 | | new year's? |
| 3 | C: | At ho[me? |
| 4 | I: | [mm |
| 5 | C: | Yes. Mm, saʃshimiʃ. |
| 6 | I: | Sashimi. |
| 7 | C: | My- my house, um my house is near (.) Ja-, Japa, |

- 8 Japan Sea, so, um, sashi-, uhm, sashimi is uh very
 9 fresh.
- 10 I: What kind of sashimi?
 11 C: I like, uh, hamachi.
- 12 I: How do you say that in English?
 13 (0.2)
 14 C: °I don't know.°
- 15 I: Maybe, mackerel. I'm not sure.
 16 (0.8)
 17 I: Did you hear the: result of the So-, South Korean
 18 elections?
 19 (.)
- 20 C: → Uh, pardon?
 21 I: Did you hear about the result of the South Korean
 22 (.) presidential elections?
 23 (.)
- 24 C: Korean president?
 25 (3.0)
 26 C: This morning, I, I watch, uh, TV, and I hear, but
 27 I, I forgot his name.

The interviewer shifts from the ongoing topic of fish for New Year's and what the candidate's favorite sashimi is called in English to the topic of elections in South Korea (lines 17–18). Following the candidate's other-initiation of repair (line 20, "Uh, pardon?"), the interviewer revises the question with more explicit formulations ("hear" to "hear about", "South Korean elections" to "South Korean (.) presidential elections") and makes "presidential" more salient with a preceding micropause. Yet the candidate shows continued problems with grasping the question as he checks his hearing (line 24) but gets no response. After a lengthy gap of silence, he answers the question affirmatively (lines 26–27).

In order to assess the candidate's understanding problems in relation to the preceding talk, we will consider the competencies that he displays in that sequence. The important point is that the candidate shows in various ways how he infers the scope and import of the interviewer's utterances beyond their literal meaning. His understanding check "at home?" exhibits how he interprets the location implied in the interviewer's question, that is, "at home" as opposed to "at a restaurant" (line 3). With the confirmation received he then answers the interviewer's question with two actions, first giving an affirmative answer and then specifying the category of food he is going to enjoy (line 5). The specification shows that he understands the trajectory of the interviewer's question as extending beyond a confirming or disconfirming response and de facto pre-empts the projected next question, "what are you going to eat?" Similarly, when the interviewer repeats "Sashimi." (line 6), the candidate does not take the turn as a mere request for confirmation. In fact, his account for why his family has sashimi for New Year's implies a confirmation without explicitly offering one. We also note that he unproblematically responds to the next questions (lines 10 and 12) and shows no difficulty following the interviewer's shift to a language-related question, even if he claims not to know the answer. From his effective participation in the

sequence, we can infer that his trouble with making sense of the interviewer's next question is related to the unannounced change of topic.

In fact, the other-initiations of repair with "pardon" in Excerpt 11 resonate with the use of "open-class next-turn repair initiators" by L1 adult speakers of British and American English. In his analysis of such cases, Drew (1997) describes that disjunctive topic shifts in the prior turn provide a sequential environment for unspecific repair initiation. Excerpt 12 is a case from his collection.

Excerpt 12: Disjunctive topic shift in casual conversation (Drew, 1997, p. 75)

- 1 Lesley: How are you keeping.
- 2 Patrick: Oh I'm very [well thanks]
- 3 Lesley: [.h h h h h h h Are you- are you keeping yourself busy,
- 4 Patrick: Ooo y(h)e [s m(h)y(h)y goodness. [()].
- 5 Lesley: [.hhh [Yes I kno:w hhuh heh=
- 6 Patrick: =([
- 7 Lesley: → [.hhh Gordon's at Newcastle no:w,
- 8 (0.7)
- 9 Patrick: → Sorry?
- 10 Lesley: .hh.tlk Gordon is at New [castle.
- 11 Patrick: [Is he, Ye-: s,

Here Lesley abruptly shifts the topic from Patrick to her son Gordon. What makes this shift "abrupt" and therefore difficult to catch for the recipient is that it comes unannounced, that is without a marker that advises the recipient of the upcoming shift (e.g., *anyway*, *by the way*) or by shifting the topic stepwise (Jefferson, 1984). The same kinds of disjunctive topic shifts make it hard for the candidate in Excerpt 11 to understand the examiner's new questions, and he responds with the same practice of other-initiating repair; that is, an open repair initiation that treats the entire turn it addresses as problematic rather than locating a specific problem – unlike the restricted repair initiations we saw in Excerpt 10. In Excerpts 11 and 12, the speaker of the problem turn repeats a close version of the turn and in this way shows that they understand the repair initiation to be addressing the entire turn. This example shows that language testing professionals need to know that interactional practices like disjunctive topic shifts often pose understanding problems for linguistically and interactionally competent speakers. In comparable environments, L2 speakers' understanding problems are sequentially induced and would be misdiagnosed if they were attributed to deficits in linguistic knowledge or processing problems. Such professional knowledge offers a safeguard to protect L2 speakers from being held to unrealistically higher standards of understanding in ongoing interaction than L1 speakers.

In topic-continuous talk too, understanding problems can originate in the interviewer's question formation rather than the candidate's inadequate knowledge or processing abilities. Some types of oral language tests prescribe standardized question formats as a measure to increase reliability. When these formats are not adjusted to the particulars of the talk, the question can be difficult to grasp. Excerpt 13 and Excerpt 14 are from the

IELTS Speaking Test and reported by Seedhouse and Egbert (2006). In Excerpt 13, the Candidate (C), a doctor, has described a stethoscope to the Examiner (E).

Excerpt 13: Examiner question formation in IELTS Speaking (Seedhouse & Egbert, 2006, p. 29)

- 257 C: =so that really convinced me that (.) this is a key instrument
 258 for us (0.6) and [I]
 259 E: [yes]
 260 C: think it's really helpful in diagnosing the diseases (0.3)
 261 E: right (0.3) thank you (0.7) em (.) eh does everyone you
 262 know use this piece of equipment (0.3)
 263 C: → eh sorry? (0.8)
 264 E: does everyone you know (0.5) use this piece of equi[pmnt]
 265 C: → [ah]
 266 yes as I told you that eh we (.) even in dramas and every person
 267 have eh supposed to face a doctor som- eh (0.3) at one or the
 268 other time (0.6) so I don't' think so (.) that this is an instrument
 269 eh (0.3) which is not well known by the other people (0.5)

The candidate has described and assessed (in the CA sense of taken a position towards) the usefulness of a standard medical instrument, a task well within the remit of his professional knowledge. The assessment makes a closing relevant and indeed the examiner closes the sequence in his response turn (line 5). Continuing the topic of the stethoscope, his next question asks “does everyone you know use this piece of equipment”. The question generates an other-initiation of repair with an open repair initiator: “eh sorry?” (line 7). In response, and following IELTS protocol, the examiner repeats the same question formulation, the only modification being a pause before the verb phrase. Whether the different temporal structuring or the mere opportunity to listen to the question again enables the candidate's understanding cannot be known, but he now starts his answer in transitional overlap, that is, just before the examiner's turn is entirely complete (Jefferson, 1984), and by claiming a change in his understanding (Heritage, 1984) before he launches into an extended response. However, he does not actually answer the examiner's question whether everyone he knows *uses* “this piece of equipment” but rather asserts that the instrument is “well known”. Possibly the change of the question content shows the candidate's effort to “normalize” a question that stretches the boundaries of common sense.

Excerpt 14 provides a contrast case. The candidate again shows himself as topic expert as he describes a plough and how it is operated.

Excerpt 14: Modified examiner question formation IELTS Speaking (Seedhouse & Egbert, 2006, pp. 30-31)

- 118 C: the plough is used to (.) it's not very simple (.) it's not very
 119 sophisticated (.) but we call it appropriate technology (.) so it can
 120 be used (.) i'm sure it's very widely used in Botswana (.) because it's

- 121 always pulled by oxen (.) they are pulled by oxen (.) needed to (.)
 122 E: → does everyone you know use a plough like that to (.) in the village
 123 where you live?
 124 C: er (.) I could say sixty percent of people use the plough (.)
 125 because they can not afford to pay for tractor

As in Excerpt 13 the examiner asks the prescribed topic-continuous question “does everyone you know use [equipment X]”, but with the modification (among others) “in the village where you live”.

The question gets a relevant answer in the next turn, showing that the limitation of “everyone you know” to the candidate’s village renders the question meaningful and answerable for the candidate. It also shows the candidate’s orientation to the preference for an affirmative answer, as the positive polarity question prefers a “yes” answer. “Sixty percent” is, of course, not “everyone”. The delay at the beginning of the turn, the epistemic downgrade “I could say”, and the absence of an overt “no” display the candidate’s sensitivity to the preference structure of polar questions (Raymond, 2003) and hence to the interrelations of grammar, sequence organization and turn design.

The candidate’s answer in Excerpt 14 thus displays his understanding of the question and shows him as a competent participant in the question-answer sequence. Yet it would be highly problematic to assess the candidate in Excerpt 13 as less competent. With the open repair initiation, he deals effectively with a question that would likely puzzle many competent recipients and successfully produces a normalized answer.⁶

This section has highlighted some of the many ways in which the examiner in OPIs affords and limits response opportunities for candidates. It also underscores the need to consider candidates’ demonstrated ICs when assessing manifest understanding difficulties. These include the ways in which candidates show their understanding not only of the topical content of a question but also its contextual implications (such as when they answer a polar question with an extended relevant response rather than just a confirmation or disconfirmation), or their handling of problematic understandings by selecting specific methods for initiating repair.

Implications and perspectives

In this paper, we defined and characterized the concept of interactional competence from the perspective of CA, and documented in illustrative cases from different data sets how IC is in evidence in L2 interaction. First of all, with a focus on two generic interactional methods, prefaces and pre-sequences, we showed how different levels of IC are observable and measurable. This analysis indicates that speaking tests can be set up to make aspects of test takers’ IC visible and scorable, for example, by eliciting request sequences and assessing the test taker’s use of pre-sequences and action formats (Youn, 2015). Measurements of interactional abilities expand the range of conclusions that can be drawn from speaking tests and support inferences as to test takers’ ability to engage in interactive talk with others, which is an ability that is currently not explicitly assessed but commonly and incorrectly assumed by users to be inferable from scores.

Second, we provided sample data to exemplify a fundamental property of interaction, namely that speakers’ contributions unavoidably influence each other (“co-construction”).

Specifically we showed cases in which problems of understanding are induced by examiners' disjunctive topic shifts and ill-fitting question formats. Such evidence has several implications for the practices of oral language tests. First of all, test protocols need to require examiners to flexibly adjust their actions (questions, instructions, etc.) and action formats to the local contingencies of the unfolding assessment talk. Second, examiners need to be trained in providing transitions between tasks that orient the examinee to the upcoming activity (Ross, 2017). Finally, examinees' repair initiations in response to examiners' turns need to be inspected for the possibility that the trouble is attributable to the placement or formation of the turn rather than limited L2 knowledge or processing problems. These practices will prevent examinees' IC from being underrated and contribute to strengthening a validity argument.

An IC perspective also casts new light on fluency, a standard measure in the assessment of speaking. Although it is true that L2 speakers with a limited linguistic repertoire may struggle to produce their turns and may not show smooth turn transitions when responding to the interlocutor, filled and unfilled pauses and other forms of "disfluencies" may not be adequately characterized as speech production phenomena. Interactionally competent speakers regularly use such temporal variables as interactional resources to delay taking a turn or pushing back material in a turn, or in response to interlocutor actions which are unexpected or unconventional in normal talk.

Attention to the temporal dimension of interaction highlights the need for the assessment of talk to consider other vocal resources than language. Future research on IC as an assessment construct should, however, cast the net even wider. When participants in interaction have visual access, they regularly mobilize a range of semiotic resources (e.g., gestures, gaze, body position and movement, objects and space) to accomplish the activity at hand (e.g., Mondada, 2014). These resources are methodically used by linguistically competent participants, whether L1 or L2 speakers, to coordinate turn taking, project upcoming actions, display understanding and affective stance, and so forth. A fast-growing literature shows that L2 speakers at any level of language competence use embodied conduct in similar ways, in ordinary conversation as well as in different types of classroom activity (Burch, 2014; Eskildsen & Wagner, 2013; Kasper & Burch, 2016; Kääntä, 2014; Markee & Kunitz, 2013; Mori & Hasegawa, 2009, among many others). This extensive evidence does not support the widely held view that embodiment in L2 talk has a largely "compensatory" function, making up for deficient language knowledge. A few studies examine how participants in different test formats use gaze, gesture, and head movements to manage turn-taking in English as a Foreign Language multiparty peer oral proficiency tests (Greer & Potter, 2008), storytelling in Japanese ACTFL OPIs (Tomimaga, 2013, 2017), and mediation sequences in dynamic assessment in L2 French (van Compernelle, 2013). Multimodal CA offers the conceptual and methodological tools, and an extensive body of studies, to advance a research agenda on IC as a resource and target in interactive language assessment.

Acknowledgements

We thank three anonymous reviewers for their detailed and perspicacious comments on an earlier version. Space constraints did not allow us to incorporate their suggestions as fully as we would have liked. We also gratefully acknowledge the guest editors' recommendations for improving the article's audience design.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Carsten Roever  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1055-6331>

Notes

1. Monologic tasks set up as speaking to an audience (imaginary or real) do require recipient design of talk, which is an element of IC. However, they severely under-represent the IC construct.
2. A pre-pre (“preliminary to preliminaries”) is a move that precedes a pre-sequence, and is usually specific to the type of core social action; e.g., “I have a favor to ask” before a request sequence.
3. Pair and group test formats (Gan, 2010; Greer & Potter, 2008; O’Sullivan, 2002; Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2011) are increasingly used to overcome these limitations.
4. Correspondingly, research on peer oral language tests has examined interlocutor effects on other participants’ performance (Davis, 2009; Galaczi, 2014; Lam, 2016; May, 2011).
5. Empirical evidence for the primacy of interaction over language is discussed by Levinson (2006) and Schegloff (2006). There is now an extensive body of research showing how participants’ interactional competences provide the infrastructure for language learning in social interaction (Eskildsen & Majlesi, 2018; Lee, 2006).
6. The ill-fitting question format in Excerpt 13 raises the issue of standardization in interactional language tests. Since further consideration of this important problem is beyond the scope of this paper, we refer readers to the extensive conversation-analytic research on interaction in standardized survey interviews (Maynard & Schaeffer, 2013).

References

- Al-Gahtani, S., & Roever, C. (2009). Role-playing L2 requests: head acts and sequential organization. [Unpublished data].
- Al-Gahtani, S., & Roever, C. (2011). Refusals in second language interaction. [Unpublished data].
- Al-Gahtani, S., & Roever, C. (2012). Role-playing L2 requests: Head acts and sequential organization. *Applied Linguistics*, 33(1), 42–65.
- Al-Gahtani, S., & Roever, C. (2013). ‘Hi doctor, give me handouts’: Low-proficiency speakers and requests. *ELT Journal*, 67(4), 413–424.
- Al-Gahtani, S., & Roever, C. (2014). Preference structure in L2 Arabic requests. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 11, 619–643.
- Brown, A. (2003). Interviewer variation and the co-construction of speaking proficiency. *Language Testing*, 20, 1, 1–25.
- Burch, A. R. (2014). Pursuing information: A conversation analytic perspective on communication strategies. *Language Learning*, 64(3), 651–684.
- Carroll, D. (2000). Precision timing in novice-to-novice L2 conversations. *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, 11(1), 67–110.

- Carroll, D. (2004). Restarts in novice turn beginnings: Disfluencies or interactional achievements? In R. Gardner & J. Wagner (Eds.), *Second language conversations* (pp. 201–220). London: Continuum.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Davis, L. (2009). The influence of interlocutor proficiency in a paired oral assessment. *Language Testing*, 26(3), 367–396.
- De Jong, N. H., Steinel, M. P., Florijn, A. F., Schoonen, R., & Hulstijn, J. H. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34(1), 5–34.
- De Jong, N. H., Steinel, M. P., Florijn, A., Schoonen, R., & Hulstijn, J. H. (2013). Linguistic skills and speaking fluency in a second language. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 34(5), 893–916.
- Dingemanse, M., Kendrick, K. H., & Enfield, N. J. (2016). A coding scheme for other-initiated repair across languages. *Open Linguistics*, 2, 35–46. doi: 10.1515/opli-2016-0002
- Dingemanse, M., Roberts, S. G., & Baranova, J., et al. (2015). Universal principles in the repair of communication problems. *PLoS ONE*, 10(9): e0136100. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0136100
- Drew, P. (1997). ‘Open’ class repair initiators in response to sequential sources of troubles in conversation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 28, 69–101.
- Drew, P. (2013). Turn design. In J. Sidnell & T. Stivers (Eds.), *The handbook of conversation analysis* (pp. 131–149). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Drew, P., & Couper-Kuhlen, E. (Eds.) (2014). *Requesting in social interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Enfield, N. J., & Stivers, T. (Eds.). (2007). *Person reference in interaction: Linguistic, cultural, and social perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eskildsen, S. W., & Majlesi, A. R. (Eds.) (2018). Learnables and teachables in second language talk: Advancing a social reconceptualization of central SLA tenets. Introduction to the special issue. *The Modern Language Journal*, 102(S1), 3–10.
- Eskildsen, S. W., & Wagner, J. (2013). Recurring and shared gestures in the L2 classroom: Resources for teaching and learning. *European Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 139–161.
- ETS (2014). *TOEFL speaking rubrics*. Princeton: ETS. Retrieved from www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/toefl_speaking_rubrics.pdf
- Galaczi, E. D. (2014). Interactional competence across proficiency levels: How do speakers manage interaction in paired speaking tests? *Applied Linguistics*, 35(5), 553–574.
- Gan, Z. (2010). Interaction in group oral assessment: A case study of higher- and lower-scoring students. *Language Testing*, 27(4), 585–602.
- Gardner, R., & Wagner, J. (Eds.) (2004). *Second language conversations*. London: Continuum.
- Grabowski, K. (2013). Investigating the construct validity of a role-play test designed to measure grammatical and pragmatic knowledge at multiple proficiency levels. In S. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 149–171). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Greer, T., & Potter, H. (2008). Turn-taking practices in multi-party EFL oral proficiency tests. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 5, 295–318.
- Hayashi, M., Raymond, G., & Sidnell, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Conversational repair and human understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- He, A. W., & Young, R. (1998). Language proficiency interviews: A discourse approach. In R. Young & A. W. He (Eds.), *Talking and testing. Discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency* (pp. 1–24). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Hellermann, J. (2011). Members’ methods, members’ competencies: Looking for evidence of language learning in longitudinal investigations of other-initiated repair. In J. K. Hall, J. Hellermann & S. Pekarek Doehler (Eds.), *L2 interactional competence and development* (pp. 147–172). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Heritage, J. (1984). *Garfinkel and ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected readings* (pp. 269–293). Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- IELTS (2017). *Speaking band descriptors (public version)*. Retrieved from: www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/speaking-band-descriptors.ashx?la=en
- Ishida, M. (2011). Engaging in another person's telling as a recipient in L2 Japanese: Development of interactional competence during one-year study-abroad. In G. Pallotti & J. Wagner (Eds.), *L2 Learning as social practice: Conversation-analytic perspectives* (pp. 45–85). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i, National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- Jefferson, G. (1984). On stepwise transition from talk about a trouble to inappropriately next – positioned matters. In J. M. Atkinson & J. Heritage (Eds.), *Structures of social action: Studies in conversation analysis* (pp. 191–222). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kääntä, L. (2014). From noticing to initiating correction: Students' epistemic displays in instructional interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 66, 86–105.
- Kasper, G. (2013). Managing task uptake in oral proficiency interviews. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 258–287). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kasper, G., & Burch, A. R. (2016). Focus on form in the wild. In R. A. van Compernelle & J. McGregor (Eds.), *Authenticity, language, and interaction in second language contexts* (pp. 198–232). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Kasper, G., & Ross, S. (2003). Repetition as a source of miscommunication in oral proficiency interviews. In J. House, G. Kasper & S. Ross (Eds.), *Misunderstanding in social life* (pp. 82–106). London: Longman/Pearson Education.
- Kasper, G., & Ross, S. J. (2007). Multiple questions in oral proficiency interviews. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 2045–2070.
- Kasper, G., & Ross, S. J. (2013). Assessing second language pragmatics: An overview and introductions. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 1–40). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kasper, G., & Youn, S. J. (2017). Transforming instruction to activity: Roleplay in language assessment. *Applied Linguistics Review*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2017-0020>
- Kim, K.-h., & Suh, K.-h. (1998). Confirmation sequences as interactional resources in Korean language proficiency interviews. In R. Young & A. W. He (Eds.), *Talking and testing. Discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency* (pp. 297–353). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Kim, Y. (2016). Development of L2 interactional competence: Being a story recipient in L2 English conversation. *Discourse and Cognition*, 23(1), 1–29.
- Kurhila, S. (2004). *Second language interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lam, D. M. K. (2016). Contriving authentic interaction: Task implementation and engagement in school-based speaking assessment in Hong Kong. In G. Yu & Y. Jin (Eds.), *Assessing Chinese learners of English* (pp. 38–60). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lazaraton, A. (2002). *A qualitative approach to the validation of oral language tests*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, Y.-A. (2006). Towards respecification of communicative competence: Condition of L2 instruction or its objective? *Applied Linguistics*, 27, 349–376.
- Levelt, W. (1989). *Speaking: from intention to articulation*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Levinson, S. C. (2006). On the human 'interaction engine'. In N. J. Enfield & S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Roots of human sociality* (pp. 39–69). Oxford: Berg.
- Markee, N., & Kunitz, S. (2013). Doing planning and task performance in second language acquisition: An ethnomethodological respecification. *Language Learning*, 63, 629–664.
- May, L. (2011). Interactional competence in a paired speaking test: Features salient to raters. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 8(2), 127–145.

- Maynard, D. W., & Schaeffer, N. C. (2013). Conversation analysis and interaction in standardized survey interviews. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*. Malden, NJ: Blackwell. doi: 10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1309
- McNamara, T. F. (1996). *Measuring second language performance*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Mehan, H. (1979). *Learning lessons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mondada, L. (2014). The local constitution of multimodal resources for social interaction. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 65, 137–156.
- Mori, J., & Hasegawa, A. (2009). Doing being a foreign language speaker in a classroom: Embodiment of cognitive states as social events. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 47(1), 65–94.
- Okada, Y. (2010). Role-play in oral proficiency interviews: Interactive footing and interactional competencies. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(6), 1647–1668.
- Okada, Y., & Greer, T. (2013). Pursuing a relevant response in oral proficiency interview role plays. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 288–310). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- O’Sullivan, B. (2002). Learner acquaintanceship and oral proficiency test pair-task performance. *Language Testing*, 19, 277–295.
- Pearson Education (2012). *PTE Academic score guide*. Retrieved from http://pearsonpte.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/PTEA_Score_Guide.pdf.
- Pekarek Doehler, S., & Pochon-Berger, E. (2011). Developing ‘methods’ for interaction : disagreement sequences in French L2. In J. K. Hall, J. Hellermann & S. Pekarek Doehler (Eds.), *L2 interactional competence and development* (pp. 206–243). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Pekarek Doehler, S., & Pochon-Berger, E. (2015). The development of L2 interactional competence: Evidence from turn-taking organization, sequence organization, repair organization and preference organization. In T. Cadierno & S. W. Eskildsen (Eds.), *Usage-based perspectives on second language learning* (pp. 233–268). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Raymond, G. (2003). Grammar and social organization: Yes/no interrogatives and the structure of responding. *American Sociological Review*, 68, 939–967.
- Roever, C. (2005). *Testing ESL pragmatics*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Roever, C., & Al-Gahtani, S. (2017, March). *Dispreference and development of Interactional Competence*. Paper presented at the conference of the American Association of Applied Linguistics Association, Portland, OR.
- Ross, S. (1992). Accommodative questions in oral proficiency interviews. *Language Testing*, 9, 173–186.
- Ross, S. (1998). Divergent frame interpretations in Oral Proficiency Interview interaction. In R. Young & A. W. He (Eds.), *Talking and testing. Discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency* (pp. 333–353). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ross, S. J. (2007). A comparative task-in-interaction analysis of OPI backsliding. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 2017–2044.
- Ross, S. J. (2017). *Interviewing for language proficiency: Interaction and interpretation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ross, S., & Berwick, R. (1992). The discourse of accommodation in oral proficiency interviews. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 14, 159–176.
- Ross, S. J., & O’Connell, S. P. (2013). The situation with complication as a site for strategic competence. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 311–326). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Sandlund, E., & Sundqvist, P. (2011). Managing task-related trouble in L2 oral proficiency tests: Contrasting interaction data and rater assessment. *Novitas-ROYAL – Research on Youth and Language* 5, 91–120.
- Sandlund, E., Sundqvist, P., & Nyroos, L. (2016). Testing L2 talk: A review of empirical studies on second-language oral proficiency testing. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 10(1), 14–29.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2006) Interaction: The infrastructure for social institutions, the natural ecological niche for language, and the arena in which culture is enacted. In N. J. Enfield & S. C. Levinson (Eds.), *Roots of human society* (pp. 70–96). Oxford: Berg.
- Schegloff, E. A. (2007). *Sequence organization in interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seedhouse, P. (2012). What kind of interaction receives high and low ratings in Oral Proficiency Interviews? *English Profile Journal*, 3(1), e2. doi: 10.1017/S2041536212000025
- Seedhouse, P. (2013). Oral proficiency interviews as varieties of interaction. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 199–219). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Seedhouse, P., & Egbert, M. (2006). The interactional organisation of the IELTS speaking test. *IELTS Research Reports*, 6, 161–206.
- Seedhouse, P., & Supakorn, S. (2015). Topic-as-script and topic-as-action in language assessment and teaching. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 6(3), 393–413.
- Sidnell, J. (Ed.) (2009). *Conversation analysis: Comparative perspectives*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidnell, J. & Stivers, T. (Eds.) (2013), *The handbook of conversation analysis*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Svennevig, J. (2008). Trying the easiest solution first in other-initiation of repair. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40(2), 333–348.
- Tominaga, W. (2013). The development of extended turns and storytelling in the Japanese oral proficiency interview. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 220–257). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tominaga, W. (2017). Assessing interactional competence: Storytelling in the Japanese oral proficiency interview. In T. Greer, M. Ishida & Y. Tateyama (Eds.), *Interactional competence in Japanese as an additional language* (pp. 211–249). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i, National Foreign Language Resource Center.
- van Compernelle, R. A. (2013). Interactional competence and the dynamic assessment of L2 pragmatic abilities. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 327–353). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Lier, L. (1989). Reeling, writhing, drawling, stretching, and fainting in coils: Oral proficiency interviews as conversation. *TESOL Quarterly*, 23, 489–508.
- Wagner, J., & Gardner, R. (2004). Introduction. In R. Gardner & J. Wagner (Eds.), *Second language conversations* (pp. 1–17). London: Continuum.
- Walters, F. S. (2009). A Conversation Analysis-informed test of L2 aural pragmatic comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(1), 29–54.
- Walters, S. F. (2013). Interfaces between a discourse completion test and a conversation analysis informed test of L2 pragmatic competence. In S. J. Ross & G. Kasper (Eds.), *Assessing second language pragmatics* (pp. 172–195). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wong, J. (2000). Delayed next turn repair initiation in native-nonnative speaker English conversation. *Applied Linguistics*, 21(2), 244–267.
- Wong, J. (2004). Some preliminary thoughts on delay as an interactional resource. In R. Gardner & J. Wagner (Eds.), *Second language conversations* (pp. 114–131). London: Continuum.

- Youn, S. J. (2015). Validity argument for assessing L2 pragmatics in interaction using mixed methods. *Language Testing*, 32(2), 199–225.
- Young, R., & Halleck, G. B. (1998). “Let them eat cake!” or how to avoid losing your head in cross-cultural conversations. In R. Young & A. W. He (Eds.), *Talking and testing: Discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency* (pp. 355–382). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Young, R., & He, A. W. (1998). *Talking and testing: Discourse approaches to the assessment of oral proficiency*. Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins.
- Young, R. F., & Miller, E. R. (2004). Learning as changing participation: Discourse roles in ESL writing conferences. *The Modern Language Journal*, 88(4), 519–535.