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A conversation analytic investigation into L2 classroom interaction and informal formative assessment

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Abstract

With the reconceptualization of Formative Assessment (FA) as a much more complicated, a locally situated and a dynamic process, it is now acknowledged that FA does not only involve formal practices but also informal ones which occur in and through interaction. This study adopts the term “informal formative assessment” (Ruiz-Primo, 2011) to refer to any of those FA practices emerging in and through language classroom interaction. Although the informal dimension to FA has been discussed in theory, how informal FA emerges in practice in naturally-occurring classroom interaction has not been explored adequately. While classroom interaction research neglects the relevance of their findings to FA practices, classroom-based assessment research is heavily concerned with formal FA disregarding the place of interaction in assessment practices. Aiming to bring the two kind of research together, this article, in a single case analysis, proposes Conversation Analysis (CA) for illustrating how FA informally emerges as an interactional practice in an L2 classroom. Sample data is presented from a corpus of video-recordings of an EFL class (55 classroom hours) in a preparatory school at a Turkish state university.

Keywords: informal formative assessment, classroom interaction, conversation analysis

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Informal Formative Assessment and Classroom Interaction

Formative Assessment (FA) commonly defined as “assessment-for-learning” has many aspects not yet discovered. Compared to the other aspects of testing and assessment, FA has been neglected even though the interface between teaching and assessment has long been recognized (Hatipoğlu, 2010, 2013, 2015b, 2016; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000). This is clear in the lack of consensus on the definition of FA. Black and Wiliam (1998b) have presented a definition that is most commonly referred to: “All those activities undertaken by teachers - and by their students in assessing themselves - that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities” (p.140). They later restated their definition as

Practice in a classroom is formative to the extent that evidence about student achievement is elicited, interpreted, and used by teachers, learners, or their peers, to make decisions about the next steps in instruction that are likely to be better, or better founded, than the decisions they would have taken in the absence of the evidence that was elicited. (Black & Wiliam, 2009, p.9)

Another common definition is provided by the Assessment Reform Group as “Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there” (ARG, 2002). However, in order to clarify the ambiguities and misunderstandings deriving from the definitions, an international conference on assessment for learning in Dunedin in 2009 draws on the discussion at two earlier conferences and critically examine the prevailing definitions by summing up the available ideas in a new definition to better highlight the central focus on student learning: “Assessment for Learning is part of everyday practice by students, teachers and peers that seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning” (Klenowski, 2009, p.264).

The revisited definition of FA at the conference (Klenowski, 2009) is more comprehensive and distinct than others in bringing out five aspects of FA or assessment for learning. One is that it uses the term “everyday practice” to emphasize the interactive and dialogic nature of teaching and learning. The second aspect is that the definition lists “students” first followed by teachers and peers as they are the ultimate goal of FA which should assist them in their learning although it is the teachers who carry out the practices for FA. The other aspect is that it employs the terms “seeks, reflects upon and responds to” to underline the active nature of FA which involves not only the process of obtaining evidence of student understanding but also interpreting and acting upon this evidence. Black and Wiliam (1998a) also emphasize that for assessment to be formative and more specifically, for feedback to exist, the information about the gap between students’ current level of performance and desired level is used to close or modify the gap by making instructional adjustments. Otherwise, the information about students’ present learning state on its own cannot function as truly feedback as the original meaning of “feedback” also suggests that the information generated is used to affect future performance (Wiliam, 2011). Therefore, there are two dimensions to FA at the most basic level- one is the means through which information

is generated about students' learning state in relation to the desired goal and the other is the means through which the information is used to make decisions that would enhance ongoing learning. In the adjustments of the learning processes, FA occurs in "moments of contingency" (Black & Wiliam, 2009, p.12). These moments of contingency may require further intervention which should involve "an incursion into the representation and thought processes of the pupil to accelerate a breakthrough in understanding a new point of view or the shaping of a notion which can immediately become operative" (Perrenoud, 1998, p.97).

The other two aspects that the definition underlines are that it clearly states the various sources of evidence (i.e. information from dialogue, demonstration and observation) to show that these sources can be non-verbal as well as verbal behaviours and thus, can take place during both planned and unplanned events throughout the ongoing instructional activity and that the information provided by these sources are used to "enhance ongoing learning" by offering students the necessary help not by simply advising them to do better but by actively engaging students in a remedial work even if this work does not guarantee a complete solution (Klenowski, 2009).

Considering the FA practices in language classrooms in particular, the aspects of assessment for learning highlighted in the definition reflect those elements of formative language assessment reconsidered after the "social turn" in second language acquisition (Block, 2003; Firth & Wagner, 1997). Formative language assessment has been reconceptualised in theory as it is now recognized that unlike standardised formal assessment, formative language assessment (1) is locally situated and dynamic, (2) is co-constructed in classroom interaction and hence, is not only about language tests and paper-and-pencil procedures, (3) involves not only individual learning outcome or performance but also collective performance, (4) is integrated with teaching, (5) spontaneously and informally achieved, (6) is not simply about giving feedback in feedback/evaluation move of the IRF/E exchanges (Initiation-Response- Feedback/Evaluation) (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) since not all evaluation moves can function truly as formative, and (7) places equal emphasis both on teachers and students as agent and decision-makers (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2009; Leung & Mohan, 2004; McNamara, 2001; Sherris, 2011; Whitehead, 2007). Similarly, Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2000) also state that

The teacher's knowledge as a result of class-based assessment is not documented in any written (e.g., curriculum) document or formal way (e.g., minutes of meetings) but appears, nonetheless, to be highly significant in the teacher's decision-making process about language development, attainment and ability of individual pupils ... (p. 231)

The revisited definition by the international conference (Klenowski, 2009) and the reconceptualization of FA in language classrooms underline the importance of interaction in and through which FA practices emerge. It is now recognized that "classroom assessment is socially constructed through interaction and as such the quality of the assessment is dependent on the interaction per se" (Anton, 2015, p.74). That is, FA is as much an informal process as a formal one and it is the study of those informal processes that are neglected. Because of the emphasis on formal FA, teachers consider FA practices as something extra and unrealistic and feel a burden on themselves (Black & Wiliam, 1998a) but if they reconsider what they already

do in the classroom, they will figure out that they are continuously and spontaneously assessing their learners. With regard to this, Ruiz-Primo (2011) asserts that “much of what teachers and students do in the classroom can be described as potential assessments that can provide evidence about the students’ level of understanding” (p.15). As well as assessments and tests formally applied for formative purposes, everyday instructional activities enacted in and through classroom interaction can also serve the purpose of FA.

A number of terms have been used to make a distinction between formal and planned FA and informal and spontaneous FA practices. Ellis (2003) comes up with incidental FA in relation to planned FA which involves direct testing of language knowledge and describes it as being “implemented through the instructional conversations that arise between teachers and students during normal classroom pedagogical activity” (Ellis, 2003, p. 314). Sherris (2011, p.59) uses the term “spontaneous formative language assessment” to explain those practices of FA that take place spontaneously through interaction in language classrooms. Finally, Ruiz-Primo (2011) employs the expression “informal formative assessment” to reframe much of classroom interaction as “assessment conversations, or dialogic interactions or exchanges, which continuously happen in the classroom” and describes it as an “unceremonious type of formative assessment” (p.15). For the purposes of this study, the term “informal formative assessment” is adopted to refer to any of those FA practices emerging in language classroom interaction. This term is preferred over incidental and spontaneous FA since it more clearly emphasizes FA practices occurring in and through interaction while spontaneous or incidental FA is ambiguous in that it can also be carried out in formal ways. For example, a teacher can spontaneously decide to ask students to answer some questions in the form of a quiz or test. Therefore, informal FA better encompasses those practices that are carried out not only spontaneously but also through unconventional means (i.e. everyday classroom interaction).

Unlike formal FA, informal FA involves the teacher interpreting evidence about students’ understanding and acting in response to this evidence quickly, spontaneously and flexibly. It is rather more frequent as it is an important part of classroom interaction and does not require the use of formally designed assessment instrument or task. For this reason, informal FA practices are usually not recorded formally. Besides, Ruiz-Primo (2011) reframes instructional dialogues which take place to verify and clarify student understanding as “assessment conversations” and describes these conversations as “dialogues that embed assessment into an activity already occurring in the classroom” (p.17). In other words, they are integrated into everyday classroom practice. Assessment conversations display students’ understanding or learning state so that teachers can recognize and act on it by shaping the instructional activities in order to enhance learning. However, in spite of the revisited definition of FA and its reconceptualization in theory which emphasize the informal dimension to FA embedded in classroom interaction, how in practice FA emerges informally in naturally-occurring classroom interaction has not been investigated adequately.

Considering informal FA in L2 classrooms in particular, it is quite neglected relative to formal FA practices. On the one hand, the literature is heavily based on the discussion of standardized testing and assessment whether administered for formative purposes or not (Black & William, 1998b; Fulcher, 2012) and such discussion is not applicable to classroom practices. Where the functions and importance of FA is discussed, it is done so in relation to

progress or achievement tests and standardized formal testing (Anton, 2015; Fulcher, 2012; Leung & Mohan, 2004; Rea-Dickins & Gardner, 2000) although an informal dimension to classroom-based FA largely exists. Many language testing courses and textbooks do not go beyond the such commonly emphasized topics as test construction, analysis of tests, measuring the four skills, validity, item analysis etc. (Brown & Bailey, 2008). Fulcher (2012) also points out the inadequacy of many testing textbooks for presenting the techniques in large-scale standardized testing as the needs of classroom teachers. While there has been an interest in measurement issues such as validity and reliability in classroom-based assessment to critically examine the relation of classroom-based assessment to the demands of standardized assessment (e.g. Cohen, 1994; Brown & Hudson, 1998; Gipps, 1994; Teasdale & Leung, 2000), not much has been revealed regarding the formative aspects of the actual classroom practices. As Leung and Mohan (2004) put forward “special features of the formative and for-learning perspective are likely to be lost if it is assimilated into a standardized assessment paradigm” and thus “there is a need to examine in depth the formative teacher for-learning assessment issues in their own right if we are to understand how the formative aspects are actually accomplished in classroom interaction” (p.337). As for the research methodology adopted in the study of FA, many studies on FA are experimental and thus, quantitative not revealing the complexity of classroom interaction in relation to assessment and learning. In their review article, Black and William (1998a) reveal that most of the studies investigate the effect of FA practices on learning in an experimental design and show significant learning gains. Ruiz-Primo (2011) in her review show that where qualitative studies are conducted on FA, many involve observation rather than the micro-analytic investigation of classroom interaction and hence, calls for sequential analysis.

As well as the skills and knowledge required of teachers to prepare and administer tests, teachers also need to develop the interactional competence necessary for classroom-based FA practices. Therefore, interactional competence needed for effective classroom-based assessment practices should be discussed as part of assessment literacy which involves the range of skills and knowledge that stakeholders need in order to deal with the new world of assessment (Stiggins, 1991). However, studies on FA and assessment literacy do not discuss the interactional competence required for effective classroom-based assessment practices. In order to define assessment literacy more broadly, the studies have used surveys whether in the form of closed or constructed response items and quantitative treatment (Fulcher, 2012; Hasselgreen, Carlsen & Helness, 2004; Plake & Impara, 1993) but have not included the analyses of the actual classroom interaction with regard to assessment practices. In addition to asking teachers about their perceptions or practices regarding classroom-based assessment, there is a need to analyse what they exactly do in the actual classroom interaction for assessment practices about which they may or may not be aware of. Besides, it is found that teachers had more problems with classroom-based assessment than with formal evaluation and that they needed training on classroom-based assessment (Hatipoğlu, 2010, 2015a, 2015b, 2017). However, before training teachers, what those classroom-based assessment practices involve need to be described extensively so that teacher educators know what to present to teachers.

On the other hand, there are those studies that investigate L2 classroom interaction but do not discuss their findings in terms of FA. Investigation of classroom interaction has received great attention and has been carried out from various perspectives. While the early studies of classroom interaction focused on the observation and description of interaction using coding schemes, the later research involved interactionist (e.g. the study of negotiation of meaning, corrective feedback in second language acquisition), sociolinguistic, sociocultural and conversation analytic orientation to the study of classroom interaction. However, although most of these studies are relevant for classroom-based assessment processes and can reveal important aspects of those processes, they have not been concerned with assessment (Anton, 2015). In fact, the relevance of their findings is inevitable since “assessment is an integral part of every aspect of teaching and learning and this is particularly evident in the analysis of classroom interaction” (Anton, 2015, p.76).

As a result, considering the gap between classroom interaction and classroom-based assessment research, this article, through a single case analysis, proposes Conversation Analysis (CA) as a methodology for illustrating how FA informally emerges as an interactional practice in the moment-by-moment unfolding of classroom interaction. Different from the studies in the field, this study uses CA as a methodology which involves a micro-analytic investigation of naturally occurring data from an emic perspective revealing details that otherwise might go unnoticed.

Conversation Analysis

This study proposes CA as a research methodology to empirically investigate informal FA practices occurring in and through classroom interaction. Unlike interaction and discourse analysis which usually involve the use of coding systems and observer’s or researcher’s interpretation of events rather than that of participants (i.e. etic perspective), CA does not impose any predetermined categories and by its nature, it is based on the principle that social contexts are not static but are dynamically created by the participants through their use of language and by the sequential organization of interaction (Walsh, 2011).

Conversation Analysis (CA) is defined as “the study of recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p.12) and draws on the following principles (Seedhouse, 2004): (1) interaction is structurally and systematically organized, (2) contributions to interactions are “context-shaped and context-renewing”, that is “any one contribution is both shaped by and shapes the context in which it occurs, which means that any understanding of turns-at-talk can only take place by reference to the sequential environment in which they occur” (Walsh & Li, 2013, p.5), (3) analysis is bottom-up and data driven, i.e. the data “speak for themselves” (Walsh, 2002, p.7) with no theoretical assumptions and preconceived categories in mind (i.e. emic perspective), (4) the details in talk are important to capture a full view of the interaction requiring a detailed micro-analysis of naturally occurring data from an emic perspective. CA argues that participants use “methods” such as turn-taking, sequence organisation, repair, and preference organisation to display their understanding of each other’s utterances (i.e. to display mutual understanding/intersubjectivity) (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010). Both the participants and the

analysts have access to the same resources. In other words, the analysts gain access to the participants' display of understanding to each other by reference to the interactional organisations just like the participants display their understanding and orient to each other's utterances also by reference to such organisations. This brings us to one of the most important principles of CA that is developing an emic perspective in analysis (Seedhouse, 2005). As Sert (2015) points out

emic perspective in analysing social interaction requires that only participants' orientations to each other's utterances should be used to make claims on social phenomena, rather than their given identities (e.g. teacher, French, Muslim etc.), the researcher's assumptions, or a priori etic (i.e. exogenous, external) theories. (p.10)

Overall, CA offers "fitting lens" through which a detailed scrutiny of actual conduct can be achieved (Waring, 2011).

After the social turn in language acquisition, CA has had an important place in SLA literature in the late 1990s and hence, has come to be known as CA-SLA (Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Markee & Kasper, 2004) which aims to show "how learning is constructed by the use of interactional resources and to explicate the progress of their learning and their socially distributed cognition or intersubjectivity" (Seedhouse, 2005). Although the central goal of FA is to enhance learning, studies of FA rarely define "learning". This study uses the term "learning" in the sense CA-SLA employs it. Foreign/second language (L2) learning from a CA perspective builds on the view of language as a resource for interaction and cognition as socially distributed and situated. From a CA-SLA perspective, language learning is not viewed as a cognitive, individual phenomenon but is defined as "a change in a socially-displayed cognitive state" (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010, p.127). It is embedded, situated and co-constructed in the turn-by-turn unfolding of social interaction and at least part of it is embodied in interaction suggesting that part of this learning as a social process is analysable and observable through such elements as repair, hesitation, repetition, turn-taking and sequential organization as well as non-verbal behaviour (e.g. gaze, gesture, body orientation and the manipulation of objects) (Pekarek Doehler, 2010; Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010). The researcher in CA-SLA tries to bring evidence for learners' understanding with reference to such interactional organisation and in this way aims to reveal the common interactional practices through which these understandings are co-constructed and thus, to demonstrate the "micro-moments of language learning" (Sert, 2015, p.33). Therefore, L2 learning is "a sociocognitive process that is embedded in the context of locally accomplished social practices" and involves not only the internalisation of linguistic knowledge but also "the continuous adaptation of linguistic and other semiotic resources in response to locally emergent communicative needs" (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p.106).

CA-SLA does not deny that learning takes place in the mind of individuals and that it is biologically determined but it argues that learning cannot be independent of social interactional dimensions and is co-constructed and emergent in the micro-details of social interaction (Pekarek Doehler, 2010). Because CA-SLA does not aim to bring evidence for what is happening in the brain regarding language learning, many studies in this field refrain from using the word "learning" alone and rather use the terms "learning behaviour" (Markee,

2008) and “learning state” (Seedhouse & Walsh, 2010) to refer to the behavioural and social dimensions of learning. In this study as well, rather than using the word “learning”, “learning behaviours” which refer to the interactional process and procedure of learning and “learning state” which refers to the learning of language items or patterns as a product are preferred.

Review of Literature

It has already been noted that there is a gap between classroom interaction research and classroom-based assessment research. While the former does not discuss the relevance of their findings to FA practises, the latter does not empirically illustrate the informal FA practises occurring in and through real classroom interaction. From an interactionist point of view, there are studies in mainstream SLA investigating teacher feedback, recasts and negotiation of meaning usually under experimental conditions but they do not reframe them as formative assessment (e.g. Mackey, 2012; Mackey & Oliver, 2002; Oliver, 1998). As for those studies investigating naturally occurring classroom interaction, many have been interested in using conversation analysis for the micro analytic investigation of the relation between interaction and learning (e.g. Koshik, 2002; Markee, 2004; Sert, 2011, 2013; Waring, 2008). Some of these studies reveal patterns for Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) (Can-Daşkın, 2015a; Sert, 2015; Walsh, 2002, 2006, 2011, 2012; Walsh & Li, 2013) defined as “teachers’ and learners’ ability to use interaction as a tool for mediating and assisting learning” (Walsh, 2011, p.158). Although CIC studies have uncovered some components of interactional competence needed for successful L2 instruction, they have not been concerned with the interactional competence required for classroom-interaction based assessment practices or with the implications of their findings for such practices. In other words, the ways teachers informally assess learners in and through interaction for formative purposes have not been examined and discussed as part of CIC.

Only a few of the studies analyse naturally occurring classroom interaction from the perspective of interaction hypothesis or systemic functional linguistics and highlight the importance of interaction for classroom-based formative assessment (Leung & Mohan, 2004; Sherris, 2011). From the perspective of interaction hypothesis, Sherris (2011) shows how such communicative strategies as recasts and clarification requests reflect and constitute spontaneous formative assessment. From the perspective of systemic functional linguistics, Leung & Mohan (2004) show how formative teacher for learning assessment focus on students’ decision-making, student processes and interaction. However, there has been no conversation analytic study on the practices of informal FA. Therefore, as well as planned or systematically designed formal assessment or tests which have long been an issue in literature on FA (e.g. Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Weir, 1993), there is a need to reveal patterns for informal FA in actual classroom interaction.

Sample Analysis

In this study, sample data is presented from a corpus of video-recordings of an EFL class (55 classroom hours) in a preparatory school at a state university. The corpus is

established for a larger project that set out to investigate teacher-student interactional practices but the unmotivated examination of the data has revealed the relevance of some of the extracts to informal FA practices. So, the selected extract is transcribed using the transcription system adopted from Gail Jefferson (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008) (See Appendix) and Conversation Analysis (CA) is used as the data analysis method.

The class that was recorded was at an intermediate level of English and consisted of 32 students (7 males, 25 females). The students were taking the course to develop their English language skills and knowledge so that they could move to their own departments. The teacher had a teaching experience for more than six years and held an MA degree in the field of English language teaching. After the students and the teacher gave their consent for the data collection, the class was recorded using three cameras and four audio recorders accompanied by the researcher's non-participant observation for seven weeks.

In the analysis of the following extract, the sequential analysis is presented first followed by the discussion of the analysis in relation to informal FA practices. In the analysed extract, the teacher goes over the highlighted words in a text given in the coursebook by asking students to guess their meaning from the context. They are up to the word "bothering" as highlighted in the text and the teacher presents it in relation to its another meaning they worked on earlier.

Extract: bother

- 1 T1: şimdi biz çok hızlı geçtik bothering'i
 2 biz daha önce rob ve jenny arasındaki diyaloglardan
 3 hatırlarsak
now, we didn't spend much time on "bothering"
if you remember from the dialogues between
rob and jenny earlier
 4 T1: [şu kalıbı gördük
we worked on this fixed expression
 5 EM: [°rahatsız olmak°
to be bothered
 6 MD: i'm sorry to bother you=
 7 T1: =sorry to: (.) bother you demişti rob.
said rob
 #1 (lines 4-7) T1 writes "sorry to bother you" on the board as she articulates it
 8→ telefon görüşmesinde hangi anlamdaydı o?
what did it mean in the phone call?
 +makes a phone call hand gesture

9 (1.1)

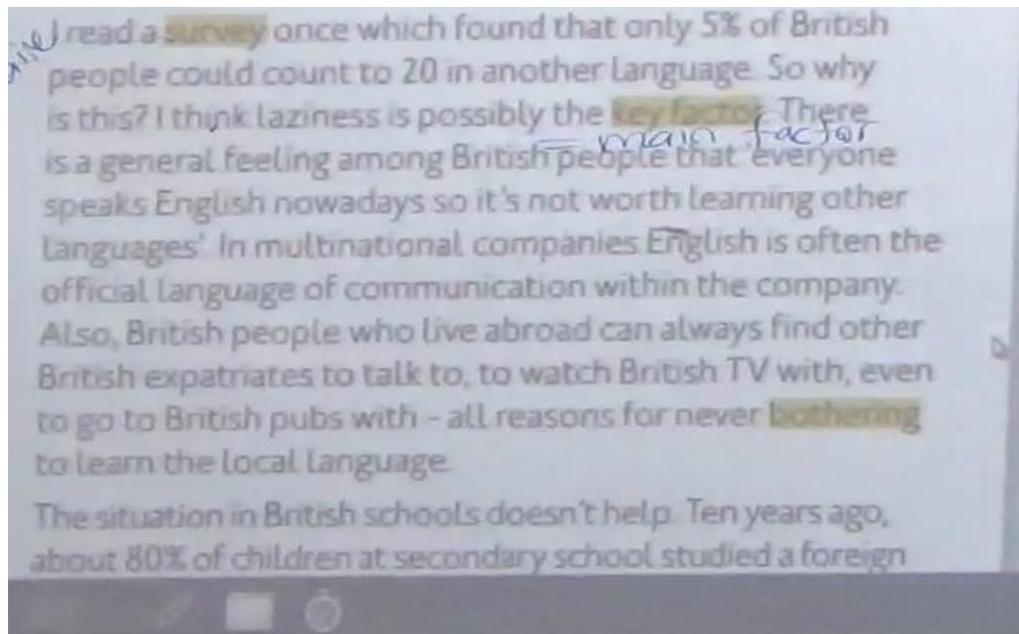
10 MS: rahatsız etmek
to bother

11 T1: rahatsız ettiğim için üzgünüm diyo rahatsız etmek
12 anlamındaydı=
it says i'm sorry to bother you it had the meaning
"to bother"

13 T1: =burada anlamı farklı

it has a different meaning here

+points at "bothering" on the board- "bothering" is highlighted in the text in their coursebook
and the text is projected on the board



((T1 answers HU's question about the number of the page in their coursebook that they are working on))

14 (4.0)

15 T1: burada uğraşmak (.) çabalamak anlamı var
it has the meaning "to try" "to deal" here

16 trying gibi.
like

+writes "trying" under the word "bothering" on the board

17 ne diyo (.)^{2#}all reasons bunlar neyin nedenleriymiş
what does it say "all reasons" they are the reasons
for what

- 18 for never bothering to learn the local language^{#2}
 #2 (lines 22-23) T1 points at the relevant words in the sentence projected on the board as she
 reads it out
- 19 [genelde öğrenmemenin=
usually for not learning
- 20 İB: [genelde öğrenmeme
usually for not learning
- 21 T1: =öğrenmeye uğraşmamanın bütün nedenleri diyor.
 22 böyle bir çaba böyle bir zahmete girmiyorlar.
it says all reasons for never bothering to learn.
they do not make such an effort.

The extract begins with the teacher's remark that "bothering" is an expression they studied earlier as it was used in a dialogue between Rob and Jenny. In Turkish, she explicitly reminds students of this dialogue and mentions that they could not spend much time on the expression "bother" when they were working on the dialogue (lines 1-3). In this way, she implies that it is not an expression about which the students have no idea at all and that it is now time to study it more thoroughly. Here, she openly employs Reference to a Past Learning Event (RPLE) (Can Daşkın, 2015b) which is an interactional resource employed by the teacher who spontaneously diverges from the main focus of the activity to language items and topics presented in a past learning event usually to check on students' past knowledge and/or to deal with trouble sources in students' learning states in and through classroom interaction. RPLE in lines 1-3 is marked by the Turkish expressions "hatırlarsak" (if you remember) and "daha önce" (earlier) and the past tense particle (-tik attached to "geç") and the first person plural "biz". In line 4, she continues with her action of RPLE as she shows that the students encountered the word "bother" in a past learning event as part of the fixed expression "sorry to bother you" and starts writing the fixed expression on the board (#1). Overlapping with the teacher's talk in line 4 and her action of writing on the board, EM with a soft tone of voice provides a partly inaccurate Turkish translation of the expression in line 5 although she is not asked to do so (*rahatsız olmak*). The translation expresses the meaning of the passive form of the fixed expression (i.e. to be bothered) rather than the meaning of "to bother somebody" and thus, to some degree displays lack of understanding of the target expression. However, her turn is not oriented to by the teacher who most probably could not hear her talk. Before the teacher completes writing the expression on the board, MD in line 6 offers the complete fixed expression (*i'm sorry to bother you*) and demonstrates his knowledge of the expression. Latching MD's turn, the teacher, simultaneous with her action of writing on the board, articulates the whole expression and adds that it is what Rob said in the dialogue. In her same turn in line 8, she, in Turkish, asks students about the meaning of "bother" as used as part of the fixed expression in the phone call in the dialogue. By resorting to RPLE in line 8, she takes the opportunity to check whether the students can recall the meaning of the expression previously encountered. At the onset of her question, she makes a phone call hand

gesture to illustrate the meaning of her question and to emphasize that she is asking about the meaning of the expression that is used in the context of a phone call. After 1.1 seconds of silence, MS delivers the Turkish meaning of “bother” (*rahatsız etmek*). By providing the Turkish meaning, MS aligns with the teacher’s turn in line 8 in which the teacher also posed the question in Turkish. The teacher in the follow-up turn accepts MS’s response by producing the translation of the whole expression first (*rahatsız ettiğim için üzgünüm*) and then in her next TCU, she repeats the Turkish expression MS provided for the word “bother” (lines 11-12). As well as repeating, she also marks that the Turkish expression “*rahatsız etmek*” is what “bother” meant in the particular dialogue studied in a past learning event and thus, by using past tense, she once again employs RPLE.

In line 13, the teacher continues with her turn and diverts the attention from the past learning event to the new context through the Turkish indexical “burada” (here) which initiates the transition to the new context in relation to students’ past learning experience. She turns to the text projected on the board and as she points at the highlighted word “bothering”, she specifies that the word has a different meaning in this particular new context. After HU’s question about the page number that the teacher refers to in the coursebook and the teacher’s dealing with this procedural trouble followed by 4 seconds of silence, the teacher gets back to the explanation she initiated in line 13 and completes it in lines 15-22. In line 15, she provides the Turkish words which correspond to the meaning of “bothering” used in the new context. In the next line, she offers the English synonym “trying” for “bothering” to make sure that the students understand the use of “bothering” in a new context in relation to what they are familiar with. Simultaneous with her articulation of “trying”, she also writes it under the word “bothering” on the board. In her next TCU in line 17, the teacher this time progresses to the meaning of “bothering” at sentence level. That is, she now focuses on the sentence in which “bothering” is used and the kind of meaning the word “bothering” gives to the sentence. In doing so, she reads out the first part of the sentence (*all reasons*) and translates it into Turkish (*bunlar neyin nedenleriymiş*) and then reads out the rest of the sentence in line 18 (*for never bothering to learn the local language*) as she points at the relevant words in the sentence projected on the board (#2). In her next TCU, she starts delivering the Turkish translation of the part of the sentence she has just read out and the part that includes the word “bothering” (lines 21-22). In line 20, IB in overlapping turns with the teacher also starts providing the translation but then lets the teacher complete it.

The analysed extract demonstrates how informal FA is carried out in a specific instructional setting. Although the aim of the activity is to guess the meaning of the highlighted words (i.e. in this case the meaning of “to bother”) given in a text, the teacher does not initiate with the main activity but puts it on hold and instead initiates the sequence through RPLE to set the ground for the main activity. After presenting the fixed expression “sorry to bother you” and reminding the students of the context in which the expression was studied and which, thus, constitutes a past learning event, the teacher in line 8 asks students about the meaning of the expression. In this way, she checks whether the students can remember the meaning of the expression presented in a past learning event. One aspect of informal FA is evident in line 8- that is obtaining information about students’ learning state in and through interaction by spontaneously diverging from the main focus of the activity so that

necessary measures can be taken before the main activity. MS's response in line 10 on behalf of the whole class shows positive evidence of their learning state as the teacher also confirms it in the subsequent turn. If the students' responses revealed gap in their knowledge and hence, required treatment, then the teacher would most probably initiate repair by making instructional adjustments but here building on students' past knowledge of "bother", she proceeds with the main activity by presenting a new use of the same expression (i.e. to bother to do something). It is only after she elicits a correct response regarding the meaning of "sorry to bother you" studied earlier that she proceeds with the present activity and marks that the word "bother" emerging in the new activity is not the one they encountered before. In fact, EM's partially inaccurate response in line 5 and with only MS responding, many students remaining silent to the teacher's question of RPLE in line 8 do display some kind of trouble in understanding the meaning of the previously studied expression "sorry to bother you". However, as the nature of "multilogue" in such an instructional setting entails (Schwab, 2011), the teacher's bringing up this expression has reference to not only those who directly participate in the interaction but also all the others and thus, may have enhanced the learning state of many students though this cannot be directly claimed based on the interactional data available.

With respect to the revisited definition of FA discussed above, the question of RPLE in line 8 spontaneously emerges as preliminary to the main activity and thus, as embedded in an everyday classroom practice in order to seek evidence of students' knowledge of a previously studied expression that is important for the transition to the new learning context in which a new use of the same expression is presented. In this way, the teacher can use the evidence obtained to decide whether there is any repairable or trouble source in students' learning state since the presence of a repairable may indicate trouble with the transition to the main activity. It can be said that the teacher's action in line 8 acts as a precautionary measure and may prevent the occurrence of a trouble both with the previously taught item and with its relevant form in the new learning event and the connection between the two uses of the same expression. By having access to students' understanding of an earlier expression, the teacher tries to enhance the understanding of a different use of the same expression by prompting students to distinguish between the two uses of the expression. In this way, her action of assessing learners' past knowledge is formative as it is this past knowledge that the teacher builds on in the main activity which is initiated and presented in comparison with or in relation to a past learning experience proving that FA does not always have a retrospective function as it does not necessarily deal with incorrect learner responses and learning difficulties but uses correct responses to shape the subsequent instructional activity. Unlike the conventional understanding of FA, it is not simply about saying right or wrong for the students' responses and making corrections. Lastly, different from formal FA which requires the use of specially designed assessment instruments at pre-specified times, the practice of informal FA as evident in the analysed extract is embedded into an everyday instructional activity which involves guessing the meaning of highlighted words in a given text and emerges in and through interaction quickly and spontaneously by means of which the flow of the activity is shaped.

Conclusion

This study highlights the place of interaction in informal FA practices in an L2 classroom and calls for conversation analytic studies to empirically reveal the complexity of interaction lying behind such practices by analysing naturally occurring classroom data and eventually to encourage a connection between classroom interaction research and classroom-based assessment research. That is, this study calls for classroom-based assessment and assessment literacy studies to better reveal the role of interaction and interactional competence and the classroom-interaction studies to reframe or discuss their analysis in the light of assessment practices. For this reason, this study has illustrated the connection between interaction and FA in an L2 classroom through a single case analysis and has partly discussed the interactional competence needed for such classroom-based assessment practices as informal FA. The analysis has shown that the interactional competence required for informal FA is an integral part of teacher Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) (Walsh, 2002). The teacher assessing learners' past knowledge in and through interaction to seek evidence of their learning state and then using this evidence to make decisions about moving on with the actual instructional activity and thus, to lay the ground for the new learning context displays how she uses interaction as a tool to assess, as a result of which to assist learning. While CIC discusses the role of interaction in creating learning opportunities, it should also extend to discussing the place of interaction in assessment practices which, in turn, can generate learning opportunities.

The analysis in this study has shown that for a teacher who is supposed to be concerned with students' learning, informal FA emerges spontaneously in and through interaction and hence, FA practices are not something extra. In fact, the analysis proves that such practices occur even in traditional L2 classrooms which are teacher-fronted and grammar oriented. Rather than simply saying right or wrong for students' responses, the teacher in the analysis uses students' responses to make the transition to a new learning context and enhances the quality of feedback. By assessing learners' past knowledge, the teacher creates an opportunity for pupils to express their knowledge and understanding which initiates an interaction through which FA shapes learning. Such a practice also allows the students to reflect on their own learning and encourages them to make a distinction between their past learning experience of a language item (i.e. to bother somebody) and their present learning experience of a different use of the same item (i.e. to bother to do something). As a result, this study proves that interaction "empowers teachers with assessment tools that are more meaningful to the classroom context and provides a different dimension of learning not easily captured by traditional means of assessment" (Anton, 2015, p.86).

This study has important implications for teacher education which should help teacher trainees gain an understanding of the relationship between interaction and assessment so that they can better understand the context and enhance learning. The data and its analysis in this study can also be used to help teacher trainees gain insight into informal FA practices emerging in and through classroom interaction and the interactional competence needed for such practices. As for further research, conversation analytic studies that track learning behaviour as a result of assessment practices by analysing longitudinal data are required and

thus, considered to better reveal the extent to which informal FA practices do enhance learning.

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Appendix. Transcription Conventions

Adapted from Hutchby and Wooffitt (2008)

(1.8)	Numbers enclosed in parentheses indicate a pause. The number represents the number of seconds of duration of the pause, to one decimal place. A pause of less than 0.2 seconds is marked by (.)
[]	Brackets around portions of utterances show that those portions overlap with a portion of another speaker's utterance.
=	An equal sign is used to show that there is no time lapse between the portions connected by the equal signs. This is used where a second speaker begins their utterance just at the moment when the first speaker finishes.
::	A colon after a vowel or a word is used to show that the sound is extended. The number of colons shows the length of the extension.
(hm, hh)	These are onomatopoeic representations of the audible exhalation of air)
.hh	This indicates an audible inhalation of air, for example, as a gasp. The more h's, the longer the in-breath.
?	A question mark indicates that there is slightly rising intonation.
.	A period indicates that there is slightly falling intonation.
,	A comma indicates a continuation of tone.
-	A dash indicates an abrupt cut off, where the speaker stopped speaking suddenly.
↑ ↓	Up or down arrows are used to indicate that there is sharply rising or falling intonation. The arrow is placed just before the syllable in which the change in intonation occurs.
<u>Under</u>	Underlines indicate speaker emphasis on the underlined portion of the word.
CAPS	Capital letters indicate that the speaker spoke the capitalized portion of the utterance at a higher volume than the speaker's normal volume.
°	This indicates an utterance that is much softer than the normal speech of the speaker. This symbol will appear at the beginning and at the end of the utterance in question.
> <, < >	'Greater than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they surround was noticeably faster, or slower than the surrounding talk.
(would)	When a word appears in parentheses, it indicates that the transcriber has guessed as to what was said, because it was indecipherable on the tape. If the transcriber was unable to guess what was said, nothing appears within the parentheses.
£C'mon£	Sterling signs are used to indicate a smiley or jokey voice.

+ marks the onset of a non-verbal action (e.g. shift of gaze, pointing)

italics English translation

Another Convention by Balaman (2016):

1#...#1 The onset and offset point of the non-verbal activity accompanying the talk