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EMOTION AND COGNITION IN ACTION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC MICROANALYSIS OF

ELDERLY LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND THEIR TEACHER

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In Applied Linguistics

By

Laura Amador

2014

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Emotion and Cognition in Action: An Ethnographic Microanalysis

of Elderly Language Learners and Their Teacher

by

Laura L. Amador

Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics

University of California, Los Angeles,

2014

Professor Frederick Erickson and Professor John H. Schumann, Co-chairs

This dissertation develops an empirical basis for the notion that entry points to cognition in adult second language (L2) learning are organized by emotional displays situated in real time learning. Specifically it examines the affective practices and forms of thinking that elderly participants use to manage and make sense of classroom events. As a case study of situated emotion and cognition among a group of elderly language learners and their teacher, this investigation provides a detailed ethnographic and talk-in-interaction analysis of classroom interaction and engagement with spoken and written foreign language Spanish. Several questions guide this qualitative investigation more generally. How is emotion situated in everyday classroom activities and when is it more prevalent? How do classmates and the teacher respond to affective displays? How do subjects manage communicative difficulty as opposed to triumphs, and what kind of meaning or understandings do they attribute to these

events? What are possible neural substrates of the observed behavioral patterns and how might current brain research help us understand such interactive patterns? What implications do findings have for language practitioners and learners of different ages? In this study, ethnographic and conversation analytic methods are used to document classroom conduct as well as participant perspectives related to such conduct, with the goal of addressing the above questions. The project consists of seven months of fieldwork in an informal second language Spanish class at a community-based center for seniors in the greater Los Angeles area; the result of which is almost 30 hours of participant observation and video documenting everyday classroom interactions and 10 hours of audio recorded interviews.

This dissertation has at its core, the idea that an important dimension of emotion is its dialogic quality and dependence on the social environment for meaning. Such qualities are visible and audible for example in social emotions such as affective stance, empathy and in behaviors such as laughter (Linell, 2009). First, it sheds light on activities and participation structures that are commonly invoked in the setting and explores the subjects' motives for learning another language. Second, it illustrates how multi-modal affective displays acquire their significance and function from interactive exchanges between peers in the classroom and from broader contexts including past experience. For example, laughter acquires variable function and meaning, but may play a central role in inviting affective involvement and directing particular attention to language use. How attention is affectively organized in language learning has implications for the accomplishment of communicative goals, and for the shaping of activities to fit needs and desires (Kramsch, 2009a).

Next, this report reveals that affective displays play a central role in how activities are organized and in the learning environment that is established. This is important given that theoretically speaking, threats to self-image may generate perceptions that positively or negatively impact engagement or action tendencies in children and young adult learners of second languages (Schumann, 2001a, Schumann et al., 2004; Horwitz et al., 1986; Guiora, 1983). In this case, whether or not participants are vulnerable to image threat, and how they manage experiences is constrained by a complex intermix of variables. Finally, subjects are found to process experiences in ways that require the use of a broad knowledge base, invoking emotions that are relevant to their collective and individual purposes and needs. Selected research in neurobiology is used to develop one or two hypotheses about the neural substrates underlying the observed patterns of behavior. This report discusses how emotion is necessary for decision making in language learning and reveals how thinking and appraisal of experience may be dependent on one's stage of life and the learning situation encountered in such a stage. A range of social scientific, neurobiological and psychological literature is consulted throughout this dissertation with the goal of explaining findings and increasing our knowledge of a poorly studied age group. In all, this project sheds light on situated emotion in real time language learning (the good, the bad and the ugly), its variable role in smoothing interactions and its meaning potential across different contexts.

Such a study of social interaction in the classroom has implications for our understanding of how emotion is situated in culturally specific ways through and for language learning across the life span and how affective displays are used tactically to achieve local and broad goals. It also has implications for language practitioners and learners looking to emphasize and use facilitative emotion (Dewaele, 2011; Pavlenko, 2005) and for those looking

to understand how emotion awareness can be exploited as part of teaching and learning praxis (Kinginger, 2004; MacIntyre, 2002).

The dissertation of Laura Amador is approved.

Arne B. Scheibel

Frederick D. Erickson, Committee co-chair

John H. Schumann, Committee co-chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

VITAE

1998
B.A., Spanish and Magazine Journalism
San Francisco State University
San Francisco, California

2001
ESL Instructor
Tutorlingua
Madrid, Spain

2004 – 2006
Teaching Assistant
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
University of California, Davis

2006
M.A., Spanish Linguistics
University of California, Davis
Davis, California

2006 – 2007
Lecturer
Department of World Languages and Literatures
California State University, San Bernardino

2007 – 2009
Teaching Associate
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
University of California, Los Angeles

2009
Teaching Associate
Department of Applied Linguistics & TESL
University of California, Los Angeles

2008
Proofreader and Copyeditor
Issues in Applied Linguistics
University of California, Los Angeles

2010 – 2011
Editor
*Crossroads of Language, Interaction and Culture
Conference Proceedings*
Department of Applied Linguistics & TESL

2009 – 2010
Test of Oral Proficiency Exam Rater
Office of Instructional Development
University of California, Los Angeles

2010   Graduate Student Researcher
                                        Graduate School of Education and Information
                                        Studies, University of California, Los Angeles

2011 – 2012   Research Mentorship Recipient (Academic year)
                                        Department of Applied Linguistics & TESL
                                        University of California, Los Angeles

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

2010   Amador, L. *Managing Incompetence Through Stance: Laughter as Discursive Artifact in a Foreign Language Classroom*. Paper presented at Communicative Practices in the Lifeworld (CPIL) Conference, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, California.

2010   Fox-Adams, G. & Amador, L. *Social Behaviors and Strategies that Increase Language-Learning Opportunities in Infant and Adult Classrooms: An Integrated Perspective*. Paper Co-presented at International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities, Los Angeles, California.

2010   Amador, L. *Social Solidarity and the Construction of Interactional Opportunity in Adult Language Learning.* Classroads. Invited talk. Human Assistance and Development International. (HADI). Los Angeles, California.

2011   Amador, L. & Fox-Adams, G. *Social Behaviors and Strategies that Increase Language-Learning Opportunities in Infant and Adult Classrooms: An Integrated Perspective*. Paper co-presented at American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference, Chicago, Illinois.

2011   Johnson, S.J. & Amador, L. A Pioneer in the Use of Video for the Study of Human Social Interaction: A Talk with Frederick Erickson. *Crossroads of Language, Interaction and Culture.* Vol. 8, pp. 93-102.

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2013   Amador, L. & Adams, G.F. Affiliative behaviors that increase language-learning opportunities in infant and adult classrooms: An integrated perspective. In A.D. Joaquin & J.H. Schumann (Eds.), *Exploring the interactional instinct*. New York: Oxford University Press

2013   Amador, L. "Too Old to Blush": Contextualizing Language Use Classroom of Elderly Learners. Poster Presentation. Second Language Research Forum. Provo, Utah.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Study Rationale

The central aim of this dissertation is to examine the ways that emotion is situated within the practices of elderly second language (L2) Spanish learners and their teacher in a classroom setting. An additional aim is to shed light on the life world of elderly language learners, what motivates their learning and how they manage their experiences. Emotion regulation and reason have traditionally been viewed in the natural sciences as private processes occurring a hermetic phenomena within the individual, yet more recent theoretical perspectives suggest that emotions and cognition are essentially socially constructed phenomena that form complex systems that include ecosocial processes, neural structures and bodily activity (Thibault, 2005). Using such a perspective as a broad frame of thinking, the following questions guide this investigation: 1) what kinds of affective patterns are found in everyday classroom interactions? 2) Do subjects achieve understanding or evaluate language use by marking such moments affectively, and if so how? 3) Do goals and perspectives on learning have a life-stage related dimension? 4) What are some possible neural substrates for the affective behavior/s observed? 5) What implications do findings have for what is learned and for practitioners and learners looking to exploit emotion for learning purposes? Ethnographic participant observation, interviews and video microanalysis are used to document the systematic discursive practices of participants, their understandings of everyday classroom experiences and their management of events. This dissertation develops an empirical basis for answering the above research questions as well as those arising through the consideration and analysis of data. Interactional sociolinguistics (microethnography) and talk in interaction methods are employed because they allow for a detailed empirical description of classroom conduct as well as a consideration of the broad contextual factors and perspectives

that can be used to explain such conduct. Finally, a micro-ethnographic approach is useful because it enables one to observe the behaviors of the elderly learner and teacher across multiple dimensions and record potential shifts in thinking or behavior over time.

1. Study Rationale and Chapter Organization

To date there have been a limited number of empirical studies documenting the experiences and discursive conduct of second language (L2) learners well into the second half of life. There have been equally scant studies on situated emotion as it pertains to language learning in L2 classrooms overall (DeWaele, 2011; Arnold, 1999). This dissertation builds on social constructionist, sociolinguistic and neurobiological contributions to the study of emotion (Linell, 2009, Schumann, 1997; Schumann et al., 2004), in order to shed light on some foci that are dimly lit in second language classroom research and that, according to some researchers merit increased attention (Dornyei, 2009). Research paradigms that enable a consideration of emotion embedded within situated activity between rather than just within the individual are useful because they enable an inspection of how affective phenomena are used for different but simultaneous social and practical purposes in a learning environment. As mentioned previously, the findings suggest that we do not express feelings, goals and desires of learning in a social vacuum, nor are we prisoners to that vacuum. Thus, emotion must not only be relevant and appropriate in a particular cultural environment, it must be relevant to the individuals interacting socially within that environment. This dissertation is divided into seven chapters, each of which are designed to contribute either descriptively or theoretically to assertions put forth regarding situated emotion and cognition in the second language classroom studied. In Chapter 2, research methods and methodological considerations are described, including a brief description of the procedures for data collection, research site and participants. Chapter 3 uses ethnographic data to

provide readers with a portrait of the setting, common activities, their structure and the participants' motives for learning. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 investigate the affective behaviors of subjects in systematic detail, with the frequent use of data from interviews to provide further explanatory evidence. Chapter 4 focuses on laughter as a particular feeling in language use and discusses its role particularly in communicative difficulty. Given the prevalence and also variation of laughter across contexts, important biological and social scientific research is reviewed at the beginning of Chapter 4 in order to orient readers and provide a backdrop for the microanalysis conducted in subsequent chapters. Chapter 5 unpacks emotional stance (perspective taking) as a social phenomenon and explores the way it is used to train attention and attune to particular emotional states. Chapter 6 examines distributed sense making within teacher storytelling, demonstrating its affective and didactic role among peers and the teacher. Chapter 6 also concludes observations of participant affective behavior by reviewing relevant literature from social neuroscience and psychology in order to provide an account of some possible neural substrates for key behaviors observed. This critical literature review is carried out in order to hypothesize about brain and language classroom behavior and thus the connections that are made are speculative. A discussion of findings throughout the dissertation and again in Chapter 7 reveals some of the central devices that elderly participants use to manage their language learning and understand it in ways that are relevant to them and their purposes. The dissertation draws from work in several fields including applied linguistics, affective neurobiology and psychology, building on the common notion across these disciplines that in order for learning experiences to have an impact one way or another, they must first be emotionally relevant (Damasio, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

Research Methods and Some Methodological Implications

1. *Methods and Methodological Implications*

This research is best characterized as micro-ethnographic and conversation analytic in its orientation, given that it employs ethnographic methods which are discursively-oriented (Gumperz, 1982; Erickson, 1992; Watson-Gegeo, 1997;) and conversation analysis (CA) as conceived by (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). These approaches to data collection and analysis were chosen first and foremost because they enable contextualized examinations of emotion as interactional phenomena within language learning. Although purists in either framework might bring their own reasons to the table for why or to what degree a particular methodology should be used (Maynard, 2005), the truth is each offers a distinct set of analytical tools and organizational concepts that are necessary in my view for providing a multi-dimensional picture of the practices that constitute emotion and their role in the classroom studied. In agreement with ten Have (1999), these approaches can be utilized in a complimentary way to fill in gaps in understanding that may arise in the process of collecting and analyzing data. This research is carried out with an eye on the respective strengths and practical uses of each approach and with attention to strategies for their integration (more on the benefits of combining methodologies later). While these frameworks conceptualize *meaning* in much the same way, they diverge on notions of *context* and what constitutes it. Ethnography is employed in order to understand how broad contextual variables like age-related beliefs and learning motives impact the overall design and distribution of emotion in the setting. Ethnographic data is obtained through participant observation and interviews which provide a *thick description* of context (Geertz, 1973), such as the people, place, culturally specific terms

4

and perspectives. The data is furthermore used to understand "curious interactive patterns that sequential discursive analysis may reveal but cannot fully explain" (Maynard, 2005, p. 68). In essence, I take the position that while participants' talk and affective displays enable them to "do being in the setting" (Schegloff, 1991, p. 60), forms of conduct are clarified through the explanatory power of ethnography. Whether or not insider perspectives converge with or diverge from researcher interpetations is precisely what gives ethnographic work its value because it may require one to go back and revisit data from a different point of view, at times leading to useful shifts in interpretation and in the conceptualization of findings. CA is a good fit for the study of situated emotion and cognition, given its emphasis on the sequential organization of spoken interaction and "forms of thinking as displayed when producing or interpeting speech" (Kalin, 1995, p. 28). A focus on how forms of thinking are exhibited in behavior is especially relevant here because it provides an additional unit of analysis for looking at if and how emotion displays impact situated thinking. CA also lends itself to nuanced considerations of emotion as manifested in both talk and the body and as elaborating semiotic activity in ways that further local goals (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000; Goodwin et al., 2012). Ethnography and ethnomethodology share the view that categories arising from the data should be essentially *emic*, that is "the relevance of categories must arise from the data and participants must make them salient, not the researcher" (see Psathas, 1995, pp. 8-9). CA does this through analysis of sequences of talk as action and response e.g., designating some object in talk as "self repair" is a warrant for assuming that the talk or action repaired was regarded by the speaker as not entirely right. Ethnography gets at members' meaning perspectives both by formal analysis--e.g. examining how people in a social group react by positive or negative sanction when one member does something--and by adding insights from observation and interview concerning understandings, values, habit patterns. Both

are used here. With its foundations in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1974), CA holds the dialogic view that emotion and cognition are phenomena with social relational, communicative and cultural dimensions (Sorjonen & Peräkyla, 2012; Lutz & White, 1986). If we assume that emic perspectives are needed to reveal how participants manage classroom events using multi-modal resources, CA emphasizes how "resources become observable and procedurally relevant in actual practices" (Arminen, 2005), while ethnography focuses on the way practices are situated and "mean" to the actual people involved. In sum, these approaches are contextualized methodologies for studying language learning and use, and place similar focus on evidential salience and relevance without *a priori* pre-specifications of phenomena. Organizational principles such as *speech activities* (Levinson, 1979), *turn design, interactional symmetry/assymetry* and signals of coparticipation or *conversational cooperation* (Yngve, 1970) are taken into account and form some of the central units of analysis for this study. A close consideration of these principles (or similar ones) is adopted to analyze the discursive practices of participants in later chapters because it enables the identification of interactive practices and participant relevant categories of situated emotion embedded within such praxis.

2. *CA in Institutional Interaction and SLA*

There is now a well-established tradition of talk in interaction studies in institutional environments (Drew and Heritage, 1992b, Heritage, 1997; Drew & Sorjonen, 1997). While most are not motivated by questions or concerns a priori, they have shed important light on interaction in institutions more generally. They reveal for example that places like courtrooms or classrooms house more "formal speech-exchange systems" which are based in part on some predesigned order. As a result of such findings, the specificity of institutional interaction has not been found to reside necessarily in formal turn-taking, rather it is found in factors such as

culturally specific forms of turn-design, lexical choice, sequential organization and asymmetical

talk (ten Have, 1999). This is helpful because it narrows the field to some concrete analytic units

within conversation itself for those interested in studying specific interactional phenomena or

overlooked dimensions of situated L2 interaction such as emotion. As Boxer and Cohen (2004b)

note, CA has a lot to offer to applied linguists studying how additional languages are learned and

to the individuals learning them. As a result there is an increasing body of Second Language

Acquisition (SLA) research which utilizes CA as an analytic approach (Carroll, 2004; Markee,

2004a, 2005; Kurhila, 2006; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Olsher, 2004; Wagner & Gardner, 2004;

Seedhouse, 2004; Pekarek, Doehler & Ziegler, 2007). These studies have provided much insight

into a range of interactional phenomena including the embodiment of cognition as a social event

(Mori & Hasegawa, 2009), which is relevant for this study because it reveals ways in which

cognitive states may be enacted in real time language learning. Despite its widely accepted use as

a research methodology in L2 learning and use, CA or discourse-oriented studies of emotion or

affect in situated environments have only started to emerge recently. There are a handful of

exceptions regarding research on situated emotion in language classrooms, many focused on

humor and play. See (Ohta, 2008) for research on laughter in an L2 Japanese setting, Cekaite and

Aronsson (2005) play and joking as a collaborative resource among children in L2 emersion

environments, Waring (2012) for play and humor in off-task talk in an ESL setting and Atoofi

(2012) for a broader look at affective practices between learners and teachers in a Persian

heritage language classroom. In a particularly relevant study, Cekaite (2009) examines how

young L2 novices solicit teacher attention through summonses, e.g., solicitations of attention.

The author finds that summonses relied greatly on novices' deployment of affective stances.

Crucially, when upgrading their summons, they deployed multi-modally structured performances

where displays of affect comprised an integral feature. For L2 beginning learners, displays of affect supplemented the children's limited lexical repertoire by establishing a framework for interpreting their moves and provided cues as to how one could build a subsequent move. The teacher showed readiness to make sense of minimal verbal/nonverbal cues in order to work out what the student was trying to accomplish. The author notes that being able to recruit the participation of the expert (teacher) and direct her/him toward specific tasks is one of the basic conditions for gaining access to the 'linguaculture' of the classroom and in itself may provide a context for learning (p. 27). Such a view of participation recruitment is relevant to the current project given a similar multi-modal use of stance among elderly learners; however, it brings up a question as to how participation recruitment plays out among peers (not just novices and experts) across linguacultures and age groups. Traditionally, talk in interaction analysis considers that context should be "treated as the product and project of the participants' own actions and as thus locally produced and transformable from moment to moment" (Drew & Heritage, 1992b, p. 19); however, many researchers also concede that conversation in institutions involves certain constraints on what some or all participants may contribute, manifested through rights and obligations (p. 22). This is relevant first because language classrooms are settings in which the roles (and thus rights/duties of teachers and learners) may be pre-designed to some degree, though to what degree and how are likely a matter of situational and cultural variables. For example, we can assume that in an ongoing language class taught and attended on an informal and voluntary basis, practices may reflect conventionalized roles in some instances as well as turn structures and role-shifts that are unique to the classroom culture and subjects in other instances. Ushioda (2009) sums up the need for studies in which learners are characterized in more dynamic ways with what she calls a "person-in-context relational view:"

"By a person-in-context relational view I mean a focus on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions; a focus on the agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, a person with goals, motives and intention; a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of. My argument is that we need to take a relational (rather than linear) view of these multiple contextual elements" (p. 220, emphasis added).

This perspective on context and how language learning gets done is useful because it sees learners, teachers and their behavior as part of complex, dynamic and interrelated systems (ecologies), of which emotion is a crucial but often oversimplified part (Dörnyei, 2009). Such dynamic constructions of learners and their experience diverge from the overall focus of CA (in institutional interaction) which is to explain how tasks are accomplished in different settings and the commitment (or lack of) to predetermined order. Arminen (2005) notes that the value of this kind of study lies in its comparative nature, such that practices are compared with their counterparts in everyday interactions (if they have been documented). The author notes however that a focus only on structural preference can limit analytic scope. A further challenge for CA in the study of institutional interaction is that of procedural relevance. This is the idea that researchers "must demonstrate the various ways context functions in a particular segment of interaction" (p. xii). Atkinson and Heritage (1984) maintain that this involves: "description and explications of the competences that speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible socially organized interaction…the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior and understand and deal with the behavior of others" (p. 1). The task of sifting out procedurally relevant discursive conduct is taken up in the present investigation by attending to how features such as turn-design, assymetries in dialogue (communicative lapses), laughter, prosody, facial expression and gesture are organized within activities and across activities. There are three recourses that I rely on in chapters 4, 5 and 6 to suggest that the conversational

practices observed are relevant. First, where appropriate I report the frequency and distribution of a determined practice across activities and in some instances compare or contrast it with similar practices in young adult settings or in other institutional contexts in studies. I explore the context of single instances of a particular emotion category in detail to show how it plays out and its role in the ongoing activity. Finally, I take into account the way in which fellow classmates and the teacher in the selected instances respond to speaker turns. For example, often learners will treat their own turn or those of classmates as problematic through laughter. As such, they mark sensitive junctures, but also affectively orient to them. Observations such as this are analyzed systematically in the ways described above in order to shed light on the range of common and idiosyncratic affective behaviors that are discussed throughout this dissertation.

Life-stage related perspectives on social-image and purpose in learning are noted as influences on affective behavior and on perspectives documented in this study. The notion that motives for engaging in social interaction and the way we think about our purpose impacts and may constrain social behavior is important, but has been explored primarily in institutions outside of classroom environments such as in HIV couseling, Alcoholics Anonymous and courtrooms to name a few (Peräkylä, 1995; Arminen, 1996; Drew & Sorjonen, 1997). The constrained and stratified structure of institutional social interaction requires what Arminen (2005) calls a three-dimensional account of practice consisting of *beliefs/expert knowledge*, *interaction itself* (discourse), and *mode of organization*. This general configuration is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Mundane Interacton	Types of Institutional Interaction		
	B	**B'**	**Beliefs, Knowledge**
	(ii)	**(ii)**	**(interaction ideology)**
I	**I'**	**I"**	**Interaction**
	(od)	**(od)**	**(organizational discourse)**
	O	**O'**	**Mode of Organization**

Figure 1. Adapted from Arminen (2005)

The author refers to sets of knowledge, beliefs, interaction and mode of organization as generic

dimensions in any social domain. The main difference between institutional talk and mundane

talk the author argues is that in everyday conversation, they are pre-given, readily at hand and are

not necessarily ordered. They are in free variation. Similar structures have been observed across

settings in which expert knowledge is routinely invoked and exchanged by participants, e.g., a

court trial. The present study demonstrates however that the cultural materials and knowledge

exchanged are not always confined to the *expert/inexpert* variety, though these do come into

play. What constitutes relevant information for exchange may be continually negotiated in some

settings, and thus knowledge and practices of *knowing* may originate from different actors in the

environment for different reasons. As such they do not fit neatly into binary categories. This has

interesting implications for the type of environment being invoked and the ways the elderly

learners manage the exchange of all kinds of information. It also has implications for those

emotions that are made relevant and those that are not because as activities shift, so too may

subject roles and orientations. One of the crucial things in actual interaction from a CA

perspective is that modes of thinking and organizing talk are sustained and renewed in

institutional practices and if either are shifted or transformed, the changes plausibly "become

observable and accountable for in the interaction" (Arminen, 2005, p. 40). This is pertinent to

the current research given that it remains to be seen empirically-speaking if and how such shifts are communicated among elderly adults in an informal L2 setting, by what affective means and to what affective ends. In other words, what is the observed quality of interpersonal relationships implied in the message when practices shift? (Gumperz, 1982).

While this dissertation rests on some principles of CA, the method is not adopted in a purist sense. To begin with, I've clearly presented more than the requisite CA 'sketch' of analytic mentality. (Schenkein, 1978). To apply only one analytic framework would be to limit descriptive possibilities and an understanding of the people, setting and events. As such, this report aims to describe practices from a more complex standpoint, with the goal of revealing if and when habits and ideosyncratic behaviors are influenced by different kinds of context and if so, what kind. In order to fully capture meaning behind affective practices, one may need to consult participants about their experiences on occasion and about the social workings of the setting more generally. To analyze something as relevant, a researcher must have sufficient knowledge of the context in question and thus be able to "recognize what activities stand for to the parties themselves" (p.31). As a result of deficient knowledge and understanding of local practice, one may be required to seek out additional information in order to interpret and understand behavior. Microethnography is used in this case for just such a purpose because it provides the researcher with a better understanding of broad context for later microanalysis of interaction. For instance, Chapters 4 through 6, which use CA were inspired by more holistic observations in Chapter 3. In essence, the documentation of class activities and behaviors over the course of data collection using multiple methods is useful because it motivates further and more detailed investigation.

3. Integrating Methods

Maynard (2005) lays out some general strengths and limitations of ethnography and CA from a practitioner's perspective and offers up several suggestions for those looking to integrate them. One observation the author makes is that neither framework is sufficient on its own to fully understand the complexities of social interaction and the social worlds, relations, conventions and underlying order that inform and make up said interactions. In order to capture the reality of interactional order and the fullness of experiences it is necessary to draw from both. Moerman (1988) asserts that "sequential analysis reveals the organization of interaction and thereby provides the local context of actions, while ethnography can contribute the meanings and social conditions of the scenes in which the actions occur" (p. 57). Hanks (1996) makes a similar case for the integration of methods by highlighting the importance of emergent elements of everyday social interaction and those that transcend the proximate realm and derive meaning from social background. The author notes, "The surrounding talk in which any expression is embedded is its first tie to context, [and there are] larger scale formations in need of analytic appreciation" (pp. 185, 223). One way to get at richer and more relevant forms of interpetation is with proper analytic control of ethnographic information so that data in which important features of social organization reside don't get lost in the methodolgical shuffle. This is no small feat because it entails that one directly engage the tension inherent in descriptive methodologies. Erickson (1982) sums up this *forest for the trees* dilemna in the following way:

"Research focused on highly specific accounts of individual thought and action in relation to the immediate environment necessarily leaves the wider contextual circumstances of social life and culture less clearly accounted for than if one takes the broader view of standard ethnography. Thus in research on human learning, general social organization, and culture, the holism so dear to general ethnography would necessarily become periphery rather than core. There is an inherent tension between scope and specificity in social research. The breadth of view provided by general ethnography is purchased at the inevitable cost of fuzziness of focus" (p. 152).

Maynard (2005) suggests that a control of focus can be practiced by "posing questions about broader analytic categories or structures observed such as, 1) whether patterns identified are relevant to participants and if so, 2) whether they are consequential in the sense that participants' display, in their talk and interaction, and orientation to them" (p. 64). In the present research, practices of nonseriousness, assistance, realistic self-assessment and frustration are significant and are reflected with varying frequency in determined activities, speech exchange systems, participatory structures and mutual orientations to language use (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977). In turn, subjects' perspectives on classroom experience, learning purposes and age-related beliefs about social image and incompetence provide emic insight into such behaviors. That said, I, like most researchers have been forced to choose between "the wide-angle shot of the social world and the close-up shot" (Erickson, 1982, p. 153). Given that this research investigates how elderly individuals relate to others in a language learning setting and how they manage their learning synchronically and diachronically in the short-term, the analytic close-up predominates. Notwithstanding, I account for context in the broad sense where possible, on how activity is constrained by purpose and belief. In essence, I try and consider how "broad patterns influence the opportunities for human choice that are available in the immediate scenes" (Erickson, 1982, p. 153).

4. *Ethnography and its Explanatory Uses*

Dörnyei (2007) notes that, "ethnography is ideal for generating hypotheses about something unknown" (p. 133). This makes the method highly useful for investigating the ordinary behaviors of elderly language learners in the 'natural' setting of the classroom. Chapter 3 sets out to generate some initial hypotheses based on observations of the general type and structure of everyday classroom activities, with an eye on participant insights into why they want

to learn another language and what their motives for being their are. Using this initial information as a backdrop, Chapters 4 through 6 explore in more detail the ways in which affective behaviors are manifest on a local level both interpersonally and intra-personally. This type of inquiry is designed in part to show how social or cultural knowledge is exposed in the process of interaction and how people create their socio-emotional lifeworld by the way in which they behave and what they have to say about the behavior. Specifically within interactional sociolinguistics it is common to *triangulate* or consult multiple sources of data to provide a thick(er) description of the social (and emotional) world created. Participant observation, video-documentation and interviews are used in this study to gather information that contextualizes discursive analysis and provides insight into what participants were trying to achieve and how they felt about certain kinds of events (Boxer & Cohen, 2004b). While emic insights into specific practices or instances are not available in all examples, they are employed where possible for the reasons described above. Interview data and fieldnotes are similarly used to get a sense of the everyday workings of the informal class setting, the people, their insights into learning language and what they are inclined to think or feel about certain kinds of events. This study takes emotion to be socially meaningful and emotional expressions are arguably organized in ways that maximize meaning (Cicchetti & Schneider-Rosen, 1984). As such, it prioritizes methodological approaches that understand emotion to be communicative signals "tied to the back-and-forth flow of conversation" (Bateson's perspective highlighted in Goodwin et al., 2012). This research further adopts the view that while affective behavior is a social product used to respond to local needs and goals, it may simultaneously be constrained by a range of knowledge going into the learning situation. As a result, certain core emotions (extactic joy, fear, anger) are not observed in the classroom studied, this does not mean they are not 'tamed' into affects that are more

relevant to what subjects are trying to achieve. Counter-examples are contrasted with more frequent practices with the aim of further highlighting and explaining their social and functional importance.

5. *Ethnography in SLA*

In short order, the use of ethnography in L2 classroom research is a reflection of more general theoretical and empirical shifts occurring in second language acquistion (SLA) research since about the late seventies and throughout the nineties from a focus on program-product relations to process-product or process-process (Chaudron, 2000). In other words, there has been a distinct shift to foci outside of the mythical 'black box.' I would also add there has been a shift toward the view that language learners actually have brains, rather than black boxes and that understanding how neural systems work and conspire over the life span with needs, goals, opportunity and experience, may tell us more about why language development is so unpredictable in adults (Schumann et al., 2004, Lee et al., 2012). The increased use of ethnography and other descriptive approaches (CA, action research etc.) have accompanied these shifts, which to my mind is a good thing for the field of SLA given that it has enabled the field to go beyond the traditional psycho-cognitive realm into a social, usage-based one. This is advantageous because it creates a bi-directional relationship between theory and practice (Van Lier, 1997). Watson-Gegeo (1997) cites several approaches to classroom ethnography, and similar to the present investigation, much research has been found to incorporate a mixture of approaches (Duff, 2002). Ethnographies have been particularly evident in bilingual or mainstream L2 classrooms and have several advantages, including the ability to account for levels of engagement in learning, peer interaction and active thought processes. They also have the potential to identify variables that have not been previously acknowledged (Ellis, 2008).

16

Another of the profitable shifts in thinking brought about by descriptive research regards how learners have been traditionally characterized in SLA. For example, there has been a change regarding the psycholinguistic notion of the 'idealized speaker' or language learner who has as her/his ultimate goal the complete monolingual command of another language. Some SLA researchers have more recently referred to this as the monolingual bias and advocate approaches that emphasize multilingualism and multiple competencies as an alternative to monolingual theories (Ortega, 2013). The reality is, people of all stripes engage in types and degrees of language use, acquisition and learning for different reasons. Purpose, as we shall see is highly relevant to the present investigation of elderly language learners, as it may constrain both activity and emotional processing of events. A more flexible view of multilingualism in learners past puberty (in this case way past) is useful and made possible by an ethnographic approach. The ontological view that learners are not 'inherently defective' (Firth & Wagner, 1997), and may appropriate language for different reasons, to enact multi-competences for example (Rampton, 1997a; Cook, 1999) is basically a sociolinguistic one, which is why it has often been explored in discursively–oriented ethnographies. Several initiatives have arisen from SLA research in recent years to capture and portray classrooms as the complex social learning milleu they are and thus get at the practice-based side of acquisition. Among these are ethnographies used to determine the effects of the environment on learning (Watson-Gegeo, 1997, Harklau, 2005; Toohey, 2008). In all, ethnographic studies have contributed different findings to what we know about language learning conduct in classrooms; however, few investigate emotion as a situated social phenomenon and still fewer have explored the role of affective practice in cognitizing. The ordinary social worlds of elderly language learners and teachers is essentially uncharted territory, given that to date there have been almost no descriptive studies that explore classroom language

learning in this age group. Thus, there is much to learn on many fronts. Dornyei (2007) notes, "the ethnographic approach is particularly useful for exploring uncharted territories and understanding social processes from the participants' perspective. It is an excellent way of 'crossing cultures' and gaining insight into the life of organizations, institutions and communities" (pp. 132-33). In short, what researchers understand a particular *lifeworld* to be and how it is lived by members, may converge or diverge with the understanding of said members, this necessitates going beyond conversational practices. It means going from general to specific levels of social organization and back again to general (Erickson, 1982). It is from this inductive and reflective process that these research findings emerge.

6. *Understanding Embodied Emotion as a Social Phenomenon: Insights from Neurobiology*

The present dissertation is essentially based on the idea that semiosis, cognition and emotion are "distributed among neural structures, ecosocial processes and bodily activity" (Thibault, 2005, pp. 49-150), and in many cases to "the other, their actions and utterances" (Linell, 2009, p. 146). As mentioned previously, the experiences of elderly persons learning language have scarcely been looked at in second language research. Thus it is hard to know which questions to start asking. For the purposes of this study, we can begin by asking about the nature of interaction in classrooms with elderly participants and from there we might ask whether such interaction is shaped in a particular ways and how. In other words, what is the valence of more common affective behaviors? Overall, findings in this case suggest that affect and learning are shaped concurrently and are understood in ways that are perhaps unique to the age group studied. Interesting neurbiological research emerging in the last fifteen years or so suggests that under normal circumstances of aging (e.g. cases where no significant brain disease, cognitive decline or depression are noted), areas of the brain associated with quick and dirty emotional

18

processing and immediate reward (Le Doux, 1996) may be up-regulated by evolutionarily more recent areas correlated with value relativism, prosocial behaviors, acknowledgment of uncertainty and its effective management and pragmatic social knowledge (Meeks and Jeste, 2009). Although there is not as much data available on the role of neurotransmitters, the researchers propose a role for dopamine and serotonin as well as for the neuropeptides vasopressin and oxytocin. Just what kind of function each of these has and to what degree they are implicated is still being debated. Similarly relevant studies in social psychology suggest that there may be an *optimization* of emotional experience late in life based on perceived limitations on time (Carstensen et al, 2003, Carstensen, 1993; Charles et al., 2003). Such a focus on overarching goals, researchers argue may result in the pursuit of more meaningful social interactions and a more effective regulation of emotions in some cases. Such differences have been further evidenced in variable activation of the amygdala among younger and older adults when processing negative and positive emotional stimuli (Mather et al., 2004). While clearly, we cannot point to specific practices and claim they have one-to-one neural correlates, or that they are representative of all elderly populations, insights from recent studies in these areas are useful because they enable us to understand some aspects of the present findings from a biological standpoint and make it possible to develop one or two hypotheses about what occurs on the outside as related the inside. In essence, while ethnography and CA lay the foundation, they alone make it difficult to answer other kinds of questions about the world learners and teachers inhabit. This is why toward the end of Chapter 6 relevant neurobiological findings are discussed (neural correlates) in relation to behavior, in order to better understand what participants do and the age-related cognitizing that informs such 'doings.' Such a cross-section of findings from

different disciplines may shed some light on language learning behavior as it relates to frontolymbic functioning and monoaminergic pathways late in life.

7. The Research Site and Participants

This study was conducted in an advanced-beginning Spanish class at a community center for seniors in the Los Angeles vicinity. Beyond the initial goal of studying elderly language learners and their teacher in real time learning, there were no exclusion criteria per se for the study. Thus, once a research site had been identified, the broad aims of the study and research interest were communicated to the center activities director. She then recommended a beginning and an intermediate class as two possible settings within the overall research site. With the verbal permission of the instructors and students, and after an initial observation of each class, it became clear that the physical layout of the advanced-beginning class (rows of tables versus one large conference table) would be more conducive to recording activity in a way that was more discreet. In all, 12 learners and 1 teacher (Mary), ranging in age from 55 to 90 were recruited for the study. All of the subjects agreed to participate in the discourse portion of the ethnographic research, 11 of which agreed to be video-recorded at each class session, and one of which consented to video recording but preferred to remain off camera. Nine of the 12 participants (including the teacher) consented to an interview. Table 1 below details some general information about the participants, including their names and age range and how long they had been attending the class when fieldwork began.

Participant	Age	Time on task
Mary	87	5 years
Lina	Late 60s	3 years
Hana	Late 60s	2 years
Vera	90	5 years
Hans	89	5 years
Ellie	Early 80s	4 years
Hal	Late 70s	5 years
Milly	Late 70s	5 years
Jim	Late 60s	3 years
Nina	Mid 50s	2 years
Susi	Early 60s	2.5 years
Julia	Early 70s	1 week
Betty	Early 70s	1 week

Table 1. Participant ages and time on task

While participant ages fall into a range, the average participant in the study was about 75. With the exception of two newcomers (Julia and Betty), most subjects had been attending the class on an ongoing basis for anywhere between 2 and 5 years. This kind of information is relevant because age-related goals of learning, purpose, needs and time on task (time dedicated to learning) are discussed throughout this report as crucial variables in how emotion is situated and for the kind of learning environment created. While the subjects' professions or other personal background information is not a focal point of this report, it does become relevant on occasion and is discussed as part of the events in which it emerges. For example, leaving the

room to speak on a cell phone with someone connected to one's business during an activity may have consequences for one's ability to reincorporate into the activity and proceed in a competent manner. This kind of ethnographic information is used to contextualize what occurs in activities from an emic (insider) angle.

8. *Data Collection and Transcription Methods*

The data analyzed in the chapters to follow were collected over 7 consecutive months of field work in the classroom setting. In all, 28 hours of participant observation were conducted and corresponding fieldnotes were collected by the principle investigator in the study. As part of observation, 20 hours of video footage of everyday classroom interaction were recorded and 2 hours of classroom interaction were audio recorded along with 10 hours of participant interviews. Where possible, documents such as articles used for oral translation activities were also procured, though specific features of texts do not feature prominently in data analysis. The contents of fieldnotes and audiorecorded interviews were transcribed while the period of data collection was still ongoing. These general (non-conventionalized) transcriptions were used to get a general sense of their contents, how the setting was organized and to develop some initial assertions. Toward the end of data collection, video footage and audiorecorded interactions were transcribed according to the transcription conventions outlined in Jefferson (1985, appendix B) and Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). The ongoing process of observation and data transcription generated some mid-level assertions, which were re-worked, as observations emerging from different data sources were cross-indexed and analyzed in finer detail. Thus, the categories and interactive patterns analyzed and discussed throughout this report are derived from comparisons of data across sources, a process of analytic induction (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Examples of specific practices or participant viewpoints outlined in chapters 3

through 6 were selected contingent on their frequency of occurrence, their relevance to the topic of situated emotion and in the case of interactive behaviors, on the contextual details of the interaction and responses of interlocutors.

9. *Brief Thoughts on Methodological Individualism*

Linell (2009) points out that a basic starting point in psychology is the "monologist assumption of individualism" (p. 148). That is, a study of the human mind and knowledge as principally an individual's possession, which contrasts with the dialogic view of individuals as *social persons* with minds and brains that are social in function and in origin (Dunbar, 2003; Lewis, 2002). The psychological notion of the isolated individual engaged in sense-making has deep implications for how collective behavior is studied because it is assummed that we have to approach it from the vantage point of individuals, the individual as self-evident starting point for any "real" explanation (Lukes, 1977). This kind of theoretical distinction is relevant in that the methodological approaches used in this project are chosen because they are suited to looking at behavior as both an individual and distributed phenomenon. For example, a conversation is a kind of distributed cognition (Linell et al., 2001), and when we interview subjects, at some point in the interview we may be looking at multivoiced minds (Marková et al., 2007). In other words, what subjects say may be related to what a classmate or teacher has already said in the past or may say in the future. The concept of the *individual*, with independently motivated, interior thoughts, goals, feelings and dispositions is treated in particular ways (or not at all) in some hard constructivist approaches to human behavior. While I hold the view that dialogically-oriented methods are amenable to emotion research, they are adopted here with the caveat that what a person does, thinks or feels is sometimes, though not always interdependent with what other say, think or feel. In other words, I reject an either or approach by claiming that subjects' behaviors

are neither independent from or codependent with the thoughts and actions of their interlocutors. Thus, intersubjectivity from a moderate social constructivist perspective is not based on collective consciousness either, it "resides in the behavior that connects individual minds" (Linell, 2009, p. 152, emphasis added) and as we shall see, it resides in the behavior that connects affects. A detailed philosophical account of how individualsim and thought are characterized from interactionist perspectives is beyond the scope of this chapter; needless to say, it is worth distinguishing what is meant in this dissertation when referring to learners as individuals who act collectively on their environment. Erickson (1982) notes that situated learning entails just this sort of adaptive and mutual arrangement of the environment:

"While the individual is the locus for learning, this learning does not take place in isolation. Learning by individuals occurs as a reflexively adaptive transaction between the immediate environment and the individual, in which each stimulates change in the other. The learning environment often includes other people. It sometimes includes other people in the role of teacher. That is, one who deliberately arranges aspects of the social and physical environment with the intention of stimulating and assisting the learning of another individual or individuals" (p. 151)

From a methodological perspective, the degree to which actions and thoughts are found to be interdependent in practice is likely impacted by the way we get our information, for example, a focus group may be more likely to elicit distributed cognitions, memories and emotions than a one-on-one ethnographic interview. To address this, I attempt where appropriate to include interview narratives from several subjects that converge on a point of view, though these may be expressed in different ways. Viewpoints that are less frequent or diverge from the norm are also considered important and are discussed as counter-examples to evidence. I also include frequency tables in some cases to illustrate the distribution of a particular practice in relation to others. In short, though accounts of participants' turn-taking, procedurally relevant behavior and

documentation of everyday practices and insights into behavior may not cover all bases, these

approaches and frameworks go descriptively further when used in conjunction.

CHAPTER 3

An Ethnographic Report of Activity Structure and Learning Purpose

1. *Introduction*

The ways age-related learning goals/needs factor into language learning behavior are poorly understood, and likely impact how goal difficulties and failure are perceived (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). It seems that if one wants to gain an understanding of situated emotion in a given classroom culture, one place to start is to get a sense of what the participants' motives for being there are. As I argue later in this dissertation, while purpose constrains from the outside in, age-related needs and expectations may also constrain social interactions from the inside out shaping how participants manage said interactions. In effect, there is a mutual influence between top down context and knowledge and bottom up brain/behavior. As this chapter will show, discovering the *purpose* for language learning is at least as important as discovering individual goals, though both are probably necessary for understanding situated goal-driven behaviors. The objective of the present report is to present readers with a series of vignettes that provide a snapshot of the classroom setting in terms of key activities and events encountered. Some events and activities were designed to learn language as we will see, whereas in other instances, the learning focus was elsewhere. As mentioned in Chapter 2, a central aim is to provide broad context for the discursive practices described in subsequent chapters. A further aim is to describe the participants' motives for learning language, and discuss how such motives shape the events and activities one finds. In other words, I focus on the everyday events as they relate to and reflect *situation, purpose* and *need*. A few ways this is done is to examine more common activities and their structure and discuss the ways they reflect the learning situation, and also to discuss them in relation to what we might find in more traditional classrooms. This discussion

reveals some findings about the relationship between activity, participation and affect, and about how cognition (thinking) may influence affective practice and vice-versa. A second way is to look at the culturally specific terms used by some subjects to characterize their language proficiency as a group and value their experience. Finally, common motives for learning language are examined in order to begin a discussion about how overarching goals may constrain activity and judgments in a broad sense. This is intended to set the stage for later discursive findings. In essence, such a microethnographic description accounts for activity and understandings at the community level (Gutierrez, 1994). As mentioned in Chapter 2, descriptions provided in discursively oriented ethnography are born in part from documented dialogic patterns (Duranti, 1997). As such, our understanding of behavioral patterns is insufficient without some knowledge of how members "represent their own actions (p. 87). The chapter relies on essential ethnographic data from field notes and interviews in order to provide such a sketch of the activity and emic thinking alluded to above. To economize time and prioritize descriptive possibilities, this report is not designed to present a detailed account of the complex social milieu and structure of the senior center, instead it provides a sketch of a classroom setting where activities and beliefs may reflect in some ways the broader function of the center. Thus, readers will get a feel for the place, but indirectly through the lens of one learning environment and its social actors. When possible, interview data is used to provide insight regarding particular events and further contextualize them. This ethnography captures a holistic picture of the world of elderly learners and their teacher whose environment, activities and affective behaviors are influenced by some of the variables mentioned above. Some variables are only peripherally related to language learning, but are nevertheless consequential to behavior. For example, we will see that underlying reasons why people show up may have

consequences for what they consider to be legitimate activity. Capturing holism is important

because as Firth (1957) notes, aspects of culture or categories of behavior are better described

and explained in relation to the whole systems of which they are a part. This is necessary also

because in later chapters participants are interpreted as actively (though perhaps unconsciously)

constructing emotional categories through praxis in ways that meet their needs. In short, the

following data show that situation, age-related purpose and needs have consequences for activity,

for how language learning is managed and thus for thinking and learning itself.

2. *Activities and Their Structure*

       There were essentially three main types of activities in this classroom setting, which can

roughly be broken into the categories of *Oral Translation, Recitative Conversation*, and *Teacher*

Storytelling or what I will call *Exploratory Cultural Learning.* This last category is actually

composed of different activities including teacher narratives, appreciating cultural images from a

calendar or book, singing and discussing aspects of Spanish-speaking and non-Spanish speaking

culture. The flow charts in Figure 2 below characterize and contrast the three patterns of

interaction associated with each activity. They are a further representation of the kinds of access

participants had to particular kinds of interaction and the broad organization of affective practice

in such interaction. While a more detailed sequential analysis is reserved for later chapters, the

ways discourse constructs different participation and the relative situation of affective displays

are presented. Dotted lines indicate an optional though relatively frequent behavior in a particular

slot.

(Type 1) Recitative Oral Translation

Teacher selects speaker

Teacher mediates ——————— Learner reads then translates ---------- Classmates mediate (less frequent)

(learner maybe evaluates own performance (**affective display**)

Teacher evaluates performance —— Classmates evaluation (**affective display**)

Teacher selects new speaker   Learner repair

(Type 2) Recitative Conversation

Teacher writes conversation questions ------ **Possible joint learner affect**

Teacher selects speaker

Learner responds
May evaluate/acknowledge problematic talk in or following turn (**affective display**)

Classmates align (**affective display**)

Teacher evaluates positively   Teacher initiates repair —— Classmates repeat repair initiation or provide gloss (**affective display**)

Teacher selects new speaker

Learner carry out repair-------Classmates repair

(Type 3) Storytelling/Exploratory Cultural Learning

Teacher launches telling of story/or narrative, shows picture (**affective display during telling**)

Learner affective stance toward telling/information

Learners listen/ display understanding (**affective display**)   Learners display lack of understanding (head shaking)

Teacher **emotional stance**　　　　Teacher checks comprehension with
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　repetition of lexeme or question

Learner stance/**affective alignment**

Learner/s confirm need　- - - - - - - - -　multiple classmates may join
for repair **(affective display)**　　　　word/meaning search

Teacher carries out repair/provides　- - - - - - - -　**(collective affective uptake)**
verbal gloss

Teacher continues telling

Figure 2. (1) Oral Translation, (2) Recitative Conversation, (3) Storytelling/Exploratory

Before discussing the above activities/interaction structures, it is worth noting that

normative everyday happenings in the setting reflect patterns that are different in some ways

from that of a traditional classroom setting, and similar in other ways. There are a couple of

factors that distinguish this setting from more traditional ones, one of which is the distribution of

classroom activities. The other has to do with the transitions between activities. Whereas in a

more conventional second or foreign language class, time may be spent on a predetermined set of

activities (e.g., speaking, reading, writing, listening) using materials that have been designed for

a specific level of proficiency, activities in this case acquire a more improvised feel. That is

because there is no set curriculum, and as a result curriculum is quite literally, pulled from

whatever resources the teacher (Mary) had at her disposal. According to one learner (Ellie), they

had talked about finding a workbook, but never really gave one a try because as she put it "I

don't know if that'll work here." When asked why not, she added "that's for a formal class"

(Interview, March 2012). Other students expressed similar views or simply said that they didn't

want to put pressure on people to buy one, because the class was "voluntary" (e.g., not being

taught or attended with an expected outcome). From this, we can begin to surmise that learners view a textbook and perhaps a strict approach as inappropriate to the informal conditions of the class, and as such class materials should also reflect these conditions. This turns out to be true in all but one case, which is explored in Chapter 5. Because interview questions related to using a textbook surfaced spontaneously and late in the process of conducting interviews, teacher views on approach or textbook use are not available, nevertheless, as we shall learn, the teacher's focus, learning philosophy and relaxed style are made evident in her actions, the materials she brings and in the distribution of activities more generally.

The planning of core class activities did not happen 'on-the-fly', given that the instructor liked to have a sense of what they would do ahead of time, yet activities were sometimes combined on the fly (Interview with Mary, December, 2011). For example, while she might choose an article to translate for the day, other activities such as storytelling were sometimes 'built' in a more spontaneous fashion around whatever reading or visual materials she selected. As Figure 2 shows, there are three main categories of activity; yet, the charts only show types, not transitions between them. Overall, there was an improvised feel to the setting. As one participant noted in her interview "you never know what she's gonna bring or what we'll end up doing, I didn't used to like that, but I like it now" (Interview with Lina, February, 2012). Others simply commented that the class was "not very structured" (Interview with Ellie, April, 2012). On a few days Mary spent much of the hour telling stories or talking about family, often code-switching back and forth from Spanish to English. On many days participants spent the time orally translating an article. There were also times when Mary shifted from one activity to another in a spontaneous fashion. For example, they would be in the middle of translating and Mary might launch a narrative which were sometimes lengthy, about what they were reading or a

related experience she had. As such, the focus/goal of activity would shift from producing language to trying to understand it (Fieldnotes, March, 2012). This also implied inevitable shifts between activity that was more teacher focused and activity that was learner-focused, which in nearly all cases appears to be readily accepted by students. The creation of learning foci entailed bringing in readings or visual materials from travel or cultural magazines, including pictures that the group would appreciate together. On other days it entailed teacher recitations of poetry or storytelling about the recent or distant past as a form of listening comprehension. Such an activity was plausibly also used by Mary to engage in nostalgic talk and share experience (see Chapter 6). Finally, from time to time the instructor initiated conversational activities, usually by writing questions which learners would take turns asking and answering. In a few instances she also launched spontaneous conversations with students by asking them questions outright. Conversational asking and answering was designed to exercise speaking skills as one can imagine and was the least common of the three activities outlined. Such exchanges are particularly notable for their affective qualities which are outlined in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Such an analysis of reactions to speaking or having spoken confirm the assertion that conversation was overall less frequent and thus not as familiar. Perhaps the activity that occurred most predictably (and at a certain time) was the warm up. This was commonly carried out by taking turns at reading and translating excerpts from a short narrative written on the board. Such narratives were generally about past or future events, or about people at the center or in class. At first blush, the warm-up activities appear to be like most other translation activities that occurred, yet they are distinguished by their role of keeping everyone informed about events that might be considered relevant; a social bulletin of sorts. On one occasion, the teacher wrote a paragraph about an elderly musician named Mario who was her friend and had played guitar for the class. The

narrative about Mario's back problems and illness from surgery eventually lead to a 15 minute negotiation about the meaning of *flaco* (skinny) and concerned inquiries from students about his current state of health. (Fieldnotes, February, 2012). As mentioned above, such information sharing through teacher narratives had a dual emotional function which is explored in slightly more detail later in the dissertation. Such long negotiations also suggest that the group was not in a rush to get from one activity to the next. In other words, time was appropriated in a culturally specific way and was shaped to fit the casual nature of the learning situation and thus, local needs. Taken together, the basic design of these more canonical learning activities is to appropriate L2 Spanish in some way (e.g. improve pronunciation or receptive language ability). Indeed, many (though not all) class sessions featured activities that might develop one or more of the skills targeted in traditional classrooms. At the same time, a diverse range of activities fall within the category of exploratory learning that were not focused on Spanish or Spanish-speaking culture at all. As mentioned, it was not uncommon for Mary to launch stories in English about her travels, family or other cultural topics. They once spent 25 minutes talking about Sidney Poitier and the defiant stance he took toward the racism he faced in Florida before his acting career. Following this was another lengthy story told by the teacher who as a 19 year old native of Colombia went to Alabama to study and felt shock at seeing how segregated society was. Stories led to stories and often brought about some kind of overt alignment or affective stance from classmates and between classmates (Fieldnotes, January, 2012). Thus the nature of activity in the setting reflects an informal, emergent learning in many cases, where the class was led in explorations of diverse kinds of cultural topics, mostly events that occurred in the past. This left one with the impression that learning language was perhaps not the only objective. The oral translation kind of activity appears to be the most standard of all for language learning in

33

both structure and goal. This is because the activity was often organized to produce more 'right' answers, for example in the way they pronounced and translated readings. Such an orientation is likely consequential to the structure of participation and to mediation from participants other than the teacher. For example, note in oral translation (Type 1) that there are overall less slots where fellow classmates mediate in affective or dydactic ways. This is plausibly because as Gutierrez (1994) argues, recitative activities feature more tightly managed or 'regulated' discourse and may limit learner opportunities for learners to elaborate talk, and opportunities for talk related to learning to flow between peers. On the other hand, the discursive boundaries of other activities are more relaxed and bring about more affective (and sometimes didactic) mediation between learners. (see Types 2 and 3). We can deduce from such participation structures that there were activities where mutual student involvement was more likely and activities where it was less likely. Subsequent chapters show how such joint attention gathering is accomplished. We can also surmise from the information in Figure 2 that while all activities had some instructive function, how they were carried out had consequences for who mediated. In terms of the distribution of activities overall, a good portion of classes were spent reading out loud and translating (51%). Exploratory learning occurred less frequently (28%) but was still a somewhat prominent activity, and conversation (about 21%) occurred more rarely, but was not so rare that it was extinct. It is important to note the differences in activity ocurring in classroom settings, because as Gutierrez et al., (1995) demonstrate, kinds of activity matter for participation, and structures of interaction matter for the opportunities that are created. The authors further show through an analysis of classroom discourse that there are *underlives* (third spaces) in classrooms where learners and teachers construct interactional opportunities with the potential for more authentic and meaningful interaction. Subsequent chapters investigating the

conversational structure of activities show that third spaces are created more often in conversation or exploratory learning and have a pronounced affective dimension. Emotional displays are embedded as contextualizing and organizing features of the interaction. While there is certainly a 'recitative' component in this setting, given the tendency for some activities to be very teacher-centered (see oral translation or storytelling structure), Figure 2 also illustrates that where meaning negotiation is involved, less rigid activity structures bring about a more symmetrical engagement from both teacher and learners. This is crucial because it provides interactional spaces in which classmates affectively and dydactically build on each other's utterances. Note in the above flow charts how slots with problematic communication (repair) are often followed by some form of mediation from both teacher and fellow learners. Considering that Type 2 and 3 participation structures reflect more learner-learner intervention as a whole, we see a preference for more distributed kinds of sense-making and shared understandings. Mary appears to provide the more affectively neutral didactic response, while speakers and fellow classmates do the job of framing the problem (Schumann, 1997) and thus smoothing the instructive component. What is interesting about this overall is that it shows that there may be joint attempts to influence processing strategies (how problems are managed). What is a result of such learner-learner problem-framing? One possibility is that further and similar kinds of positive framing and problem management can occur when engaged in learning. While there is not enough evidence to claim that such patterns of behavior directly impact learner judgements per se, such an impact is observed within the interactions themselves and in the way participants reason about their experiences. Such a back-and-forth does not exclude the teacher, it simply shows that learners play a central role for other learners in active forms of reasoning about language use, especially that which is flawed in some way. As Gutierrez (1994) notes, over time

members come to expect certain forms of orientation (scripts) after repeated interactions in contexts with particular social and linguistic features. While the author approaches this from a more instructive angle, it is arguable that pattered affective orientations can also become frames of reference for conduct (Mehan, 1979). While the above discussion starts to shed light on the place and activity from the inside, the following vignettes and interview data reveal how overarching purpose and motives may influence events and activity from the outside, as well as judgements about events.

3. *Seeing More Than the Bottom of the Whale: Goals Versus Purpose for Learning Language*

The previous section starts to describe how categories of activity are reflective of a kind of learning situation (e.g. an informal, more exploratory one). We further discovered how certain activities (namely conversation and storytelling) contain less restricted discourse structures in which the 'right' answer is negotiated and understanding can be established in a distributed fashion. In such less restricted exchanges important kinds affective peer mediation (emotion signals) also occur and help to organize activities by framing them in ways that will be discussed in subsequent chapters. As the following data set illustrates, motives for showing up on a voluntary basis and engaging in language learning are attributable to a variety of factors. While such reasons are varied in a certain sense, they converge in a manner that reflect common needs and concerns. Some of the motives for learning language are outlined in the following quotes:

"For me it is primarily mental exercise. I felt that if I take another language and use that somehow, that probably my brain would last a little longer-ha-ha, as opposed to sitting idle. But my real interest is being around the people. It's being in a group that I <u>know</u> I can talk to, that can talk to me. I know what their difficulties are, they know what mine are. In other words, it keeps the mind busy in that way" (Inteview with Sam, October, 2011).

"I wanted to keep my brain-I <u>knew</u> I better do something-ha-ha-ha. I read a lot and so when I was a girl growing up in Germany we learned English, but all we did was <u>listening.</u> Here we talk. I came to be with the people. I feel at home. I don't come for the Spanish, I don't have to learn Spanish anymore" (Interview with Vera, October, 2011).

"It's like going to the gym for you brain. It's 90% learning." (Interview with Ana, March, 2012).

"Part of this anti-aging process is to keep your brain active. So everybody's trying, though not always getting it right. The truth is if you don't use it you lose it--in every part of your body-ha-ha-ha-ha. Your brain and your body go downhill" (Interview with Lina, February, 2012).
"I'm in this to share my experiences, where I come from and, also learn from them. (Interview with Mary, December, 2012).

"First, there was a need because I had a helper at home who speaks Spanish, so I started to come here. But then the need disappeared because another lady came that spoke English, but my interest stayed. Also, we want to maintain in our mind something that is new, instead of going backwards-ha-ha. Whatever [Mary] teaches, I don't know it-ha-ha. So it's always interesting. I like the exposure to types of people, there are people from all over in our class. It's nice to know different things. We call it in Chinese, a frog on the bottom of a whale. So you see just a very narrow view, because all you see is just the bottom of the whale, and then the wrong sky" (Interview with Lina, February, 2012).

The above quotes point to a shared overarching goal, which is to keep the mind active by

engaging with others who understand your needs. Schumann (1997, 2001) proposes after Scherer

(1984a), that motivation relies upon the way events are actively evaluated along several

dimension including novelty, pleasantness, goal/need significance, coping mechanisms, and self-

and social image. While delving into these theories is beyond the present focus, goals and needs

do come into play in ways that are unique. For example, when asked why they were learning

Spanish, many subjects responded that they attended the class in order to obtain some cognitive

benefit. More specifically, many express a desire to actively engage their brain in order to avoid

or arrest memory loss, as opposed to sitting back and waiting for the process of aging to happen

to them. Essentially, collective needs are created because cognitive challenges have begun to

creep in. A search for a way to do something to that frustrating process ensues. It should be noted

that laughter occurred regularly in interviews when talking about the pitfalls of aging. This was a

sense of levity toward the facts associated with their state of affairs, which is replicated in their

affective behavior in the classroom. It also suggests that the memory lapses they speak of are not

severe enough to be shattering or threatening to core competencies (Goffman, 1959). In other words, forgetting how to conjugate a verb is clearly not as serious as forgetting where one lives. Perspectives about language learning and memory point to an underlying *use it or lose it* attitude, both in and outside of the class with others at the center. On four occasions over six months Mary (the teacher) brought up scientific research on the benefits of bilingualism and foreign language learning as a potential way to prevent cognitive decline. In one such class comment she touts the findings of such studies. "Creo que es cierto y muy valioso porque como dicen aquí, if you don't use it you lose it." --*I think the study is right and very valuable, because as they say here, if you don't use it you lose it* (Field notes, February, 2012). The instructor apparently shares the perspective that language learning is a way to *exercise* the brain and as such combat the effects of aging on it. She thus uses the information to portray other language learning as a useful and relevant tool in the latter part of life. A search for common themes in interviews reveals that learners seek out those activities that are meaningful to them. For example, Sam, Vera, Lina, Mary and others are regulars in activities occurring in and outside of the senior center, including trips, painting, singing, gardening and yoga. This raises an interesting question as to whether the language-learning environment afforded opportunities not found in other places. There is some evidence that it was a unique site for developing a certain kind of skill. For example the following excerpts reveal that the class provides access to different kinds of people, and thus to different kinds of social and cultural knowledge.

"I would say [the class] opens a door into a new ability to relate to people. It's about relating and learning. Relating to people on a human level and learning from them in turn, from their experiences of a whole different culture. It's about the people, and the people in turn can tell the history and tell the culture. The door's opening into their mind and experiences." (Interview with Jim, November, 2011)

"The language class gives you a different perspective and you don't always have that. I think it's important that people REALIZE, open your mind! What do you have to lose. You're not losing your mind, your gaining it." (Interview with Vera, October, 2011)

These and other excerpts reveal that learners derive meaningful experiences from their exposure to and interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds. They also elucidate that the kind of knowledge gained in class entails the give and take of perspective. It is from this exchange of information that cultural knowledge is gained. As Jim says "the door is opening to mind and experiences." The discursive analysis in subsequent chapters shows that in a certain sense, learners inadvertently enact these views by providing each other access to events in ways that are relevant and useful to them and their purpose as a group. They enact reason as well as emotion to tailor language-learning experiences.

4. *Summing up Purpose*

These data reveal that smaller objectives for learning language late in life are varied in a practical sense, but are common with regard to the social dimension of learning. Thus, when emic perspectives are understood as a *Gestalt*, they reveal that there is an overarching purpose for showing up to class. Such a purpose appears to trump other goals such as attainment. For example, overall less time was spent on conversation than on other types of activity and a likely result was that after three, four and five years many in class found conversation (a salient marker of linguistic knowledge) most challenging and limited. It appears this did not matter to most. The above insights show that if goals are numerous, they inevitably enter into competition. In this case, learning (big L), e.g., occupying the mind vis-à-vis *experience* wins out. This is signficant given that almost all of the participants (7 of 9) attribute a powerful social value to their experience, saying that learning from people and expanding one's perspective was essential to fighting idleness. Lina refers to the alternative as having a narrow view of the world or as *seeing*

the bottom of the whale, and then the wrong sky. Such perspectives sum up their purpose, which is to keep growing the mind and access all kinds of knowledge via interaction with different people who share some of the same needs and limitations. As a result, what is learned or how much language is learned may matter less. But, how does such a purpose constrain events and how they are processed? This question is examined next.

5. Classroom Culture, Purpose and Reason: Other Evidence

The following short vignettes further develop our understanding of the kind of classroom culture that was constructed, and the knowledge that was used to understand events. The data reveal that because of the informal nature of the setting and motives, broad expectations about what constituted legitimate activity and learning existed, but were kept fluid. As mentioned, the class had been ongoing for some time when the researcher showed up on the scene to start observation. Learners had been attending the class for varying amounts of time (see Table 1 in Chapter 2). With the exception of two participants who were newcomers, most had adopted the class as a regular part of their Thursday morning routine over many years. In the following example, the class is engaged in a warm-up in which Jim reads an excerpt from the board in Spanish. At this moment Eli (a former student) enters the class with a box of Sees chocolates for Mary, as it was almost Christmas. It was not uncommon for classmates (and former classmates) to bring Mary gifts such as paintings from an art class or fruits and vegetables from their garden. Sam was an avid gardener and brought her Satsumas in Winter and tomatoes in late Spring (Fieldnotes November 2011-May 2012). They exchange enthusiastic greetings and Eli hands her the chocolates. Many in class witness her response "chocolates, ooooh my goodness" and chime in simultaneously "ooh my goo:dness." They also turn to each other and smile or laugh, making side comments about how she loves chocolate and how Eli is a former student and so forth. Mary

and Eli inquire a bit more about family and travels, and as Mary is talking Eli nods and turns to

the rest of the class. Important actions come in lines 6 through 9.

Extract (1)

```
1       Mary: you know we watched a program on hungary the other day.,=
2       Eli:    you did,. (.) wow ((smiling))
3       Mary: and uh I was so fascinated. What a beautiful (.)
4       Eli:    [((turn toward classmates)) (.) ((wave at Hal)) (.) ((wave at Jim))=
5       Hal     [((smile and wave)).=
5       Mary: =what a beautiful place., ((looking toward students))
6       Eli:    you mean these people still didn't learn spanish,  [they are st-
                ((waving index finger at them)).
7       Class:                                                     [HA-HA-HA-ha-ha-
                                                                   ha-ha-ha-ha=
8       Hal:    =we're still waiting for our diplomas-ha-ha-ha-ha.=
9       Class: =ha-ha-ha-ha.
```

This encounter between a former student and the teacher as the class looks on is illustrative of

the informal nature of the setting and is further illustrative of how most approached situations

that diverged from everyday activity or expectations. In other words, classmates appear to both

readily accept and affectively embrace impromptu visitors or unexpected events. This excerpt is

also illustrative of the way most learners perceived their lack of progress. For example, we see

that many onlookers find Eli's comment humorous (line (7), and one learner (Hal) elaborates the

joke further by saying in a loud voice *w'ere still waiting for our diplomas,* which is followed by

more laughter (lines 8 and 9).   Such a collective response is interpeted as a nonserious stance

toward the implication that their efforts had not really gotten them anywhere, e.g., they were

aware but unthreatened by such a fact. It is this type of event that characterizes the informal

nature of the class and indexes their purpose for being there. In sum, such informality and

collective attunment to whatever is going on at the moment suggests a reasoning by feeling,

which can happen as a shortcut when we judge that an issue is "not crucial and would not have

significant consequences" (Schumann, 1997, p. 247). On rare occasions, Mary asked the class to complete an activity at home and bring their written answers to the next class. Below we see how 'turning in' answers could go.

Extract (2)

1	Mary:	did anybody write anything about these questions?
2	Class:	((begin pulling out papers))
3	Mary:	nina did. ((gazing at nina in back row)).
4	Hana:	˚**I didn't (.) I was too lazy.**˚ **((smiling, looking at Lina))**
5	Ana:	˚**I did.**˚ **I don't want you to check 'em though.-ha-ha. ((looking at Lina))**
6	Hal:	[((handing Mary paper)).
7	Mary:	I'll be happy to take it-anybody else?
8	Ana:	**we'll I don't wanna turn it in, (.) it's not official. ((looking at Mary)) ha-ha.**
9	Nina:	**((standing in front of Ana with paper)) please be with me. ((smiling, trying to get Ana's paper))**
10	Ana:	**no ((swatting hand away)) no. ((smiling, swatting hand again)).**
11	Nina:	((hands Mary paper)).
12	Celia:	[((puts paper on table in front of Mary)).

This exchange shows that assignments outside of class were rare and when there were homeworks, many did not complete them or chose not to turn them in. Here, Nina, Celia and Hal see that Mary gets their paper, while Ana prefers to keep her work to herself, saying "it's not official." This choice of words is interesting because it arguably characterizes her view of the class, as much as the quality of her work. Hana does not do the assignment at all, saying she was too lazy. Sam who is seated next to her, takes out his answers but does not hand them to Mary, who for her part does not insist and proceeds with the next activity. Overall, we see that compliance with 'formal' learning tasks was often not carried out or sought, and thus may not have mattered all that much. The following vignette illustrates that expectations existed, but were generally kept fluid. On this occassion the teacher spends several minutes telling a story in Spanish and English about the Russian ballet dancer Alexandra Danilova (an exploratory activity). Toward the end of the telling, she writes Danilova's girlhood nickname in Russian on

the board. Mary had begun taking a Russian language class at the center in order to better communicate with her daughter-in-law and step-grandson. Here, Jim who had traveled in the Soviet Union contests the way Mary writes it. At one point, he stands up, saying that Russian is based on the Cerilic alphabet and wanted to show them a few letters. At this point he walks to the board and begins writing the word restaurant in Russian. He explains each of the sounds and as he walks back to his seat he and Mary begin debating what he had written. The exchange continues as follows:

Extract (3)

1	Mary:	let me tell you something., ((gazing at jim)) this is not necessarily an <u>a</u> all of the time. (.) It depends on the position or the location in the word.
2	Jim:	yes-yes. ((sitting down)) It can be an o but it never is ow.
3	Ana:	**((furl eyebrows, put face in hands))**
4	Mary:	but very good. (.) You did very well with your restaurant.
5	Jim:	oh-thank you.
6	Ana:	**ha-ha-ha ((clap))**
7	Jim:	**[ha-ha-ha-ha.**
8	Mary:	very very good.
9	Jay:	the subways absolutely drive me crazy cause all the underground subways have it in russian and you don't know what the hell the words is (.) You have to say-oh I remember that.
10	Ana:	**((gaze at Lina)) have we gotten off of Spanish here today, (0.2) no spanish today-h-ha-ha.**

This vignette is a typical example of *exploratory learning*, and shows that different cultural topics were covered through storytelling structures. Here, the teacher and a single learner become engaged in a discussion about a language other than the target language, and in doing so attempt to exhibit other kinds of linguistic knowledge (epistemic knowledge).[1] The exchange further shows how Ana first displays mild exasperation (line 3), and then a casual dismissal of getting off track, saying *no Spanish today-ha-ha-ha.* Whether or not others shared her awareness and resigned stance is only partially clear. Many sat and watched the exchange with either

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[1] This vignette has a negative antecedent which is analyzed in Chapter 5.

neutral facial expressions or smiles. When asked what she thought when activities took a different course or when things did not go as one might expect she expressed that for her, it was not cause for upset because it was about enjoying the experience. "This is small stuff. It's about having fun, and I think if we took it any other way we'd be missing the point." (Interview, March, 2012). Overall, the above vignettes demonstrate that neither activities or expectations were set in stone in order to keep them realistic. It would also appear that participants understood events in part by drawing on broader knowledge sources, e.g., knowledge of situation and overarching objectives. This is important because it shows that affect is constructed from social events occurring in the learning environment but the form that affective behaviors take (i.e., laughing something off even when it was contrary to one's expectations) may be influenced by cognitive reasoning. It is worth noting that if activities had veered off course it this way more often e.g., a learner took the floor from the teacher in order to talk about topics other than Spanish or Spanish-speaking culture, we might see more explicit sanctioning. What did students think of their attainment? In the following, we find that a culturally specific *term* was used on a few occasions to characterize their proficiency as a group, and plausibly also to poke fun at their lack of progress. One day, as the group was putting their things away after translating a lengthy article, Mary tells them they did really well given the difficulty of the reading and, that she was noticing a lot of improvement. To this Hal replies loudly, "We're the upper basement now, we've graduated!" (Fieldnotes, March, 2012) Many classmates and the teacher align with the characterization by laughing. Presumably, for this learner, and potentially for others given the pronoun 'we,' *upper basement* is used to characterize proficiency in a way that is casual. The term is also used with some levity to frame their lack of attainment as unproblematic. This

44

interpretation is confirmed a week later when it surfaces again in conversation. Consider the

following response when a classmate is asked what she thought of their proficiency.

"Collectively we all pretty much agree that we <u>are</u> kind of like Hal said in class the other day, upper basement. Which is basically, our language level. We're upper basement, meaning we aaall think we are not quite intermediate, and we're not down in the dumps. Basement is too basic right? We're a little bit ((gesture upward)) ha-ha-ha. But that's ok, because we're with people who understand." (Interview with Nina, March 2012)

This learner insight confirms that *upper basement* is used to characterize shared proficiency and

may be a marker of group membership. Its use in these instances suggests that for most, a lack of

attainment is not considered a signifiant issue, enabling learners to reason about it. There is

insufficient interview evidence to make the claim that all subjects used this term, indeed, in at

least one instance (described in Chapter 5), outright frustration resulted from their lack of

progress. Nevertheless, the above data suggest that overall, activities and states of knowledge

are judged in a flexible manner. Such judgments are arguably based on understanding of

purpose, the informal situation and probably, on assumptions that there would not be significant

consequences, e.g., that issues were not crucial (Schumann, 1997). In essence, knowledge is used

to make emotionally relevant judgments of activity, proficiency and progress. An age-related

code emerges (Wieder, 1974). This code of reason is a device for responding in emotionally

relevant ways.

Looking back, the variety of activities one finds in this setting unearths its informal,

exploratory nature; while teacher and learner insights and behaviors show that attaining spoken

proficiency was not a need, and therefore not a central goal. The fact that most subjects appear to

sit back and enjoy the ride even when off track suggests two things, that preexisting knowledge

structures and overarching social purposes may conspire, constraining behavior, and that

participants were more occupied with the experience, or the means to language learning than the

end. Evidence of this process-related thinking re-emerges in later chapters, overall in the affective practices participants use to manage communicative difficulty and make sense. In essence, a learning niche is created to meet the needs and unique purposes of participants. In such an environment, reasoning by feeling takes center stage. Such a niche is itself subject to environmental constraints. To use a concrete ecological analogy, in intertidal ecologies organisms must endure consistent periods of water immersion and emersion and basically live underwater and on land. As such, they must adapt to a large range of climate conditions within their niche. In other words, an organism adapted to low water level may not do so well at high water. Similarly, if we remove organisms from a determined environment, or shift the reasons why they are there in the first place, we may change the information they use to make judgments and decisions. Such decisions would plausibly change also, and maybe not for the better. In other words, these elderly learners and teacher might not thrive socially or affectively in the same way if placed in a formal class with younger learners or even in a different class at the center. In both cases, environmental dynamics shift and plausibly affective behaviors must shift with them.

In all, the types of activity and insights we find above paint a portrait of an informal classroom and participants with relatively flexible expectations. Such expectations appear to be adapted to the situation partly because the main objective is not canonical language learning. Other kinds of language learning motivation count as well, and in fact as this and subsequent chapters illustrate, many students are motivated to seek the language class as a way to combat cognitive decline. From the above data we derive two broad assertions, a) language learning activity has consequences for participation structures and plausibly for affective practices within those structures and b) diverse sources of knowedge are used to process events in ways that are relevant. We also derive the finding that language learning goals are a unique product of life

stage and that such goals may have consequences for what goes on in the classroom and what gets learned. As Chapters 4 through 6 demonstrate, the students in this class notice and act on environmental affordances of all sorts with a distinctly positive orientation. Examples of counter-evidence show that when beliefs or goals are misaligned, negative emotions such as frustration result, potentially leading to shifts in agency.

CHAPTER 4

Laughter as Emotional Entry point for Fixing Problematic L2 Communication

1. *Introduction*

The present chapter investigates how laughter becomes an emotional entry point to using language, largely by focusing particular attention on language. It further demonstrates how broad contextual variables such as purpose and age-related beliefs constrain affective habits in a second language (L2) classroom. Readers will learn how habits of laughing help to establish an affective code, and how such a code is evidenced in practices. The ethnographic discription in Chapter 3 sets the stage for the following discursive analysis by determining global patterns of activity, learning motives and cultural terms that may constrain such patterns in a broad sense. Conversation analytic (CA) methods are used in the next three chapters to conduct a closer discursive inspection of the four activity types discussed previously. Chapters 4 and 5 will focus specifically on the activities of *oral translation* and *'recitative' conversation*, while the focus of analysis in Chapter 6 is on sense-making in *storytelling* (exploratory learning). Patterned emotion ecologies are shown to be organized in ways that are locally appropriate to cultural norms (Ekman, 1972; Ekman & Friesen, 1975), while at the same time idiosyncratic behavior emerges contingent on the will and unique goals of individual learners. This results in a tension between top down and bottom up influences on affective behaviors in a language learning environment, and a complex assemblance of habits and novelty. This chapter is organized in the following way, first it shows that laughter can be a default response in 'non-humorous' contexts such as L2 repair in order to characterize communicative problems as *nonserious* (Chafe, 2007). As such, it builds on previous conceptions of laughter as an other-oriented emotion display used for rapport building in groups (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2006) and self-directed humor as a

48

means to build common perspective (Keltner et al., 2001). Second, it extends these findings by showing how patterns of laughter and honest self-evaluation are jointly used to display previously established shared perspectives and a reduced vulnerability to face-threat overall. As such, the degree to which communicative incompetence is found to be face-threatening (Kurhila, 2006) or 'delicate' (Haakana, 1999; Jefferson et al., 1987) may be constrained by age-related social context. These interactive practices often transform communicative difficulty into a situation where speakers and hearers can ultimately become jointly involved in mediating language use and carry out more socially meaningful interactions. Such affective mediation is explored in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6. Finally, the chapter presents tentative acoustic evidence showing that as repair activities shift, so too does the intensity of laughter and perhaps its social significance. Findings are discussed in terms of how we think about emotion with respect to the cultural activities, age-groups and individuals that situate it, its relation to social *image* in the group of elderly learners studied and its role as an entry point to thinking about and using language collectively. In an effort to frame the present analysis, this chapter begins with an overview of experimental and naturalistic research that contributes to our understanding of human laughter as a biological and relational phenomenon.

2. *Laughter at the Beginning of the LifeSpan*

While a detailed account of the developmental aspects of laughter is beyond the focus of the present literature review, it is worth noting a few details about how laughter develops at the beginning of life to distinguish for readers the importance of its increasing meaning potential and complex use in social interaction over the lifespan. Although neonates have been found to smile and laugh (vocalize while smiling) spontaneously within the first two weeks (Kawakami et al., 2007), most researchers agree that most human infants begin to laugh regularly in about the third

49

month of life (Stearns, 1972). As might be expected, smiling reflexes appear in infant

development before laughter and postnatal social smiling is most likely to occur when an optimal

amount of effort (neither too little or too much) is required for the recognition of caregivers'

faces (Mcghee, 1979). Importantly, the act of smiling becomes *instrumental* over time. While

more reflex-like in the first few weeks, research shows that social smiling may develop

concurrently and coexist with spontaneous smiling as infants six to eight weeks old smile for

longer periods when recognizing familiar voices or faces, and do so in a way that involves the

entire face (Izard & Malatesta, 1987; Kawakami et al., 2006). At around ten weeks, smiling

begins to be used to achieve goals such as getting caregivers to smile back (Bower, 1982). In

this way, smiling is adapted for overt social purposes and as such is transformed from an act into

a signal (a meaningful action). Laughter appears to develop in a similar way, obtaining more

diverse meaning within increasingly complex social exchanges between children and caregivers.

For example, Sroufe and Wunsch (1972) studied the social stimuli that trigger laughter in the

first year of life by prompting mothers to engage in a range of behaviors with their infants, such

as making lip-popping sounds, displaying animated facial expressions, tickling, and playing

peek-a-boo games. Laughter was found to occur with increasing frequency and in response to a

wider variety of actions over a year. This is because the types of social stimuli that induced

laughter changed over time. For example, tactile and auditory stimuli such as kissing a bare

stomach or making a horse sound are more likely to make a seven or eight month old laugh than

one who is 12 months. In contrast, more complex visual and social actions like an exaggerated

'waddle' or the "I'm gonna get you" game observed in some western caregiver practices are

more likely to amuse a 12-month old. This suggests that not unlike language, the emergence of

laughter in the individual goes hand in hand with our social and cognitive development within a

culture; what makes us laugh shifts as our ability to grasp socially complex meaning shifts also. Using what we know about the development of these behaviors in children, we can surmise that unlike sighing, eye-rolling or other affective markers, laughter develops as a complex emotional signal relatively early, which tells us in evolutionary terms that it is an important adaptive mechanism for interaction and perhaps social resilience across the lifespan. (Neely et al., 2012). Also relevant to the present dissertation is the notion of environment. Children appear to learn early that the social environment is what provides affordances for laughter, that these are primarily interactions with a positive and rewarding emotional tone[2] and importantly, similar responses are provoked in others. These findings are useful for the current study because they demonstrate that we are keyed in early to the biosocial benefits of laughter. Yet, as we enter into increasingly diverse social situations with more, then less familiar others thoughout life, we learn to socially purpose our capacity to laugh and knowledge of what it does. As such, we fit it to our cultural environment in increasingly complex ways as adults. In essence, we are socialized into and through real and spontaneous laughter, but is later used to communicate what we are thinking or feeling, and gain access to the thoughts and intentions of others. Given that laughter is essentially an involuntary behavior, just how intended or unintended this communicative signal is, remains up for debate (Hurley et al., 2011).

3. *Laughter in Other Sciences*

In the last decade, an increasing amount of studies have been dedicated to de-coding laughter, it's origins, relation to neural events and sound on the one hand and structure and function in social interaction on the other. Yet, researchers are generally limited to bits of truths

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[2] This has been born out by recent neurobiological studies finding that certain areas of the brain are activated when children and adults laugh, such as the mesolimbic regions associated with reward and temporal-occipital-parietal areas associated with incongruity or perceived 'mis-match.' This latter region is thought to be less developed in young children and may experience increased activation as they mature into adulthood (Neely et al., 2012).

about the phenomenon, in part because our understandings of the behavior are naturally shaped by the type of tools we use to study it and also, because as the present dissertation demonstrates, complex behavior can acquire different functions and meanings both across and within situations in a given environment. Aristotle viewed laughter as the one behavior (along with language) that separates us from beasts, so he called us *animal ridens,* the creature who laughs (Sanders, 1995). It was also thought by ancient philosophers that when infants emitted their first laugh they became "ensouled" and were transformed from merely human to human being (p. 21). It is not surprising that Aristotle thought this way given that laughter has a way of animating the body and voice in a manner few other behaviors do, literally giving it *anima* or breath. Biologists who study emotion in other species would disagree that we are alone in our ability to 'breathe' in this way, asserting that laughter may originate from panting forms of play that has been observed in other primates (Provine, 1996, 2004). When un-forced, it seems to be one of the ultimate social signals of acceptance and affiliation seeking, what Jefferson (1979) referred to as its *inviting* quality. Generally speaking, laughter is viewed in the natural sciences as a form of emotion expression. Those concerned with its inner mechanics understand it as an individual neuro-physiological response to an external stimulus. Not unlike other emotion processes, it involves a form of environment-body-brain feedback that can be observed in part through our interactions with various stimuli in natural environments and by measuring its expression within the body proper, such as through brain imaging or measurement of endorphin release. Positive physiological effects include its involvement in feelings of well-being, our increased threshold for pain and improved immune response when under its spell (Dunbar et al., 2011). From an evolutionary standpoint it has been characterized variably as a form of non-threatening behavior that emerges without cultural exposure (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989), a display of appeasement to

adversaries (Fry, 1977) or a signal of group safety that predates language (Hayworth, 1928).

Others emphasize its primarily positive social function, arguing that overall it communicates to

co-present individuals that actions potentially perceived as threatening are in actuality safe, a

descendent of the *false alarm* signal (Bateson, 1972, Ramachandran, 1998). That is, its

"underlying meaning conveys to participants and onlookers (mothers in particular) "don't worry,

this isn't dangerous agression" (Hurley et al., 2011). Most gelotologists (laughter scientists) and

ethologists would probably agree that the behavior signifies preparedness for friendly interaction

which is used to extract a social benefit. Neuroscientist Jaak Panksepp notes in an interview with

the New York Times that such positive behavioral mechanisms tend to induce behavior in others

and that sophisticated social animals need "positive emotional mechanisms to create social brains

and weave organisms effectively into the group fabric" (in Tierney, 2007, no page number).

Aside from its evolved social functions, experimental studies have yielded interesting findings

on the physiological and acoustic features of laughter and may break it down by examining

sound patterns and neural and motor systems associated with its expression. For example, such

research demonstrates that although the basic sound structure is the same due to constraints on

human physiology and breath/speech patterns, the amplitude and pitch of laugh vocalizations are

unique to individuals and encode a high degree of meaning. Bachorowski et al. (2001) illustrate

that laughs exhibit a wide range of pitch shifts and can jump from 55 hertz to 270 hertz in a

heartbeat. The authors claim these sudden changes in pitch are designed to have a social impact,

noting that it is a vocalization that has evolved to shape behavior in others, make ourselves feel

good and get others to respond positively towards us (Bachorowski & Owren, 2001). The notion

that emotion filters social attention in this way is intriguing and relevant to the current study of

affective behaviors in the language classroom because it brings up the question of how language

learners use it to achieve their unique goals of learning. One of the findings of the present investigation for example, is that pitch shifts may vary according to the nature of language learning activities and the information that is exchanged. As such, mutual laughter that occurs when learning about or aiding classmates who are stuck, may be qualitively different (higher pitched) than that emerging in repair sequences where little to no social information is exchanged. Laughter has also been linked to stress response, an idea attributable first to Darwin (1872), who viewed it and to a lesser degree smiling as a form of tension relief in individuals who experience a spontaneous release of energy accumulated in response to stress. This hypothesis has been born out by neurophysiological studies finding that sustained mental tension creates a hyper-aroused state of the sympathetic nervous system, which can be released by laughing (Sumitsuji, 2000). Such findings raise interesting questions about the kinds of social interaction that bring about mild build ups of tension or no apparent tension at all, and nevertheless produce the behavior. In essence, laughter is at once a social, cognitive and biological act, such that it involves others (real or imagined), kinds of thinking, and various systems of the brain and body.

4. *A Problem with Studying Emotion in Labs*

A reality of studying laughter under exerimental conditions is that its social particulars are difficult to capture and the behavior all but disappears in many laboratory studies that have been attempted (Provine, 2000). In fact, people are 30 times more likely to laugh in a group than alone. People do laugh in isolation when exposed to stimuli such as a television comedy or joke book, but these are vicarious social stimuli that indirectly involve others sharing in the laugh because the stimuli were created by others. From this the author concludes that solitary forms of laughter are triggered because they are an involuntary social behavior neurologically

programmed by evolution. In other words, laughter will only occur if there is a sharer, even if

that sharer is imagined. Thus, even biologists suggest that one of the best ways to unravel the

social (and cultural) particulars of laughter is to observe it in spontaneous, naturally occurring

interaction between people. But is all laughter the same when people come together in social

interaction? There is some sense that it is not. Nevertheless, Darwin (1872) notes that laughter is

a distinct signal of happiness:

"Throughout a large part of the animal kingdom, vocal or instrumental sounds are employed as a
call…[and] also as the means for a joyful meeting of the parents and their offspring and between
the attached members of the same social community. But why the sounds which man utters when
he is pleased have the peculiar reiterated character of laughter we do not know. Nevertheless, we
can see that they would naturally be as different as possible from the screams or cries of distress"
(p. 205).

While such early studies of human behavior accurately characterize the behavior as something

occuring between members of a group, to interpret all laughter as a happy matter leaves out other

possible variables. Social science research demonstrates that a range of emotions may be

involved including displays of embarrassment (Edelmann, 1994), teasing (Bradford & Petronio,

1998), anxiety and derision (Giles & Oxford, 1970). In sum, to determine the valence and

function of laughter, one has to consider the social environment and what it affords, and

importantly from an interactionist or ecosocial perspective, how participants interact with such

environmental affordances.

5. *Emotion Derives Function and Meaning From Environment*

Perhaps a good general metaphor for laughter is that of a social gauge, capable of

signalling engagement with or distancing from others and their actions in a social environment.

Put another way, the signal may or may not invite a response depending on if and how we

indicate its appropriateness (Jefferson, 1979). This suggests that laughter is not put into the

environment in an arbitrary fashion, it has a target which is usually social and as such it derives much of its function and meaning from surrounding actions. More specifically, Jefferson et al. (1987) characterize it as "a consequential response to a prior utterance, with a significant bearing on some next action(s)" (p. 159). Conversation analytic approaches to emotion conceive of laughter as a non-speech phenomenon (like coughs and sighs) and an integral part of conversation that is systematically produced and sequentially organized with speech (Jefferson, 1979; Glenn & Holt, 1991). While this is helpful for looking at how laughter is 'talked into being' under commonplace circumstances, it does not take into account its meaning potential across contexts of classroom speech, contingent on the activities and goals of those who are doing the talking. In other words, affective practices generated in 'chit-chat' may have a different function than those generated in non-chit-chat, which raises the question of how people in different age groups *do* being competent communicators. This question is of central importance for this investigation on classroom interaction, where clearly people enter the setting with varying degrees of second language (L2) aptitude and communicative competence. Reduced communicative capacity has been found to be consequential to how laughter occurs in conversation. In one such study on aphasic speech, Madden et al. (2002) show that laughter is used to achieve different objectives, including shifts in turn-taking, orienting interlocutors and displaying understanding. Research looking at the affective side of things demonstrates that laughter may encode a variety of emotional dimensions such as the dissociation from distress, (Keltner & Bonanno, 1997) a disabling mechanism (Chafe, 1987), teasing (Schnurr & Chan, 2011) embarrassment (Haakana, 1999) and importantly for this study, nonseriousness (Chafe, 2007), humorous self-disclosure (Ervin-Tripp, 2006) and affiliation and bonding (Maynard & Hudak, 2008). Environments where communicative know-how is asymmetrically distributed,

such as language classrooms, are potentially profitable sites for studying laughter because one may be required to publicly perform what he/she does and does not know and may be seen taking any number of measures to manage such responsibility. Sandlund (2004) demonstrates in a study of discussion groups in college classrooms that laughter is associated with embarrassment resistance. Similar findings come from studies of 'delicate talk' in doctor-patient interactions (Hakaana, 1999) and self-deprecating humor in the workplace (Homes, 2000). In the case of interactive self-deprecation in the work place, a speaker is thought to anticipate embarrassment and respond by turning the source of embarrassment into something laughable. We can surmise from these studies that interlocutors with assymetrical status may minimize authority using laughter depending on what the goals of activities are. What is not as clear is how these behaviors play out in informal environments among older peers, where the social stakes are arguably lower. In sum, studying laughter in language learning environments is useful because it may reveal how different affective dimensions may be invoked by the behavior, depending on the sociocultural milieus and instructional contexts in which it emerges.

6. *Laughter in Language Learning Settings*

What are the functions of laughter in adult second language learning and why does it matter? For one, the phenomenon is thought to be an important affiliative cue used by teachers and learners in young adult classrooms to mitigate face-threat potentially invoked in less competent language use or participation (Amador & Fox-Adams, 2012). The authors demonstrate that when learners attempt to participate and fail classroom norms or expectations in some way, they are guided back on track by more knowing participants (usually teachers) via a consistent repertoire of affiliative cues, which include forms of laughter. Their findings support previous studies on second language classrooms in which young adults are found to resist or

mitigate problematic communication by laughing, in order to manage potential face threat (Kurhila, 2006; Ohta, 2008). The present discursive analysis provides us with a somewhat distinct interpersonal picture of language learners with regard to how laughter is used to manage participation. Though, in other perhaps 'core' ways, it is not so distinct. Such interactional uniqueness, similarity and a discursive investigation of all such matters is detailed in the following sections.

<u>7</u>. *The Data and Participants*

As described, one of the goals of this report is to investigate the role of situated emotion in second language use from a nuanced emic perspective. The data that will be used for that task is derived from various sources including field notes from participant observation, transcripts of audio and video recordings, and interviews. The transcripts themselves feature several learners and the teacher engaged in their mundane classroom activities. Here, I will unpack the conversational details of two such activities detailed in Chapter 3, with the goal of providing supporting evidence for the assertions highlighted in the introduction and which are revisited below. Where appropriate, interview excerpts are used as additional evidence to further explain the interactive behaviors observed. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the data stem from seven months of participant observation in the classroom (a total of 28 hours), 20 hours of which were videorecorded. Perspectives highlighted in the discussion of the data come from 9 audiorecorded participant interviews, lasting approximately 1 hour each. Methods of data transcription are adapted from conversation analytic conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). A description of these conventions is included in Appendix 1. The transcriptions of talk presented below often deal with both Spanish and English in which case

two lines of text are presented. The first line provides the original talk and the second line

(presented in italics) is an idiomatic English gloss. Important lines of talk are highlighted in bold.

8. *Revisiting Assertions on Laughter in the Setting*

Excerpts taken from a larger sample of laugh tokens embedded in discourse demonstrate

that laughter was distributed with varying frequency across all three of the activities outlined in

Chapter 3. Nevertheless, laughter occurred more frequently in recitative conversation and oral

translation activities. More specifically, it occurred most often within communicative difficulty.

Laughter 'habits' are interpreted as giving attention to some matter related to disfluence or

failing a standard (Goffman, 1963) and thus signal 'sensitive' junctures in interaction

(Adelswärd & Öberg, 1998). However, laughter portrays a feeling of *nonseriousness* toward said

failure (Chafe, 2007). Such practices often invite involvement from others and direct attention to

fixing problem language. Crucially, laughter also occurred with some regularity in response to

overt 'on-record' self-evaluation in communicative lapses. Taken together, increased

nonseriousness toward language use and unmitigated evaluations of performance indicate a

reduced vulnerability to face-threat and were tactics used to display shared perspective regarding

language use. A consideration of conversational responses and participant perspectives

regarding such exchanges are used as evidence for this assertion. Finally, an acoustic analysis of

laugh tokens using PRAAT software will demonstrate that laughter pitch (measured in Hz) and

involvement intensified (became more prominent) under certain conditions. The behavior

occurring in such conditions was consequential to the quality of laughter and to the social

'meaningfulness' of certain activities of learning.

9. *Laughter As an Invitation to Get Involved*

Given that a central goal of CA is to shed light on practices and procedures that are most common in a setting and thus, those that are locally significant to people engaged in social interaction, this chapter aims to reveal just such procedures occurring regularly among the elderly subjects studied. The following extracts from classroom interaction provide example evidence of mutual laughter when performing Spanish or when engaged in sense making about language more generally. This report relies on analysis of single detailed extracts of classroom discourse, with an eye on when laughter occurs and how hearers treat turns in which laughter is present, to show how or why it is affectively relevant to the interaction. Where possible, reports of laughter distribution, frequency of occurrence and interview quotes are included to explain conversational practices in a more holistic fashion. Some examples from previous research on young adult are also used in the discussion to provide contrastive evidence and further explain patterns.

As mentioned above, laughter was found to occur most frequently following problematic language or understanding within the activities of recitative conversation and oral translation. As such, it dually portrays a nonserious orientation toward difficulty and invites involvement from others in many cases. In extract (1) we see an example of how such exchanges played out. Here, a learner (Lina) has just finished reading and then translating an excerpt from an article into English and she shows some relief when she completes the activity in line (1). The teacher positively evaluates her efforts in line (2), upon which two separate classmates make known their failure to understand what had just been translated.

Extract (1)

1   Lina: whew.

2   Mary: very good.

3   Ellie: **((shaking head rested on hand)) now tell me what it <u>means</u>.**

         ((gaze up at Mary))

4   Class: **HA-ha-ha-ha-ha.**

5   Ana: **yes-what does <u>that</u> mean-ha-ha-ha. ((leaning back gazing at Mary))**

6   (0.6)

7   Ana: o:h-k-h.

In this extract we see that laughter emerges from an instance of not understanding what has been

translated. As such, joint displays of deficient understanding and nonseriousness are carried out

at the earliest possible moment after the teacher's evaluation. After Lina has just been praised by

the teacher in line (2), Ellie initiates repair by saying *now tell me what it <u>means</u>* in line (3). Here,

the verb <u>means</u> receives the most prosodic stress and is designed to be emphatic. This indicates

to hearers its importance in the stream of speech, conveying "the translation is done, but that's

only half the story." That 'means' receives more stress is not an arbitrary thing. As Bolinger

(1989) notes, "We must not make the mistake of denying a principle of lastness. There is such a

principle, but it belongs in a description of accents of power: the great majority of major accents

occur at or near the end, because speakers want to convince their hearers and end position is the

position with the greatest impact" (pp. 362-63). This repair initiation provokes laughter from

several classmates in line (4), an aligning move. Ana then ratifies Ellie's repair initiation and

laughs in line (5) saying, *yes-what does <u>that</u> mean-ha-ha-ha.* Emphasis (word stress) is again

strategic, falling on the article <u>that</u>, referring hearers back to the problem. It is worth noting that

in this case no actual repair is carried out, despite a call to it by two different learners. This is

apparently because the teacher did not hear the question, at least her absent reponse in line (6)

does not indicate she heard. Efforts to carry out repair are abandoned without much ado in line (7). Sight and hearing deficiencies were observed in several cases and often led to interactions where efforts to understand (repair) were carried out by more than one learner in order to help direct attention to where it was needed, a collaborative process. This practice is examined in more detail later in Chapters 5 and 6. Overall, this example illustrates that a nonserious feeling emerges in response to jointly publicizing difficulties with understanding. As such, it indexes a shared perspective regarding their lack of understanding. Laughter is also tactical because it mobilizes the attention of hearers (those who heard) in a postive way. While in this case it does not lead to repair, it many cases it does. Extract (2) illustrates that self-repair is one option if a learner notices a correction to his/her language is necessary. Here, the teacher is asking them questions about their families, a slightly less scripted form of conversation because the questions are not written on the board. Celia notices she has misunderstood the meaning of a word, leading her to respond incorrectly and the teacher to the wrong conclusion. As a result she quickly backpeddles her initial response. Here, laughter shows hearers are paying attention to her actions in a specific way.

Extract (2)

1   Mary: tienes hijos,
do you have kids,

2   Celia: mis hijos-uh (.) dos hijos-no tre-uno dos tres hijos y una hija.
my kids-uh two sons-no thre-one two three sons and one daughter.

3   Mary: dos hijos y una hija,=
two sons and one daughter,

4   Celia: **=no↑ (.) no-no-no.**

5   Class: **HA-HA-HA-[ha-ha-h-h**

6   Celia: **[no-wait-wait-wait= ((smiling))**

7	Hal:	**=YOU'RE IN TROUBLE-ha-ha-ha.**

8	Class:	**[ha-ha-h-h.**

9   Celia: no hijos-no hijas-tres her<u>ma</u>nos., <u>u</u>na hermana. ((smiling))
         not sons-not daughters-three brothers, one sister.

10   Mary: una hermana.
         one sister.

11   Class: ha-ha-h.

When Mary confirms her understanding of Celia's response (line 3), Celia quickly backpeddles with the emphatic initiation of self-repair *no↑no-no (.) no* in line (4) to which many classmates respond by laughing loudly. She attempts to initiate repair a second time in line (6), followed by a move in line (7) where Hal jumps in with what we can gloss as, ironic humor targeting the repair actions (line 7). More laughter enters the picture from Hal, and Celia eventually manages to carry out repair in line (9); Mary confirms comprehension and the episode is puctuated with calmer laughter from the class (line 11). Notable in this exchange is the way that laughter (line 5) and irony (line 7) do the work of portraying the repair as nonserious. Hal's action is most interesting because it is a sort of fictional enactment of seriousness. In other words, the content of his language is designed to portray Celia's mess up as something she's 'in trouble' for but his laughter frames it as 'not in trouble.' The 'not trouble' message arguably comes across stronger given the responses to it. Notable also is the way the more intensified laughter is carried out at the earliest possible opportunity in the turns after self-repair initiations. The actions in (5 and 7) represent sudden shifts from affectively unmarked speech to what Selting (1994:404) has described as 'peaks of involvement' within activities of storytelling. Here we are talking about vocal shifts in pitch communicated through laughter and through language. When considered in relation to what preceded it, Hal's voice amplitude undergoes an audible leap. Thus, not only are

these moves designed to be heard in a particular way, they are designed to be heard in relation to prior actions by a fellow learner. By laughing, hearers are gaining access to and framing the event at hand in a positive way. Similar to response cries provoked by a 'triggering event' (Goffman, 1981), 'serious' events such as repair are fitted with laughter and as such are "subcomponents of a larger activity system; each implies the other" (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000). In extract (3), learners similarly respond to a problem in understanding. This example is evidence of a learner responding to her own lack of understanding with laughter, and it unpacks some of the interactive details of recitative conversation. Here, we see how classmates become involved in the sense-making process by attempting to scaffold responses in Spanish for a less knowing classmate, while the teacher looks on and lets them 'figure it out.' On this occasion, Mary instructs learners to ask each other questions about where they were born. Nina asks Julia (a newcomer to class) where she is from by modeling the desired response in line (1), Julia raises her eyebrows in line (2) indicating a lack of understanding, and collaborative efforts to get her to respond correctly unfold.

Extract (3)

1   Nina: nací en--I was born in,

2   Julia: ((raise eyebrows))

3   Nina: nací- ((pointing to Julia)) I was born?

4   (1.0)

5   Betty: [where were you born?

6   Milly: [where were you born?

7   Julia: **u:h-ha-h-h.**

8   Betty: **nací en, -I was born in.,**

9	Julia:	**a:h-nací en: (0.6)**
10	Betty:	new orleans.
11	Nina:	o:h. ((smiling))
12	Ana:	**HA-ha-ha-ha.**
13	Vera:	**[HA-ha-h.**
14	Julia:	**land of the blues-ha-ha.**

Here, Julia does not appear to understand the meaning of the verb *nací* (I was born) and therefore has to be shown how to use it conversationally. Because of her displayed confusion at various intervals (lines 2, 7 and 9), fellow classmates become increasingly involved in assisting her (lines 1, 2 5,6, 8). Mutual laughter arises in lines (12) and (13), in a way, affectively commenting on what came before it. Note that the laughter at the end of the sequence is qualitively distinct from that coming from Julia in line (7). For one, Julia's laughter is quieter. This and her hedge *u:h* demonstrate that her participation is potentially at a precarious point, such that after repeated attempts to assist her, she is still unable to move the interaction forward. Note also, that after Julia's hesitation, Betty again scaffolds, in lines (8) and (10), enabling Julia to repeat part of the answer in Spanish in line 9. What is notable about this example, is that the response itself is distributed across several learners, taking the responsibility of responding fully off of a solitary individual who appears unable to complete the activity without help. Laughter is fitted to this process, especially by classmates in lines (12) and (13) in order to indicate awareness of the labored efforts to get Julia to respond, but affectively portray them as something that should not be worried about. In line (13) Julia appears to align with this orientation.

As we have seen, and will continue to see, laughter is a way of communicating a particular kind of access to events and affective orientation to those events "without the use of explicit linguistic symbols" (Uzgiris, 1996, p. 23). Such affective involvement without the use of 'emotion vocabulary' shows awareness of less competent second language use and may focus attention in a sense 'paving the way' for actual repair. Anward (2003b) has argued that laughter within aphasic lapses in communication similarly indexes the need for repair and as such helps to achieve normality. The act of repairing is argued to provide an opportunity for the person with aphasia to display social competence. However, the author also acknowledges that the nature of such communicative lapses may engender more serious threats to status as a competent speaker. In other words, status as a capable speaker of language (big L) may entail higher stakes than maintaining one's identity as capable speaker of a second language. In the following example, speaker and hearer laughter show that attention to normality is part of it, but such focus may undergo shifts within the same exchange. In extract (4), Lina has just finished reading and translating a narrative in Spanish about her trip to Taiwan and a massage she had while there. The teacher pursues elaboration by asking her if she liked the massage. Lina's response in line (1) is problematic and is treated as such.

Extract (4)

1   Lina: sí-sí muy gus-uh ((gaze up))-me gusta (.) muy bien.
              Yes-yes very li-uh I like very well.

2   (0.6)

3   Lina: **h-h-ha.**
4   Class: **[h-ha-ha.**

5   Mary: [me gustó mucho.
              I liked it a lot.

6   Lina: **mucho. ((smiling and turning to classmates)) (.) [ha-ha=**
                a lot.

7   (0.2)

8   Class: **=HA-ha-ha-ha-h.**

Mary follows-up Lina's reading by asking her if she liked the massage she had in Taiwan.
Lina's response in line (1) is labored (features a repeat, hedge and restart). Details that follow
such as a pause in line (2) and then mutual laughter from her and some classmates in lines (3)
and (4) seem to suggest it did not come off as desired, and a mutual nonserious orientation
toward this fact. Mary addresses the problem language by recasting Lina's original utterance in
the correct way in line (5). This is followed in the next turn by repetition of the adverb *mucho*
(with additional stress on the vowel) from Lina, who then turns to look at classmates as she
laughs. They respond in kind. It is important to note that just prior to this exchange, Lina had
read a narrative she wrote in Spanish about her trip to Taiwan. In the narrative the class learns
that she went to have a massage and it turned out the masseuse was blind. After she finished
reading her story, Jim jumped in and said, "at least he said he was blind!" At this point the class
entered into a fit of laughter. Given such a precursor, Lina's repetition and gaze in line (6) are
designed to do more than just respond to the teacher's instructional move, they provide hearers
affective information about the quality of the experience itself, and increased access to it. Hearer
laughter occurring in line (7) is a response to this access, and displays understanding of her
intention. In summary, laughter initially helps to direct awareness (and some amusement) to the
activity of normalizing language, but the quality and meaning appear to shift in relation to what
comes later. Note that laughter in line (7) is louder and longer than that in (3) and (4). In other
words, when classmates are engaged in learning something extra about a fellow learner, the

exchange arguably becomes more socially significant and is responded to affectively as such.

9.1 *Self-Directed Humor*

Bold-faced evaluations of incompetence are not found to be a common practice in young adult language classrooms (Kurhila, 2006, Beaumont, 1999), and in mundane conversation in mixed-sex groups, self-directed humor is uncommon without some form of exaggeration (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 2005). Furthermore, conversational research has found that laughter responses to communicative lapses (such as word searches) in second language settings often assume the function of downplaying deficiencies in order to mitigate the face-threatening or delicate nature of such difficulty (Kurhila, 2006). Laughter has been understood primarily as a response to one's struggle with language. As such, the efforts needed to construct a turn are seen as a "threat to one's status as a competent member of a category of speakers" (p. 150-151). Nevertheless, in this classroom, self-directed humor ('on-record' statements of deficient knowledge) following misconduct often triggered responses, which convey a different feeling. The following data show that self-criticism practices often had the effect of inviting intensified involvement from fellow classmates and increased joint problem-solving efforts over one third of the time. In Extract (5), learners are again asking each other questions (as instructed by the teacher) about family and how long they have resided in the area. As described in Chapter 3, most participants come from other parts of the U.S. and the world, and talking about origins was a common conversational topic. As in most 'recitative' conversational activities observed, prompts to questions, e.g., dónde naciste (where were you born) are written on the board and utilized in a scripted fashion by learners to formulate questions. The information provided in the prompt appears to be less useful for responding, and is consequential to being able to do so as we will see. After several learners complete the activity with some success, it is Ellie and Sam's

turn. In this case, facial expression (smiling) helps to invite a relevant response to humorous self-evaluation (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2013).

Extract (5)

1 Ellie: cuando vino a los angeles?
   when did you first come to Los Angeles?

2 Sam: **uh- (0.2) I don't know how to answer. ((smiling, gazing up at teacher))**

3 Mary: **((smile))**

4 Ana: **[HA-ha-ha-ha.**

5 ?: **[HA-ha-ha.=**

6 Sam: **=heh-heh-h. (low volume)**

7 Mary: yo vine.
   I came.

8 Sam: yo vine.,
   I came,

9 Vera: yo vine, ((leaning toward Sam slightly))
   I came,

10 Hans: yo vine de los angeles de culver city.
   I came from los angeles from culver city.

11 Mary: a culver city en que año?
   to culver city in what year?

12 Sam: (1.0) ((gazing straight ahead))

13 Vera: how many years ago?

14 Mary: en qué año.
   what year.

15 Sam: qué año, ((gazing up at Mary))
   what year,

16 Ellie: which year. ((gazing over at Sam))

17 Lina: which year.

18 Ana: **ha-ha-ha. ((leaning back in chair))**

19 Mary: mil novecientos.,

ninteen.,

20   Sam: no-uh ((gaze up at Mary)) mil noveciento siete uno.
             no uh ninteen seven one.

21   Mary: setenta y uno. novecientos setenta y uno.
             seventy-one. nineteen seventy-one.

22   Sam: six. ((smiling))

23   Ellie: oh six,

24   Mary: sesenta y uno.
             sixty-one.

25   Sam: sesenta. ((nod and smile)).
             sixty.

How one invites laughter is crucial to what it will then mean. While the preferred response to

self-directed humor or evaluation is generally disagreement (Pomerantz, 1984b), laughter

conveys that Sam's lack of know-how is amusing and not something to worry about. In line (1),

Sam hedges his response to Ellie's question with *uh* and a pause, then he explicitly recognizes

the problem in line (2) by saying *I don't know how to answer*. Sam's smile is reciprocated by

Mary in (line 3) and by laughter coming from classmates in lines (4) and (5). Note that a

nonserious feeling started by Sam is intensified, leading eventually to repair by the teacher and

assistance from several people. In short, several hearers become involved in sense-making

through repetition and repair initiations (lines 13-25) ultimately helping Sam to accurately

communicate the correct year he moved (19-25). The laugh token in line (18), displays

amusement toward the extended efforts to scaffold.

    In all, an occasion of 'not knowing' is audibly lightened by a pursuit of laughter

ultimately modifying speaker stance from self 'blame' into something laughable (Peräkylä &

Ruusuvuori, 2012). In other words, a facial expression (Sam's smile) modifies responses in a

way that is relevant to the feeling conveyed, e.g., that he blames himself, but is not that worried about it. Note that misconduct is not proclaimed to the four winds, e.g., his elongated *u:h,* pause and slow tempo project that bad news is ahead. Yet on the whole, the methodic quality of Sam's utterance and his smile are more understandable as 'on record' acknowledgment rather than an apologetic confession. This and similar exchanges involving other learners show that self-directed evaluation is often portrayed as amusing, and is neither mitigated, or exaggerated. This has consequences for sense-making in some cases because it invites mediation from participants other than the teacher and, such mediation takes the form of more prominent affective displays. As Chapters 5 and 6 will show, such collaborative meaning brokering (Bolden, 2012) occurred with laughter fairly regularly. Extracts (6) and (7) further demonstrate that honest evaluations of troubles and the responses of classmates portray communicative lapses in particular ways, and help establish sense-making habits in the class. In Extract (6), nonseriousness emerges when Vera makes light of her inability to respond.

Extract (6)

1	Mary:	cuántos hijos, *how many kids,*
2	Vera:	oh-ok. (.)
3	Mary:	tengo., *I have.*
4	Vera:	no-quince five. *no-fifteen five.*
5	Mary:	tiene qué, *you have what,*
6	Vera:	quin-quinta uno. *fif-fifty one.*
7	Mary:	no,

8   Vera: **fifty-one years. ((smiling))**

9   Ana: **HA-ha-ha.**

10   Vera: in L.A. ((point down))

11   Mary: no-no cuántos hijos tienes.
                no-no how many kids do you have.

12   Vera: cuántos hijos, (0.4) my children?
                how many kids,

13   Ellie: **((nod)) how many.**

14   Vera: **oh-dos.**
                oh-two.

15   Mary: te:ngo,
                I have,

16   Vera: tengo dos.
                I have two.

17   Lina: yo tengo dos. ((smiling))

18   Vera: **was that the question, oh- I don't know how to answer that-ha-ha-ha-ha.**
                ((look toward Ana)).=

19   Ana: **=ha-ha-ha.**

This exchange unfolds in a similar way to the previous one, except that here, nonseriousness

comes in response to Vera's misunderstanding of the question and later in response to her

declaration of why she misunderstood. The first part of the exchange is spent getting on the same

page in terms of the meaning. In this process it becomes clear that Vera's responses in lines (4),

(6), (8) and (10) are designed for a different question than what was asked. Ana's laughter in line

(9) draws attention to and orients to this mis-match in understanding with amusement. Mary's

repeat of the discourse marker *no* and recast of the question attempt to re-focus attention on the

meaning. Such a move is built upon when a fellow classmate becomes involved in the scaffolding in line (13) by providing an English gloss to get Vera to understand. This clarification enables Vera to comply in line (14). Mary then initiates a second corrective action in (15) to get her to elaborate, which Vera does. In this case, repair initiations come from both the teacher and classmates. While the actions of classmates scaffold actual meaning, those of the teacher appear to work on the quality of the response. This is important, because it provides a glimpse into how sense-making occurred more generally in this classroom, e.g., sense composed of bits and pieces from different hearers and framed by laughter. Finally, when Vera realizes what the 'actual' question was in Spanish, she declares her inability to answer it (line 18). In other words, at the earliest point following her declaration she affectively orients to it by laughing. Note also that Vera's gaze and laughter invite a reciprocatory response from Ana who is seated next to her. Here, we again see an instance of self-evaluation which is straightforward without being exaggerated. It has a strong inviting quality (Jefferson, 1979) and receives a display of mutuality as in previous instances, helping to establish a shared perspective. The following example, continues to investigate these practices by showing that learners sometimes went so far as to bypass praise, in order to honestly evaluate their competence. In this instance Sam has just finished reading a short passage from a magazine article. The teacher and a classmate (Ana) seated next to him respond by taking up repeated positive affective stances toward his reading.

Extract (7)

1   Mary: Sam you have no idea how wonderful it is to hear you read that way.
2   Ana: oh absolutely.
3   Mary: you are reading beau:tifully-anybody would understand you.
4   Ana: ye:s.
5   Mary: it's so CLEAR.

6		(0.6)
7	Sam:	**the problem that I have is translating it-h-ha.**
8	Class:	**HA-HA-ha-ha-ha.**
9	Sam:	reading is the easy part. ((smiling))

Here, laughter sequentially follows the identification of a problem and appears to be aimed at establishing common orientations toward it. Furthermore, laughter again occurs with a bold self-evaluation, suggesting that this learner is not afraid to be honest about what trips him up. The sequence begins by praising Sam's performance. Here, strong positive affective evaluations like *you are reading beau:tifully—anybody would understand you* in line (1) and (3) and wholehearted agreement later in (2), (4) and (5) position Sam as using language sucessfully and ideally. The qualifier *anybody would understand you* is meaningful here because it suggests that his pronunciation had improved so much that it would be understood by a wide audience, even native speakers. Sam responds in (6) with the evaluation, *the problem that I have is translating it-h-ha.* Clearly, Sam considers translation a more important task and is forthright about it. This of course is followed by laughter from him and many of his classmates in lines (6) and (7). In this example, we see that the learner counters several positive assessments by repositioning himself as unable to do something. He does this rather than simply saying thanks or providing some other response. This and similar examples demonstrate that laughter follows honest self-evaluation, and as such, communicative shortcomings are put on public display. Laughter does the work of affirming such moves and conveys that classmates can 'relate' to what is said. The context is very similar to Extract (1) in the sense that praise is offered by the teacher, but efforts to repair understanding begin immediately, suggesting that making sense is prioritized. Note that making sense occurs in a distributed fashion (similar to extracts 1, 3, 5 and 6), taking the form of repeated repair-initiations which are distributed across several people. Additional evidence that

participants value shared perspective and sense-making over appearances, is found in field notes documenting learner responses to difficulties of understanding. Field notes collected over several months reveal that mutual laughter resulted one third of the time when learners initiated repairs such as inquiring about the meaning of what they or someone else had just read or translated (Fieldnotes, January-April, 2012). This demonstrates that in general, seeking understanding in a way others could relate with was part and parcel of putting one's competence or incompetence on display. Publicly assessing rather than downplaying one's own knowledge deficiencies is one such tactic that is designed to convey common perspective (Keltner et al., 2001). As a result, addressing communicative (in)competence becomes a coordinated effort and appears to be a less threatening and dare we say, a more enjoyable feature of everyday classroom life.

9.2 *Shifting Pitch, Shifting Meaning: Preliminary Acoustic Evidence*

As we have seen in the above examples, laughter was a common affective device for managing repair and corrective actions in general. However, the specific affective message conveyed is arguably determined by the local activities, goals and needs of participants. An acoustic analysis of 11 such exchanges (including some of those analyzed above) was carried out using PRAAT software in order to determine if and under what conversational conditions one might see shifts in acoustic prominence (pitch). Such an investigation of the participants' speech reveals that laughter measured in Hz intensified in two repair conditions:

1) In activities when learners jointly participated in discovering social particulars about classmates.

2) When learners engaged in self-directed humor, made 'on record' evaluations or disclosed knowledge deficiencies.
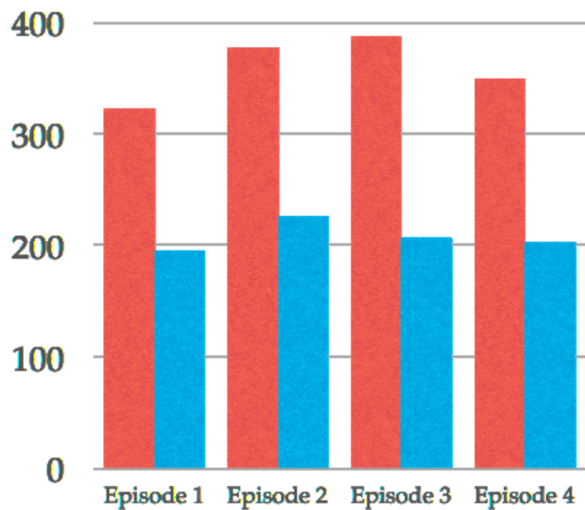
Figure 3. Hz differences in joint sense-making/self-disclosure (red) and oral translation (blue).

The graph in Figure 3 visually depicts differences in pitch height in four of the eleven exchanges in which laugh tokens were measured acoustically. While this graph does not show all cases in the data set, it gives readers a basic visual representation of four such prosodic contrasts. In seven of eleven repair episodes examined, laughter pitch was 80% higher (an average of 360 Hz) under the two conditions mentioned, than in repair occurring in more restricted activities such as oral translation (average of 200 Hz). Further, under conditions of self-directed humor and joint sense-making, classmates usually reciprocated the laughter of the speaker in more intensified ways, and contributed to correction or repair 1/3 of the time. So what kind of influence does context (activity) exert on the quality of laughter? Upon further examination, it becomes apparent that many (though not all) of the repair exchanges with intensified laughter are conversational activities that entail disclosing information about oneself or finding out something about other classmates. Such an exchange may look like this:

Extract (8)

1   Mary: ok. estás soltera (.) casada?
                ok. are you single?

76

2	Nina:	are you single, ((gazing at Julia))
3	Mary:	viuda,
		a widow?
4	Julia:	u:h-s=
5	Betty:	sí. ((pointing to self))
		yes.
6	Nina:	((point to Julia))
7	Betty:	((point to Julia))
8	Julia:	**s:í.**
9	Betty:	**no you're not single,**
10	Julia:	**soltera (.) no-ha-ha-ha-ha.**
		single no-ha-ha-ha
11	Jim:	are you single, ((returning from the bathroom, walking to seat))
12	Betty:	**you're not single-huh-huh-h=**
13	Julia:	**=HA-HA-HA-ha.**
14	Nina:	**[no soltera-HA-HA-ha.**
15	Betty:	**[HA-ha-ha.**
16	Hal:	**[HA-ha-ha-ha.**

Repair sequences such as this appear to be less about repairing language and more about gaining knowledge or information about a peer. This is also perhaps why English is increasingly used. Nonseriousness emerging in this and similar instances is more acoustically extreme, arguably because the topic of conversation (e.g., the information exchanged) is more relevant to them. Note also that more people become involved in this exchange, indicating that acoustic prominence, e.g., laughter that is more voiced may have a more inviting quality than less-voiced varieties. In contrast, the information exchanged in more scripted activities such as oral translation tended to be focused mainly on the meaning or aesthetic qualities of language itself. Such exchanges look something like this:

Extract (9)

1	Jim:	I say recita.
2	Mary:	recibo.
		receipt.
3	Celia:	[recibo.
		receipt.
4	Mary:	recibo.
		receipt.

5	Nina:	[receipt. ((nodding))
6	Jim:	recita-how do you say receipt.
7	Mary:	receta?
8	Jim:	receta. ((nodding))
9	Mary:	**no-no-no-receta-ha-ha.**
10	Celia:	**ha-ha-ha.**
11	Ana:	**[ha-ha-h.**
12	Mary:	no receta. receta is the prescription of a doctor or a recipe.
13	Jim:	hm. I was always wrong but I always said it. ((smiling))

In Extract (9) the class reads off of a vocabulary titled 'at the bank'. As learners took turns translating the words on the list, the Spanish version of the target lexeme *receipt* emerges as a topic of debate. In short, slightly more muted laughter results when repair is carried out. Note that this activity has a more structured, less conversational shape. One hypothesis for why the acoustic quality of laughter varies, is that while the exchange of information in classrooms is in itself a social endeavor, there are some pedagogical exchanges that are inherently more socially meaningful and perhaps less 'institutional' than others. Arguably, activities that enable participants to learn something about each other are managed in a different way, and as such, they become less about the quality of language and more about content of the communicative exchange. In a sense, learners become less concerned with how they are speaking, and more concerned with the message and feeling being created. It it also worth noting that while nonseriousness emerged in repair sequences within both oral translation and conversational activities, mutual laughter was twice as likely in coversational activities than oral translation (21 versus 11 tokens). As such, practices occurring under the abovementioned conditions are interpreted as more positive affect-inducing (Bachorowski & Owren, 2003). In other words, in repairing activities when learners humorously self-disclosed or when several people were involved in trying to make sense with the goal of obtaining information about others, interaction was arguably more socially meaningful, and more acoustically extreme laughter was an

orientation to such shifts in the quality of the information. In all, we can surmise from this that

the message conveyed when we laugh is not set in communicative stone, given that shifts in

pitch were found to occur in such ways across exchanges and on occasion, within them (see

Extract 4). Such a finding suggests that kinds of social information and pedagogical activity

matter for acoustic prominence, and according to Bachorowski & Owren (2001) and Owren et al.

(2004), more acoustically extreme laughter matters for eliciting positive emotional responses in

others. We might call the above findings a 'gestalt' effect in the acoustic patterns observed, but of

course such a hypothesis can and should be tested empirically in more detail in the future.

9.3 *Distribution of Laugh Tokens in Communicative Difficulty*

As the Table 2.0 demonstrates, 63% or 48 out of 76 instances of communicative lapses

selected for microanalysis were followed by or co-occurred with laughter in some way. This is

telling in the sense that one might expect competent or successful language use to bring about

more celebration, perhaps with laughing. Yet, laughter did not occur with the same frequency or

prominence in participation that was carried out successfully, illustrating that when things went

as expected, attention was not directed in quite the same manner.

Table 2.0 Communicative Difficulty with and without laughter	
Communicative Difficulty (repair) with laughter	48
Communicative Difficulty without laughter	28
Total laugh tokens	**76**

It is worth noting that the above figures reflect contexts in which learners are expected to engage

in some type of public performance, e.g., conversation or oral translation. As described in

Chapter 3, performance or occasions of having to use the L2 in a public way falls into these two

primary categories. Table 2.1 below further details the frequency of laughter occurring within

communicative difficulty and suggests that it became a joint project more often than not.

Table 2.1 Joint Versus Solitary Laughter Within Communicative Difficulty	
Communicative difficulty with Joint Laughter	32
Communicative Difficulty with Laughter confined to speaker	16

The distribution of joint versus solitary laughter provides evidence for the assertion that overall mutual laughter was a more common outcome to disfluent language use, e.g., it occurred in 67% of cases, or 32 out of 48 instances. Further, classmates were more likely to become involved in mediating communicative lapses or repair when laughter was mutually carried out than when not. In other words, laughter invited and received affective alignment (mutuality) from others, plausibly as a way for learners to establish shared perspective regarding their language use and recruit help. There were of course instances when affective orientations to difficulty did remain confined to the speaker. Such example evidence is examined in the following chapter and will show that getting others to pay attention to what we do and say may not always be desirable. In other words, its between me, myself and I. Overall, the above analyses demonstrate that a nonserious feeling is created more often in infelicitous language use than not, and primarily occurs between the learners. This is perhaps not surprising given that even in an informal classroom, conventional assymetries in knowledge and power between the learners and teacher make it so that laughter from teachers regarding problematic talk would plausibly be perceived as insensitive. (see also Figure 2 in Chapter 3) By contrast, laughter between learners is not only interpreted as safe, it is a routine way of 'doing' incompetent performance. The analyses also illustrate that directing humor at oneself is possibly a social tactic designed to establish common ground with fellow classmates. The above examples unpack the activities of oral translation and

recitative conversation and in doing so, begin to illustrate how laughter helps to organize sense-making and highlight its affective and practical function. That is, affect helps to frame the problem and as such, potentially influences cognition (Schumann, 1997). Acoustic analysis of the data demonstrates that in activities where information exchanges were of a more social nature, laughter was more acoustically pronounced. This provides initial evidence for the hypothesis that shifts in pitch coincide to some degree with the nature of language learning activities and with the type of information exchanged in such activities. We can deduce from this that the more meaningful information exchanges are, the higher pitched laughter becomes, plausibly having an influence on hearers. Finally, these data provide some support for the notion that emotion displays are constrained by cultural norms, or 'feeling rules' (Hoschild, 1979), given that the quality of exchanges in this chapter (and subsequent ones) indicate that positive interactions were more common and by contrast, overt conflicts were kept below the radar in most cases. While such rules are constructed locally, they also represent in this case, a kind of understanding going into the learning situation. Such understandings are explored in the following section.

10. *A Synopsis and Discussion of Evidence from Discourse and Interviews*

What is significant about laughter in the previous examples is that it responds more often to communicative difficulty and honest self-evaluation about such difficulty, than felicitous second language use. Expectations tend to be built up in situations when learners must perform in some way, and when things do not go well, laughter is one way of indicating that and portraying the problem. Habits in this case arguably enable participants to enjoy displaying imperfections and eventually identify with it as a group. Hearers respond by becoming involved in many accounts and as such, ensure that the speaker feels affirmed in his or her nonserious stance (Goffman,

1959). Mutual laughter and self-directed humor regarding communicative deficiencies are

interpreted as acceptance of imperfection, and perhaps an enjoyment of it. This brings up the

question, of whether participants felt their lack of communicative competence projected a

negative social image, and whether or not such projections were of an embarrassing nature. The

following evidence from participant interviews reveals this was not the case in all but one learner

and more importantly, it begins to explain why.

10.1 *Nobody's Perfect*

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. -Aristotle

As has been suggested in the research outlined at the beginning of this chapter, second language

learners have an interest in protecting their own or another's *face* from threats while doing

learning, especially sense-making in learning. When learners are expected to negotiate meaning

and thus engage language in ways that may project incompetence, embarrassment can result and

learners may take protective measures such as avoiding such kinds of interaction (Foster, 1998;

Aston, 1986) or distancing oneself from actions through laughter (Ohta, 2008). Communicative

lapses within performance may compromise one's status as a competent speaker, and as such

may be a site where such face work ensues in order to address problems. According to Goffman

(1967) the term face can be defined as "the positive social value a person claims for himself…an

image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes" (p. 7). The previous discursive

analyses and following interview data are used to argue the case that while general efforts are

made to protect mutual respect, e.g., not laughing <u>at</u> others, the actual line taken in social

interaction is partly dependent on the threateningness of the situation and the vulnerability of

interactants to such threat. What might influence theateningness and vulnerability? One

possibility is the ability to reason about it. In interviews, participants were asked questions

related to how they handled communicative problems that arose in class more generally and if they found such moments uncomfortable. While responses varied in certain respects, such as how they defined "embarrassing," most participants (8 out of 9) were not threatened by such experiences and most attribute this to a combination of different factors including age-related perspectives on social image, and other factors such as purpose, e.g., an emphasis on pleasure in learning and realistic understandings of goals. As a result of these unspoken but commonly held beliefs, taking onself and what one was doing overly seriously was likely to be considered inappropriate. For example, in the following excerpts, two participants discuss how imperfection was something nobody could escape from. It was a part of their condition as a group of individuals trying to learn language late in life:

"It's not so much embarrassment because I think we're at the point where we all kn<u>ow</u> that we're not perfect and people help each other out for that reason. We have very interesting and <u>very</u> understanding people with us in class. You know, <u>every</u>body has some days. It's not one saying oooh no, it's not like that. Oooh it's not like that, it's learning from the mistakes. (Interview, Sam, November, 2011).

"No, this stuff is not embarrassing, If I mess up it means, I don't know how to say this or what they're trying to say. It's not 'oh what will they think,' not embarrassed no ha-ha. We're beyond that. To err is human. We all know that." (Interview, Jim, Janurary, 2012)

These quotes suggest the shared belief that imperfection was not only part of classroom life, it was part of being human in the classroom. Note that both subjects refer to classroom experiences in relation to the idea that nobody is perfect. For example, Sam says *everybody has some days, it's not one saying oh no it's not like that.* For his part, Jim says *It's not 'oh what will they think, to err is human.* The quotes also suggest that such views were related to the stage of life they were in. Sam acknowledges, "we're at this stage," and Jim says "we're beyond that." Seven out of nine participants responded in a similar fashion. This raises the possibility that a lack of vulnerability to image-threat may enable learners to reason about their classroom experiences

and derive other kinds of meaning from them. The discursive data demonstrate that they choose

certain practices (laughing off problems) over others in a way that reflects these understandings

in my view. Notwithstanding, to interpret this as purely a matter of owning one's imperfections

would be simplistic. The ability to poke fun at incompetence was attributed also to the purposes

for learning and the fact that many participants understood that the stakes were low. The

following quotes allude to this idea:

"You know, I do think we give each other permission to just have fun. Whereas younger people are usually there because they have to be. You <u>have</u> to show up, you <u>have </u>to perform and there's more ego involved. Those are things <u>we</u> don't have. We don't have those pressures. You know, so it's just supposed to be fun. And I think if we take it any <u>other</u> way then we miss the purpose." (Interview with Ana, March, 2012)

"We're too old to blush. We're laughing at our stupidity-ha-ha, that we can't pull the words out. It's like, oh are you kidding I can't do <u>that</u>! But you just accept it because everyone's doing it. And then we all sit there and go-oh God that's ridiculous. It's self-denegration I think is what it <u>is</u>-ha-ha! We laugh <u>with</u> each other. You have to laugh with them, cause we're not gonna walk out of here with a degree in Spanish I know <u>that</u>!" (Interview with Ellie, April, 2012)

 "We're at a stage when we twist it—make jokes out of it to keep it light. (Interview with Jim, December, 2011)

While the theme of *social image* was not specifically explored in the interviews, it seemed to

emerge naturally. For example, when participants talk about being "too old to blush" or

"knowing they are not perfect" or "having days" they are exercising reason regarding how they

perceive themselves in relation to their classmates and regarding experiences when they may fail.

Decisions based on such reasoning are indexed in conduct, for example, the tendency to

publicize communicative difficulty and invoke nonserious feelings about it. These quotes

provide emic evidence suggesting that many are aware of 'public perception,' yet they bargain

within this awareness in order to conduct themselves affectively in ways that are situationally

and personally relevant. Such reasoning has tactical consequences, as Jim says they "simply *twist*

it-make jokes out of it to keep it light. Learner perspectives also support the interpretation that

humor is used in some cases to blythly ridicule less-competent participation because the stakes are low and there is an effort to keep goals realistic. As Ellie's comment reveals, they were "*not gonna walk out of with a degree in Spanish.*" Such a statement is telling for a couple of reasons. More generally it shows that the learner felt that flawed performances were expected, given the level of the group. However, the statement was delivered with hint of exaggeration (sarcasm), owing to some frustration she felt with class activities and slow progress, which emerged later in the interview. Emotional behaviors that deviate from the norm, such as displays of seriousness, and frustration are examined as counter-evidence in Chapter 5 and are used to explain more generally how not all classroom interaction was wine and roses. Of course, not all instances in this data set provide evidence that learners were equally resilient to embarrassment. In her interview Lina expressed that she was in fact nervous on occasion and was prone to feeling embarrassed. Although how she later defined embarrassment shows that emotion labels are often overly generic and do not capture the reality of experience. When asked about the last time she had to speak up in class, she responded in the following way:

"Oh still very nervous, and I try and search for the right word to say and it won't come out. My nature is to be calm, so you might not see it, but I was nervous. But that makes me want to study it. If there's homework or something I don't want to feel embarrassed in the middle of class if I don't know what I'm doing. Although, I really don't know what I'm doing ha-ha-ha! I want to hide it somehow. At the same time, the embarrassment is that there's a very simple thing and I don't remember. And I know I learned it before but it's just not there anymore. There's nothing more we want except to learn some Spanish and uh maintain something new. Instead of forgetting it, or going backwards. We're trying hard to at least stay at the original place. (Interview, February, 2012)

Although infrequent in the group studied in some respects, this insider perspective is interesting because it it multi-faceted. First it suggests that embarrassment and perhaps other emotions can fly under the radar. As Lina says "my nature is to be calm, so you might not see it, but I was nervous." Indeed, this learner rarely if ever conducted herself in such a way that would suggest

she felt nervous, nor did classmates treat her actions as such. This has implications for the data

collection methods we choose to employ, given that as this quote suggests, not all emotionally

relevant events are observable in the behavioral procedures of participants, necessitating other

modes of inquiry. Second, the excerpt reveals that while she was prone to face-threat (wanting to

"hide" what she didn' know), her understanding of embarrassment is not one dimensional in

nature. In other words, while on the one hand, face threat engendered nervousness and a desire to

appear to as if she knew what she is doing, it also brought about frustration regarding her

memory. This is important, because memory emerges more often as an age-related variable of

emotion than perhaps any other in 8 of 10 interviews. Consider the following quote from Ellie: "I

feel frustration primarily. And I can make out the story very easily but I can't pull the words out

when I need them." Or this quote from Sam: Not embarrassed in the sense that I get down (looks

down shyly). I think, I should know that. I know that. Right now I blame my aging memory on

all that." (Interviews, October 2011-February 2012) These and other viewpoints discussed in

Chapter 5 suggest that situated embarrassment is not merely defined by positive or negative

valence, it is uniquely defined in terms of disappointment in onself, in the perception of lost

ability, and an intense desire to arrest the loss. Finally, Lina's views uncover how she exploits

her susceptability and potential threats to face in order to increase her motivation to study and

prepare. Potential embarrassment in this case is a factor that motivates behavior. Such an

interpetation is supported by the fact that Lina was known by many in class, including the

teacher to consistently do her translation homework (if they had any) and come prepared for

class. Such a view does not mean Lina did not engage in the practices described previously, it

means that significant idiosyncratic emotional perceptions of and orientations toward events

probably go unnoticed in behavior at times, and other times they may be minimized for social

reasons. While communitive difficulty may be face-threatening for Lina overall, the embarrassment engendered when using language in less fluent ways is associated with other dimensions of affect, reflecting an inherently complex feedback between environment, brain, self-reflection and behavior.

In all, the above emic perspectives provide evidence that subjects were generally not vulnerable to face threat because to feel so would have been inappropriate to their purposes for being there and what was relevant to them at a later stage in life. These insights into participant behavior reveal an underlying informal code of reason. A fundamental part of this code is an age-related understanding that nobody is perfect and that the purpose for learning language is to derive enjoyment from it through levity. Being overly serious would have been counterproductive to this. A key finding is that learners come to identify with each other and as members of the group based on their incompetent performances, much more than their competent ones. Such viewpoints provide further insight into the affective practices described above and illustrate that the effects of reasoning can be made evident in decision making and thus, patterns of behavior. This demonstrates that learners are using feelings derived in interactions and interpreted by the brain (Schwarz, 1990; Schumann, 1997) and reason (age-related understandings of experience) as sources of information to carry out behavior. It should be noted that the abovementioned code is not verbalized in explicit ways between participants, nor is it formally recorded and hung on the wall of the senior center, as in a club or half-way house. Rather, practices appear to be built over time by community members and reassembled in unique ways through repeated interactions and experience. How and why affective practices vary inter-individually and converge is explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Stance Taking in the Here and Then: Evidence from Multi-Modal Affective Displays

Grammar can express a good deal,
but style and intonation can do more…(Volosinov, 1973)

1. Introduction

This chapter investigates the ways in which participants use idiosyncratic and common emotional stance displays (Jaffe et al., 2009; Du Bois, 2002) to orient to events or objects in the learning environment. It also investigates the dialogic side of emotional stance. That is, actions that entail perceiving oneself or one's actions in relation to others (Linell, 2009). The investigation provides several accounts of idiosyncratic and patterned emotional stance with the goal of discovering a) the origin (trigger) of such behaviors and understandings of participants and, b) whether any relation exists between situated stance behaviors and broader beliefs and orientations to learning. As shown, situated affective stances and the responses of hearers are integral in some cases to affective practices, and their format reflects the educational and social goals of the community. Stance displays were found to be negative and positive, invoking a variety of mild affects, rather than full-blown emotions. How and when stances were accomplished was found to be consequential for responses. Deviant cases, it is argued, provide insights into the dynamic and complex emotion worlds existing in a single classroom and demonstrate how emotional stances are mobilized as devices in sustaining or pushing against cultural codes or activity that has been 'chosen' for learners. I examine how subjects position themselves toward such actions or activities in order to address particular needs and thus, exercise control over learning and discourse. The embodied affective orientations described in this chapter are themselves largely

idiosyncratic, such that they are communicated in a variety of ways through language, prosody, laughter, eye-brow flashes, sighs and in the case of one learner, orderly hair smoothing. To that end, speech cannot be affectively neutral, because as Jaffe et al. (2009) note, "it is read in relation to other possible emotional orientations we could have displayed" (p. 1). In line with this thinking, the present chapter is concerned with the nature of emotional perspective-taking in the classroom on the one hand, and on the other, with how such local behaviors may be influenced by previously established orientations toward what goes on. That is, how do global and local social ecologies of emotion connect? (Erickson, 2004) I take the position that cultural habits and volitional behavior are at work simultaneously, and that a tension between these is felt on occasion. Chapter 5 is organized in the following manner. First, I provide evidence of several affective stances, some involving laughter and some not, in order to illustrate the idiosyncratic and common nature of such displays and explore their organization as individual and joint activity. Then, I take apart two examples of counter-evidence and use field notes and participant insights to further explain them. Overall, it is my hope that the following extracts provide some materials for investigating the way mild emotional perspectives are built multi-modally on a local level as social action while reflecting the individual *selves* that build them. Affective stances are examined in 28 hours of naturally occurring interaction recorded in the classroom. The data for this chapter are chosen based on 1) the type of activity the participants were involved in (primarily oral translation and conversation) and 2) whether participants chose to take a position regarding some event. The interactions take place in the class at the senior center and consist of routine activities. First though, we take a quick look back at some particulars of the people and setting.

89

2. *A brief Look Back at People and Place*

The class sometimes felt like a weekly bridge game for its reliable informality and steady cast of actors (Fieldnotes, May, 2012). Because it was ongoing (some participants had been attending for 4 years or more) many students and the teacher had become well acquainted and appeared unsurprised by certain forms of conduct. As mentioned previously, two of the participants Hal and Jim owned and managed apartments in the area, necessitating the occasional phone call in the parking lot outside. This occurred both in the transitions between and in the middle of activities. Also, Jim sometimes kept a newspaper open on the table in front of him and maneuvered back and forth between the learning activity and reading (Fieldnotes, March, 2012). Hal for his part, did neither. Hal and Vera are a married couple that sat next to each other in the front row, plausibly because Hal suffered from macular degeneration and often relied on his wife to help him 'see' what was on the board. As a result, there were many instances in which Vera helped Hal by reading something, mostly supplying short glosses, and in a few instances providing whole fragments of L2 speech for him. Hal would emphatically repeat and thus appropriate such glosses as his own (Fieldnotes, May, 2012). Further, Mary had significant hearing loss, which became evident during her exchanges with learners on several occasions. What is most significant is that when confusion related to hearing went unresolved (e.g., learner inquiries went unanswered), frustration rarely if ever resulted (see Extract 1). The following two chapters will show that seeing, hearing, understanding and affect were distributed between peers in various ways.

3. *Research and Theoretical Background on Emotional Stance*

In line with (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987; Du Bois & Kärkkäinen, 2012), people may use any number of multi-modal affective orientations to evaluate actions or objects in the environment and organize socioaffective relations. As such, emotional stance is understood (in some cases) as an interactive phenomenon when interlocutors are allowed to gain mutual access to local events and objects (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000). Such variable practices of emotional stance are a form of contextualization because they inflect in a consequential way the specific language events they are tied to. Observing when and how the elderly participants evaluate events related to language learning provides a means for looking at how emotion gets encoded in action in idiosyncratic and culturally relevant ways. Furthermore, this discussion provides materials for investigating how people demonstrate their perception and understanding of an event by assessing its significance and positioning themselves or others vis-à-vis what happens. Such stances are achieved "through overt means (language, gesture and other symbolic forms), whereby "individuals evaluate objects, and position and align with other subjects with respect to any salient dimension of the socio cultural field" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163). The notion of interactive 'footing' (analogous to stance) can be attributed to Goffman (1981) and relates to the alignment that people take up toward themselves and others while managing the production or reception of an utterance. Contemporary work that unifies Goffman's analysis with the physical constitution of participation frameworks reveals for example that uncooperative stance is conveyed through various embodied resources, including the positioning of one's body toward interlocutors or other objects in the environment (Goodwin et al., 2012). For example, the authors show that embodied cooperation or lack thereof makes visible for others one's compliant

or defiant moral stance. This can generate specific forms of affective stance or reprimand to an uncooperative party in families or all out rejection and isolation in interaction among young girls. Such studies are useful more generally because they provide detailed insight into how affective stance becomes directed at events outside of the individual and how it is accomplished as joint activity for specific social purposes.

4. *Positioning of Self and Others*

The notion of positioning is important when considering how successes and failures are managed in classroom interaction. The positioning of speakers is according to Jaffe et al. (2009) a central part of communication, and as such there is no such thing as a completely neutral position toward one's use of language (p. 3). Further, when individuals take up stances they constitute themselves as distinct social and moral actors with emotional ways of portraying the actions of others (Goodwin et al., 2012). In psychology, cognitive appraisal is thought to be a process whereby an organism receives feedback from the environment and employs it to determine the emotional significance of the circumstance confronting it. A situated ecological view of emotion envisages a more interactive role for organisms as part of the niche in which they are embedded, in that (under normal circumstances) they may "probe their environment through initial emotional responses, and monitor the responses of other organisms to determine how the emotion will evolve" (Griffiths & Scarantino, 2005, p. 3). Such a perspective broadens our thinking about how something like real-time appraisal can happen in a language-learning environment. In line with this thinking, the following data set is used to argue that in some cases emotional stance and responses to it are contingent on activity and on the participants' evolving individual relationship with it. I examine a few examples of self-critique to demonstrate this. It will be shown that in other cases stance taking is jointly accomplished and may represent

localized attempts by the language learners and teacher to "share attentional frames and attune to emotional states" (Tomasello, 2003, p. 21).

5. *Stance in Language Classrooms*

Stance is difficult to study, for one because multi-modal forms of evaluation and positioning can range from affectively neutral to impassioned and can be interpreted as conveying diverse messages. In classrooms for example, stances may be involved in the evaluation of knowledge and information, and appear to be important triggers to affective stance, with consequences for emotion (Du Bois, 2007). If interaction and explanation are constitutive to learning and development (Enfield & Levinson, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and stance is an integral part of explanations (Goodwin, 2000), when and how does emotional stance come into play in a foreign language setting? Ochs and Schiefflin (1989) get at this by relating it to the experiences of learners. The authors note that emotions attributed to a language learner's target language, are sometimes closely related to experiences of acquiring or using language, such as failing or succeeding in the environment in which learning is attempted. In other words, emotion would appear to be involved in experiences of target language use, in particular those that involve public failure or triumph.[3] The following data reveal that this is true to some degree; and contribute to the above argument by illustrating that context, outside of local interactions, may influence understanding and significance of such displays. In other words, emotional displays may have multiple origins. Much research on stance in language classrooms has singled out teacher/learner dyadic interactions (Cekaite, 2012) particularly as it relates to institutional identity formation. Much research has also focused on teachers as the primary 'stance-takers' presumably due to the particularities of social structure in institutional environments and

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[3] This includes emotion potentially highlighted through narrative and reflection about learning experiences (Kramsch, 2009).

assumptions about asymmetries in expertise and power. In one pertinent qualitative study, Ohta (1994) shows that teacher stance affects the frequency of affective particle use, and the frequency of such use was found to increase when focus was on the communicative content of interaction rather than on grammatical form. As the previous chapter shows, such shifts in intensity and frequency of affective displays can also be true for laughter, but from a learner perspective. Other researchers have encountered persistent beliefs (and expectations) among some language learners that teachers should show they are in command in the classroom by controlling the flow of conversation (Hiratsuka & Malcolm, 2011). These findings contribute to our knowledge of how affective stance operates with teachers, but fail to make visible the ways learners socially construct stances as emotional phenomena, or the potential function of this kind of contextualization. It is my hope that this chapter provides some insight into such questions.

6. _Idiosyncratic and Common Emotional Stances in Performance: Some Assertions_

Data in the previous chapter reveal that emotional common ground can be built through the conventionalized occurrences of laughter, which portrays nonserious feelings toward participation, particularly that which is flawed in some way. To further investigate emotion as a social phenomenon, I use the following data set to examine particular kinds of assessments of language use. The stances analyzed provide a way of looking at how learners orient to their own performances and those of other classmates in _colorful_ ways, thus engaging in affective perspective taking of some sort or other. They also provide support for the broad assertion that affective stances toward previous and future actions are carried out verbally and nonverbally and are in many cases unique to individuals (identifier-like) within the patterns that are formed. Affective stances that are jointly carried out are more common in activities when there is a need or desire to establish a feeling that is relevant to the group. In such cases, the emotional

94

'involvement' of speakers and hearers intensifies (Günthner, 2011). Finally, a microanalysis of the data leads to the assertion that while critical orientations toward language use are observable, on the whole they are directed toward oneself. Perspective taking does not always prompt a response in such cases, largely because access to the event is not provided or achieved (Goodwin & Goodwin, 2000). Potential reasons for this are discussed. Two examples analyzed at the end of this chapter are found to deviate from the norm, have a stronger negative *tone* and show that while overall efforts are made to *get along,* clearly participants did not always agree.

6.1 *Critiquing Oneself: Variation in Emotional Stance*

As shown in the following examples, affective orientations in the act of learning are visibly and audibly distinct in many cases. They may be composed of any combination of multimodal displays, such as eye-brow-raising, sighs, prosodic lengthening (Selting, 1994) hair smoothing, and, consistent with what we know thus far, laughter. The following four examples illustrate the types of actions that are used to do self-critique and provide some materials for looking at how nonverbal and verbal stances are taken up. Some involve laughter while others do not. In the first example, Susi attempts to make sense of a question Mary is asking her about her family. Here, Mary opens up the exchange by saying that she knows Susi has family in Holland. Susi confirms that she has a brother living there and Mary asks where he lives. A word search and repair initiation ensues following Mary's question in line (1).

Extract (1)

1   Mary: dónde vive.
                   where does he live.

2   Susi: u:h- (1.0) en-u:m ((looking down)) (1.5) un um:- ((flaps hand in air)).
                   ((puts nose between thumb and forefinger, looks down)). (0.4) ((gaze at
                   Cecilia)). ˚village?˚
                   in um, a um…village?

3   Mary: cómo se llama el sitio donde vive.
             what's the name of the place where he lives.

4   Susi: uh-VAIGANESH. (.) vaiganesh. e- poquito. ((smiling))
             vaiganesh. It's little bit.

5   Mary: poquito. <u>cer</u>ca del mar?
             little bit. near the sea?

6   Susi: uh-no. ((shake head)) (0.6) uh- (0.2) el nor? ((drawing eyebrows together))
             uh no. the nor?

7   Mary: th-el <u>mar</u>.=
             the sea.

8   Nina: =°norte°, ((gaze at Susi seated next to her))=
             north?

9   Susi: =norte-sí. ((shift gaze to Nina, then back to Mary))
             north yes.

10   Nina: norte,= ((gaze at Mary))
             north?

11   Mary: =no, (0.6) no cerca del mar.=
             no, not near the sea.

12   Susi: =no-no en el mar. ((shake head))
             no, not at the sea.

13   Mary: ALRIGHT., (.) hana.

14   Susi: **[((raise eye-brows))   . hhhh. ((putting glasses on))**

Figure 4 – Affective stance (raise eye brows)   Figure 5 – Affective stance (exhale)

In this example, an embodied affective stance emerges that is so subtle it is easy to overlook. The positioning comes in response to the extended word search occurring in line (2) and later difficulty producing the lexeme *norte* in lines (6-9). Note that Susi (seated in the center back row in the above images) is eventually provided with the lexical scaffolding she needs to say part of what she wants to say in line (10). Such a *rescuing* move comes in line (9) from Nina who is seated next to her. This occurs at the same time the teacher is pursuing a response to a different question (*is it near the sea?*). Affective stance itself occurs via multiple nonverbal channels (eyebrow-flash, side-twist of the mouth and pronounced exhale) as is exhibited in Figures 4 and 5 above. Susi's seriousness is read in relation to her awareness of the difficulty she experiences producing spoken Spanish. Line (14) is arguably a stance depicting this and her mild frustration that the problems in understanding were not fully resolved. When asked in her interview about her experiences of speaking up in class and making errors, she had the following to say:

"In a situation like that it's always the same reaction. I'm good with language. But the minute I have to speak (puts hand to mouth) nothing comes out. So I get kind of desperate-ha-ha-ha! But I get mad at myself about that, I think, I can do better than <u>that.</u> It's disappointing to me because I think I should know at least a basic sentence. What really frustrates me is when I have to say something and I just-I <u>can't</u>. I don't even know where to start. I don't have a little chest of drawers where I can pull things out. I'm a total mess with speaking Spanish. I don't even have to think twice with languages I learned when I was young like English and German." (Interview with Susi, May, 2012)

Susi grew up in Holland and like many Dutch, she speaks three languages at native or near-native levels. This quote provides some insight into the learner's emotional frame of mind when engaging Spanish in a way that does not reflect her usual expertise with other languages. Further, rather than assessing difficulty in relation to those who may witness it, emotion appears to be primarily self-directed. This is reflected in her embodied display and in her reflections on behavior when she says, "I get mad at myself about that," "it frustrates me when I have to say

something and I can't" or "It's disappointing to me because I think I should know at least a basic sentence." This and similar views from others reveal that while the affective stances are built as local action and are directed at something in the environment, they may depend also on age-related self-expectations that participants bring with them into the learning situation. This suggests that disappointment or frustration in these cases is a reflection of accountability to self, rather than to others. Holding oneself accountable in this way provides evidence that learners tend to be less concerned with issues of *face* (how they are perceived), and more concerned with letting themselves down. The following instance in Extract (2) continues to explore nonverbal critique. In this example, Nina finishes reading a passage from an article in Spanish and Mary launches a highly positive assessment of her reading in line (1). Note that Nina's evaluation of her performance in lines (2) and (4) is misaligned with that of the teacher throughout. In figures 5 through 7 Nina is seated on the left.

Extract (2)

```
1       Mary:  perfecto↑=
               perfect.
2       Nina:  =((grimace, gaze at Mary)).
```

Figure 6 – Pre-stance reading
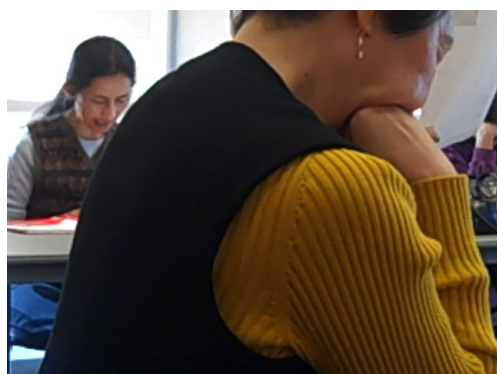
Figure 7 – Affective stance - grimace

```
3       Mary:  I mean this kid is burmese, (.) her language has absolutely nothing to do with
               this↑ and she's reading beautifully. ((smiling))=
```

4   Nina: **=((shake and duck head)).**
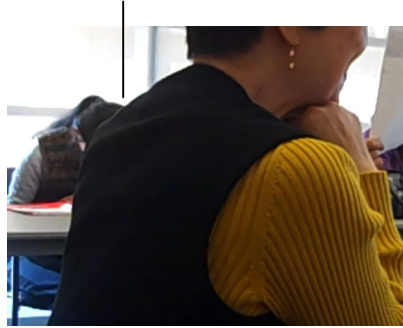
Figure 8 – affective stance – duck head

Nina's actions are read in relation to the teacher's highly positive assessments, and as such are affectively misaligned with the approving and affiliative actions in lines (1) and (3). Nina opts instead to enact a disapproving stance toward her reading in lines (2) and (4). Figures 7 and 8 are a visual representation of her multi-modal orientation and depict how the slot following each of the preceding approving actions is filled with a counter-move designed to downplay the approval. Insights into her behavior suggest that she thinks the accolades are not warranted, and further reveal that what matters to her is how her production of the L2 often did not measure up to the image she constructed for herself:

"This is not a place where my emotions swing from side to side because I'm relaxed and I'm here with people who are not worried about making mistakes. Now, I think I usually don't do as well as I could have. I don't think I deserve praise that Mary or others give. I still believe that I cannot speak well, can't communicate well in Spanish. I tend to critique that a lot in class. I think, I can learn <u>more</u> than this." (Interview with Nina, January, 2012)

In line with the participant viewpoints analyzed in Chapter 4, Nina expresses that she did not have to worry about making mistakes because the focus was elsewhere, meaning people were forgiving. These data suggest that learners may not be as forgiving of themselves. While the actual emotional displays directed toward the self are not always dramatic, they reveal that emotional relevance (even subtle) is constructed partly from experience in the learning

99

environment, and partly from understandings of the situation and one's ability. Thus, there is some question as to whether these emotional stances are not also epistemological in nature, (Goodwin, 1986), given that they convey a basic understanding of the situation and varying degrees of certainty about actions and authority with respect to the target language and to the activities they take up while learning. Learner perspectives illustrate that situated affective stances reflect elements of the author's emotional positioning toward knowledge, and can arguably be categorized as a form of on-line appraisal of such knowledge. This type of appraisal appears to be directed at the self because it is based on self-imposed expectations more so than externally imposed ones. If anything, external social pressures on performance in this classroom environment appear to be of less consequence. In sum, such affective stance practices are situated based on needs, and knowledge of situation, and yet subjective elements (features of *self*) also appear to exert influence on appraisal and thus behavior from the inside out. As Averill (1994) argues, emotion is constituted by subjective experience and social roles interpreted by individuals in a way that is open to revision:

"Who writes the scripts for our emotional feelings? Ultimately of course each person does, based on experiences, present circumstances and future aspirations. But an individual is not entirely free to write just any story. Society and personal biography determine the subject-object relations that help constitute the emotions. While feedback from bodily reactions, cognitive appraisals and responses all contribute to emotional experiences, emotions differ greatly in their temporal course. A sudden fright may last only a few moments; but an episode of anger often lasts for hours or even days, grief, for months or years, and of love, perhaps a lifetime" (Emphasis added, p. 384-85).

While it is not clear whether society or individual inclinations exert more influence on such 'emotional script writing,' such a perspective is useful for looking at how experiences of language use are made relevant momentarily in embodied ways reflecting emotional dispositions. Such responses may constitute "sensitivities to certain types of events" (Fridja, 1994). To manage such sensitivities elderly participants construct affective niches that are

100

relevant to what they are doing and to their needs as individuals and as a group. Some such affective behaviors are meant to be other-oriented, while others are not. In the following extract we see yet another example of embodied affective stance. Here Ana reads a list of several countries in Spanish that were included at the end of an article they had just translated. In line (1) she takes up an embodied stance toward her recitation and several classmates attempt to repair her production. In the Figures 9 and 10, Ana is seated in the center in the orange jacket.

Extract (3)

1 Ana: **italia, (0.4) japón, (0.6) ka-za:-na:-stan, ((draw down corners of mouth while gazing at paper))=**
     italy, japan, ka-zan-a-stan,

Figure 9 – Pre-stance difficulty reading

Figure 10 – affective stance - frown

2 Jim: ˚kazastan.˚= ((gazing at paper))
3 Susi: =˚kazak-hstan.˚ ((gazing at paper))
4 Hal: [kazakhstan. ((gazing at paper))

Ana projects her trouble pronouncing *Kazakhstan* because before she actually utters anything she pauses for almost a full second. This stands in contrast to the slots just before where as she recites the countries her pauses are in the tenths of seconds, suggesting she finds these words easier. What is important here is how she makes a frowning facial expression in line (1), an affective orientation toward her utterance, which, like the first example is embodied in a fleeting

manner and remains a more or less private affair. Note that classmates chime in but continue

looking at their papers in lines (2-4). Subsequent repair is neutral affectively speaking, given that

it targets the aesthetic aspect of language. It is notable also that as with previous examples, Ana

does not pursue the attention of hearers following her stance. Importantly in this case, fellow

classmates do not pay attention presumably because most are occupied with the paper in front of

them, and are trying to figure it out themselves. While the above examples are typical of

instances in which participants affectively orient to their own performances as a form of affective

evaluation without calling further attention to them, there are examples in this data set where

self-directed orientations toward labored L2 production can be read as affective resignation and

in effect lead to literal resignation. Cases of disengagement from the activity like that of the

following example are rare. Here, Ana continues to read off the list of countries in Spanish.

Presumably the recitation is used as an opportunity to practice pronunciation; however, as her

production requires constant mediation from the teacher and classmates (a short excerpt of which

is shown in transcript) it becomes too hard to manage and she opts to end her turn early. Note

that her emotional display becomes 'public' and is responded to in a nonserious way.

Extract (4)

1   Ana: luxemburgo., (0.2) hm::: (0.4) macedonia, (0.2) a::h (.) huh., ((tilting head))

          (0.6) ma:ru (.) icos.

2   Mary: maru<u>ecos.</u>

3   Ana: maru<u>ecos.</u> ((gaze up at Mary))

4   Class: [maru<u>ecos.</u>

5   Ana: mon<u>ai</u>co,

6   Vera: m<u>o</u>naco.

102

7   Ana: nigeria,

8   Mary: <u>nig</u>eria.=

9   Ana: =<u>ni</u>geria. ((gaze up at Mary))

10   Mary: ni-=

11   Ana: =ni<u>GE</u>ria.

12   Mary: nig<u>eri</u>a. ((nodding))

13   Ana: **(1.5) ((gaze at paper, shake head, raise eyebrows)) .hh-hhhh.**

14   Class: **ha-ha-HA-HA-HA.**

15   Ana: **I <u>pass</u>=**

16   ?:   **=HA-ha-ha.**

17   Ana: **<u>you</u> go vera-ha-ha-ha-ha.**

Unlike the previous examples, this exchange demonstrates that prolonged stretches of effort to

perform in a fluent-like way could involve frequent mediation from hearers and lead to

'bowing out' on occasion. Such displays were rare, but they did happen. Here, Ana's orientation

toward the ongoing difficulty with pronunciation is carried out verbally and nonverbally through

head-shaking, eye-brow raising and a pronounced sigh at the end of her turn in line (13). Taken

together, her displays signal for hearers that she is exhausted by so much effort, which

classmates find exceedingly amusing (line 14). This emotional enactment also projects Ana's

coming withdraw from the activity, which she carries out in lines (15) and (17). It is important

to mention that while this participant orients to her performance in a critical way, her stance has

a playfully resigned sense about it. By sighing loudly, she is announcing that she is tired of

trying. She and classmates confirm that such *giving up* is not crushing in lines (14), (16) and

(17). According to Jaffe et al. (2009) "every performance is recognized as the performer's

stance on a speech genre, itself recognized as collective, cultural property" (p. 11). Some of these examples show that stance may or may not be recognized (responded to) overtly or at all by others, in cases where learners are 'being their own worst critics.' In many such cases, learners play a dual role of judge and jury. One possibility for why fellow classmates and the teacher do not always provide responses (especially laughing ones) following such self-critiques is that they are not invited. In such cases, it could be considered inappropriate to call further attention to the problem (Jefferson, 1984b). While this may be true in one sense, it belies the point that some affective stance taking is more "self-muttering" than anything else (Goffman, 1961b). Such mutterings may be responses to events that are considered somewhat emotionally relevant, but are primarily 'notes to self' that are not designed to be shared. This brings up an interesting question as to why emotional stances are more varied than other kinds of displays, e.g., emotions such as exceeding joy, despair or anger, which were not observed in this classroom environment. Part of the answer is found in how emotionally arousing and significant experiences are judged to be. For example, participants are visibly and audibly critical toward the quality of their participation, and yet, most of these enactments are fleeting as described and infractions rarely if ever negatively impact the trajectory of interaction. Such observations along with interview data suggest that learners were simply not engaged in a high stakes game and were aware of this, hence Ana's interview comment, "This is small stuff!" (Interview, March, 2012) A likely result of this kind of rational thinking, is that outright disengagement from interaction rarely happened. Interview excerpts demonstrate that overall, serious orientations have a self-appraisal dimension such that performances are judged as disappointing or frustrating because of the knowledge learners think they should possess or be able to recall. They are epistemological because of understandings of the situation and a varying degree of certainty regarding actions.

This chapter has thus far shown a slightly more serious side of stance. As we shall see in the following three examples, laughter was often a form of positioning toward one's own actions and the most common form when disapproving the participation or performance of classmates. In Extract (5), Vera enacts an amused orientation toward her misuse of a lexeme.

Extract (5)

```
1       Mary:  ok?
2       Vera:  tengo (.) hijos. (0.2) tengo dos hijos.
               I have children-I have two sons
3       Mary:  tengo dos hijas=
               I have two daughters
4       Vera:  =hijas-daughter ha-ha-ha-ha-I made a mistake on that-ha-ha-ha
               (.) this is te↑rrible.
```

Here, Vera orients to having described herself as the mother of sons instead of daughters, which does not accurately reflect her life history, e.g. the fact that she has daughters. This is interesting because it demonstrates that she may more amused by the mistake regarding a fact about her life than the production error itself. Evidence for this is found when she says *hijas-daughter*, then laughs and says *I made a mistake on that* and laughs again. Finally, in the same turn she says *this is terrible* with a noticable pitch increase on the first syllable, a negative evaluation of the whole thing overall. In all, we can say that Vera's assessments of her speech are not affectively neutral. They are colored with laughter, pitch increases and marker of negative assessment. Her enactment can be taken to mean that she is aware, but portrays the communicative bumps in the road as laughable. Extract (6) entails a similar kind of enjoyment toward getting something wrong. In this example Mary has written on the board an anecdote about going to a Christmas party the weekend before in which she recounts how a large amount of food was served (a *banquete)* rather than light refreshments (*refrigerio*), and guests were unable to consume the

copious amounts of food. Hal, who has been selected to translate, gets tripped up with the false

cognate *refrigerio* thinking it means *refrigerator* in English. His affective displays in (16) and

(20) demonstrate his amusement toward this misunderstanding.

Extract (6)

1 Hal: un re- (.) refrige:ra-[refrige:-reo

2 Mary: [refrigerio-it's a new word for you.

3 Milly: ((gaze Hal)) refrigerio.

4 Hal: refrige:r-reo. (.) a refrigerator.

5 Mary: re-fri-ge:-rio.

6 Hal ge-rio. [ok fue un ban- (.) ban-

      fresh-ment. ok it was a ban-

7 Mary: [mm-hm?

8 Hal: fue un ban- (.) [ban- (.)

      it was a ban-ban-

9 Milly: [banquete. ((leaning toward Hal))=

      banquet.

10 Hal: =quete,

11 Mary: that's it. you're there.=

12 Hal: period. ok. (0.4) there was no:=

13 Milly: =it was not ((gazing at notes))

14 Hal: **it was not a refrigerator.=**

15 Milly: **=it was not refreshments.**

16   Hal: **it was not ref<u>resh</u>ments, [I thought it was a refrig- ((smiling))**

17   Milly: [it was a banquet.

18   Hal: it was not refri-it was not refreshments. It was a banquet.

19   Jim: it was a big spread of food. It wasn't just a-

20   Hal: **[I thought it was a refrigerator- I was thinkin' refrigerator?-HA-ha-ha.**

21   Mary: Betty can you get the next one?

This example is useful because it shows two things. One is the way that neighbors (and classmates seated further away) fill in key meaning for a classmate having trouble producing language. Here, Milly (Hal's wife) is seated next to him and provides assistance by producing entire lexemes, e.g., *banquete* when Hal is only able to manage half (lines 8-9), and by providing the correct English gloss when he produces the wrong meaning (lines 14-16). In other words, assistance entails filling in lexical gaps and providing more complete utterances as a way of scaffolding understanding. What is interesting structurally in terms of turn taking is that Milly self-selects to become Hal's tutor (so-to-speak) and as his tutor she works in tandem with the teacher to provide the support needed to complete his turn with him. The speaker in turn follows suit by repeating much of what is provided for him. Jim also helps when he provides a longer gloss in line (19). This mode of meaning 'brokering' through repetition and elaboration was a common practice in the group in general, although it was perhaps more consistent and synchronized between this husband and wife team. Peer assistance is analyzed in somewhat more detail in the next chapter. The second thing this example illustrates of course is how a learner manages getting off track by laughing in line (20). Note first that he projects his stance by smiling when he starts to say what he 'thought' it meant in line (16). This type of laughter entails noticing a misplacement of understanding and an amused evaluation of that fact. Previous

research on laughter finds that it can be used to weaken or strengthen stance taking, deal with rhetorical conflicts posed by questions, and resist or acknowledge the constraints of a question (Stivers & Hayashi, 2010). In line with data described in Chapter 4, laughter in these cases is an emotional stance in itself toward a communicative hiccup or progressive hiccups. It is embedded in the activity of making sense of language and as such, it was the most consistent device for managing mismatches in understanding and the most common form when disapproving the participation or performance of classmates. In a very significant way participants enjoy rather than resist lapses in knowledge or understanding. As Jaffe et al. (2009) note, affective stances should be read with reference to what else could have been done. This is significant because arguably, a very different emotional tone is conveyed if we strip both laughter and facial expression from utterances such as *I made a mistake on that--this is terrible* or *I thought it was a refrigerator.* Such multi-modality within stance taking demonstrates that the voice and face are powerful vehicles for making known what learners feel, despite what they say sometimes.

6.3 *Looking Back at Self-Directed Emotional Stance*

Overall, these data provide evidence for the finding that learners do engage in more serious forms of evaluation, but much of this is self-critique (Extracts 1-5). While such serious orientations occurred, they were not as common (about 2 in 5 stances of 40 documented overall). Such self-directed verbal and non-verbal positioning toward speech or participation often do not get a response from hearers, primarily because they do not appear to be designed to get one. As the above discussion illustrates, self-critique is one form of affective display whose primary function may be to let ourselves know how we think or feel about some event related to second language use. Yet, the ever present audience should not be ignored either. Just as a dancer might grimace when falling off point, a language learner may wince when displeased with the sound of

108

their pronunciation as an off-the-record secondary adjustment (Goffman, 1961b). They are both "inside and outside the ritual order simultaneously (Erickson, 2004, p. 145). Interview data reveal that these displays can reflect an underlying awareness and frustration in many participants regarding what they think they should know or recall based on expectations they establish for themselves. This does not mean that they never engaged in any form of self-comparison with classmates or the teacher, yet such comparisons were mostly positive. For example, interviews reveal comments like "Milly belongs in a more advanced class" (Interview with Ellie), or "Some people in class know a lot more and speak so much better. Like Carol, her pronunciation is SO GOOD." (Interview with Ana) Other subjects tended to value other abilities more than linguistic talent, those related to memory or motivation for example. In his interview, Sam expressed his admiration for Mary's capacity to recall information:

"I admire more than anything else that she has a fantastic memory for names and facts. I have wondered and I've asked her before, I say 'how do you do that?' A person comes in, she asks their name and she asks about their background and the next week she still knows it! I've never been able to figure out how she does it. As far as I'm concerned I have difficulty doing that. I have difficulty with my OWN name let alone others."

One interesting observation one can make regarding comparisons and evaluations of ability is that without specific prompting or questioning from the researcher, three of the younger learners in class (those ages 55 to 65) commented on the linguistic or expressive ability of others, whereas most very elderly learners in the group tended to talk about and admire cognitive prowess. This suggests that the epistemological dimension of stance proposed earlier may vary along an age dimension. In other words, age appears to be an important variable in the kinds of emotional value judgements that are made, e.g., Sam who is 85, values memory as an ability and brings this up himself, while Ana who is 65, values pronunciation and does the same thing. If what we talk about and how we talk about it can be considered a form of 'relevance,' than what

is emotionally relevant would appear to be determined in part by our age, and more importantly by age-related challenges and aspirations.

7. *Emotional Stance Taking As a Socially Distributed Phenomenon*

Disapproval or misalignment with the participation of other learners happens, as shown in the following example. Yet, it is achieved in a way that shows localized attempts to share a particular kind of attentional frame (Tomasello, 2003, p. 21). Such exchanges often involve a more flexible turn-taking structure (see also Chapters 3 and 6) than many of those analyzed above. Here, language use is portrayed as 'not good' based on responses to it. It positions receivers as audience; and may position the speaker as needing input or assistance. In Extract (7), learners hold a fellow classmate (Jim) accountable for code and mode. In the following, Jim has just re-entered the classroom after a ten-minute cell phone conversation out in the parking lot. Such phone calls were common given that he owned some apartments that required regular communication with the manager and maintanence crew (Field notes, January-April, 2012). He enters, stands behind the table and as he puts his cell phone away he scans the white board at the front of class, attempting to orient himself to the activity he has thus far missed. As he does this, Mary asks him the question in line (1).

Extract (7)

1   Mary: dónde naciste.
                 where were you born.

2   Jim: (2.0) ((looking up at board)). ques-
                 where are you starting from?

3   Class: **HA-HA-ha-ha-ha.**

4   Ana: she asked you a question. ((smiling))
5   ?:   **[ha-ha-ha.**

6   Hal: una pregunta. ((smile, look back at Jim))
               a question.

7   Jim: =yeah, a pregunta's a question.

8   Mary: [como yo te tuteo-es nac<u>iste.</u>
               because I'm using informal you-it's <u>you</u> were born.

9   Mary: ((begins to write verb on board))
10   Vera: naciste. ((looking at board))
               were you born.

11   Jim: something does not exist.= ((smile, gaze at Susi))

12   Susi: **ha-ha-ha.**=
13   Ana: =where were you born.

14   ?:   **h-ha-ha-ha**
15   Hal: [where were you born.

16   Mary: dónde naciste.
               where were you born.

17   Jim: en la ciudad de baltimore maryland.
               in the city of Baltimore Maryland.

18   Nina: o::h.

19   Celia: baltimore maryland.

20   Mary: santa monica?

21   Celia: baltimore.

22   Hal: =baltimore [maryland.
23   Celia: [maryland.

24   Mary: oh-baltimore.

25   Jim: [BAL-TI-MORE-MARY-land. ((gazing at Mary))

26   Mary: oh-baltimore.

27   Jim: u-s-a. ((smiling))
28   Mary: no sabía que había nacido allí.
               I didn't know he was born there.

111

29	Jim:	**I was raised in san francisco.**

30	Mary:	=no, (.) no-no-no,

31	Hal:	**no- ((turn around in seat, look at Jim)) sólamente en español (.) por favor-**
		heh-heh.
		no-only in spanish please.

32	Mary:	[no- (.) no,

33	Class:	**HA-HA-HA-ha-ha**

34	?:	[en español.
		in spanish,

35	Jim:	[I was a war-I was a war activ-

36	Hal:	**aquí sólamente se habla español-heh-heh-heh-h**.=
		only Spanish is spoken here.

37	Ana:	=**ji:m only in spanish. ((smiling))**

38	Mary:	nací-I was <u>rai:</u>sed.

39	Jim:	**o:k. ok.**

In this example, we see how performance puts the act of speaking on display—"objectifies it,

lifts it to a degree from its interactional setting and opens it up to scrutiny by an audience"

(Bauman & Briggs, 1990, p. 73), however, laughter enables them to carry out misalignment and

thus share an attentional frame *in jest*. We can also note the 'performers' accountability to his

audience because in this case, they hold him accountable on two fronts, for his responsibility to

respond and to respond in a certain way. In essence, laughter and affective stances reveal some

of the tacit affective dimensions that characterize what is acceptable and preferable in the

learning activity being taken up (Levison, 1992). When Jim enters he is understandably lost and

shows this in line (2). Classmates collectively orient to this confusion in lines (3) and (12) and

attempt to get him on track in lines (4) and (6). Letting Jim know a question was asked indicates

that a particular kind of response is expected. When it becomes clear that he does not understand, the teacher carries out scaffolding actions in Spanish, and classmates carry them out in English in lines (8-16). Such moves provide the information Jim needs to give a valid response *en la ciudad de Baltimore Maryland* in line (17). Next, repair initiations become necessary in lines (21-25), this time as a result of the teacher's failure to hear Jim correctly. Finally, learner language is opened up to scrutiny a second time in line (29), when Jim elaborates his previous response *I was raised in san francisco* in English. This time, code choice is evaluated by the teacher with the repeated disagreement markers *no-no-no* in lines (30) and (31), and fellow classmates join in with further misaligning moves in lines (34), (36) and (37). Here, when Jim attempts to elaborate he gives a right answer, but not a 'legitimate one' (Arminen, 2005, p. 125). Jaffe et al., (2009) note that teachers are "role models of evaluation, when they choose a language, they assert its appropriateness—or preferential status" (p. 120). This example demonstrates that in more informal or perhaps 'familiar' circumstances such as these, learners may also exercise control over the distribution of code, albeit in a way that is 'playful' and thus mitigated in certain ways. For example, laughter and smiling follow many if not all of the classmates' stances. Prosody is also used empathically when for example, Jim continues to use English in line (35), Ana says his name *Ji:m* with prosodic lengthening and smiles. This arguably softens the tone of the directive *only in Spanish* in (37). Mary's use of negation as a form of disagreement is more affectively neutral, not in the sense that emotion has been eliminated, but that it has been "tamed" (Bolinger, 1989, p. 68). This is plausibly because it has a more 'instructive' function, demonstrating that she is after all, the teacher and it is after all, a classroom. Interestingly, the teacher never actually utters the directive *only in Spanish,* classmates do. Their actions can be read as elaborating and aligning the teacher's corrective moves in an effort to get Jim to attend. In all, the teacher and

fellow learners together build a zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) in which a peer is given opportunities to gain perspective via the collective organization of attention (see Chapter 3 for a visual diagram of such zones/spaces within different activities). Laughter appears to follow and be fitted to the corrective actions that occur, plausibly so Jim doesn't interpret their efforts in the wrong way. What makes the actions of classmates and the teacher interesting is the fact that Spanish was often <u>not</u> the code of choice in other kinds of activities such as storytelling or translation. When language use was above the proficiency of learners (when understanding was at a premium), English was often used to verbally gloss meaning, ensuring comprehension in most cases (Fieldnotes, April, 2012). The use of English was therefore highly strategic and thus not considered problematic in such cases because it enabled participants (including the teacher) to clarify meaning when using Spanish would have been too labor intensive or more confusing. This suggests that affective stances toward code choice are more likely in some activities than in others, and that code-switching is desirable or undesirable depending on the conditions of the activity.

7.1 *Iconic Performances of Fear Rather than Fear Itself*

Some of the examples analyzed in this and the previous chapter reveal that amusement often arises when the students get something wrong. The following examples further investigate such a practice as a form of stance taking toward second language use that is yet to come. Extracts (6) and (7) unpack two instances in which affective stances are deployed as a joint activity. These data show that learners coordinate their orientations toward a coming activity and in doing so jointly project assumptions about their future performances in order to prepare for the task together (e.g., show that they're all in the same boat). In Extract (9), the class had been looking together at some pictures from a Latin American travel magazine. As Mary puts the

114

magazine back in her bag she looks up at the class and indicates in line (1) what the next activity

will be.

Extract (8)

1   Mary: ok. vamos a: (1.0) a: (.) conversar. ((gaze Ana, narrow eyes and smile))

                        ok. we're going to converse.

2   Nina: [uh-oh. ((smiling, gaze at Mary))

3   Ellie: na:: ((smiling, gaze at Mary then Sam))

4   Nina: [e:h-heh-heh-heh. ((gaze at Celia))

5   Sam: [ha-ha-ha.

6   Ellie: na:-ha-ha-ha.

7   Vera: [we should do it. ((smile, gaze at Ana))

8   Mary: terror-terror-terror. ((smiling, turning toward the board))

9   Vera: we love to talk. ((gaze at Ana, smile))

10   Ana: really? ((shake head, gazing at Vera)) yeah, ha-ha-ha. ((gazing at Mary))

11   Mary: terror-terro:r. ((erasing the board))

12   Vera: I'm tongue-tied-ha-ha. ((gazing Ana)) ((smile and stick out tongue))

13   Ana: ha-ha-ha. ((gazing Vera))

14   Ellie: terro:r-s:í-ha-ha.

15   Hal: terro::r. ((smile and look out the window))

First in line (1) Mary's narrows her eyes and smiles as she utters her proposition. Her

smile is contrastive because it attributes a nonserious emotional orientation to the serious activity

of speaking. This is plausibly because they all know conversation is not a daily practice, and thus

is not a strong point for many. Such actions convey the humorous message, *we're gonna get*

115

down to business of being "serious" students. Mary's proposal triggers a host of reactions,

beginning with the mild response cry *uh-oh* and smiling from Nina, as well as bursts of laughter

and an exaggerated enactment of surprise from Ellie in line (3) and laughter from others in (4)

through (6). While such displays invoke light apprehension toward the coming activity, the way

apprehension is organized as a series of progressive stances across individuals, shows that their

orientations are not displayed in a social vacuum. As such, affective stances are directed at a

specific event in the environment and importantly, respond to the actions of others (Goodwin et

al., 2012). Note that in most cases stances including laughter are deployed while maintaining or

seeking the gaze of a fellow classmate or the teacher (lines 2-4, 7-10, 12-14). This stands in

contrast to assertions that emotional expressions do not locate targets in the environment beyond

the individual (Ekman, 1998). Vera exhibits shifts in her orientation in lines (7) and (9) when

saying *we should do it* and *we love to talk,* yet later in line (12) she says *I'm tongue tied* and

sticks out her tongue laughing as if trying to literally free it. This shows that the process of stance

taking can be dynamic because it involves the ongoing rotation and interchange of roles (Du

Bois, 2007, Schutz, 1962). Such non-static emotional positioning may show a calibration and re-

calibration of stance vis-à-vis alignment with surrounding actions. Evidence of a feigned fear

subsequently emerges as a joint embodied enactment (e.g., reproduction of the word *terro:r* in

lines 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15). In this joint enactment, the teacher and learners modify language and

their body in order to portray an opposite feeling. The teacher Mary is the first to produce *terror*

in lines (8) and (11), again with smiling which conveys a false menacing tone. At least two

learners pick up on this and reproduce it, only they do so by further prosodic lengthening in lines

(14) and (15). Such lexical reproductions arguably demonstrate an intonation of contrast

(Bolinger, 1989), whereby interactants may mark words in ways that illustrate *I don't mean x, I*

116

mean y. What is notable here is how prosodic contours are used to convey affective rather than semantic contrast as the author shows. Further, vocalic duration and heightened fundamental frequency (elevated vocal pitch) have been identified by Selting (1994) as emphatic speech styles and (Goodwin et al., 2012) have more recently noted that exaggerated acoustic features can indicate defiance and opposition. Prosodic lengthening in this case signals an exaggerated sense in order to convey the opposite affective message, or 'not terror.' As Goodwin et al. (2012) maintain, "prosody makes possible not only the display of experience, emotion and stance, it provides the resources for constructing and organizing shared experience (p. 23). This is important for understanding the function of dialogic emotional displays such as stance because it requires that one look beyond the private thoughts and actions of the individual and take into account the way orientations may be publicly distributed for the purposes of the group. The same incongruent message between the verbal and non-verbal expression is conveyed primarily with smiling and laughter in lines (2-3), (7), (9-10) and (12).

If we understand affective stances to be isolated from surrounding actions, they lose much of their meaning; however, if we take the collection of stances to be a coordinated effort, we see how learners build on previous actions in ways that align in an ongoing fashion. Similar (though not identical) interactive formats in storytelling or "sharing rounds" have been observed in AA groups, and are designed to get people to see that they are "in the same boat" (Sacks, 1992b, p. 260). In line with (Du Bois, 2007), stances in this case are target centric and represent modes of exhibiting emotion in order to get others to attune in similar ways. An enactment of false fear is achieved overall by combining linguistic and embodied materials in contrastive ways. For example, linguistic structures like *I'm tongue-tied and terro:r* are iconic symbols for inhibition and fear, but are contextualized in this instance by facial expression and laughter. The

multi-modal actions observed are understood as indexes, that is, contextualized, multi-party and multi-modal forms of situated emotion (Goodwin et al., 2012). When juxtaposed with verbal stances, prosody, facial expressions and laugh tokens in this case contextualize what is said (Gumperz, 1992a). As such, they signal what is emotionally relevant for the social actors involved and thus what is appropriate to the situation and the classroom culture (Hoschild, 1996). Such stances are volitional and individual but respond to previous actions in a way that is arguably consequential for eliciting positive affect in others. In sum, when subjects construct joint emotional stances they show 'shared' sensitivities toward events. By constructing stance in this way, they portray themselves as a particular kind of communicative community; perhaps, one that approaches novelty and difficulty as a group. The learners also portray themselves as people who can exercise relative freedom to engage in such behavior. A similar form of mutual affective signaling is investigated in the following example. In Extract (9) response cries and laughter spread throughout the group and emotionally foreground the coming activity. The orientations of learners emerge in an aligned fashion as they read conversation questions being written on the board by the teacher.

Extract (9)

1   Mary: ((begins writing on board))

2   (10.0)

3   Nina: **uh-o:h.** ((smiling, gazing at board)).

4   Susi: **ha-ha-ha-h.= ((gaze at Nina seated next to her))**

5   Lina: **=oh no-h-h-ha.**

6   Ana: **[h-h-ha (.) e::ha-ha.**

7   (2.0)

8   Vera: querer,

9   Mary: querer. (.) quiero is yo. ((pointing to self))

10   Vera: ah-ha. yeah. ((nod))

11   Mary: ((turning back to board)) yo quiero (.) u:h (.) ok. ((continue writing))

12   (2.0)

13   Milly: **a:h (.) muy <u>bueno</u> ((gazing at board, smiling)).**
               very good.

14   Ellie: **°ma:lo°-h-ha.= ((gaze at Milly))**

15   ?:   **=h-ha-ha-ha.**

16   Milly: ((turn to Ellie seated next to her)) (?……?).

17   Ellie: ((nod))

18   Vera: **(?) h-ha-ha. ((reading board))**

19   (15.0)

20   Lina: **o:h no. (0.2) no way-ha-ha-ha-h. ((look at Vera))**

21   Vera: ((smile, look at Lina)) **°o:h yeah-we can do it.°** ((pointing to board)) °questions.,°

               (.) °we ask questions and respond-ha-h.°

22   (8.0)

24   Ana: **((lean forward squinting, sit back in chair)). bue::no-ha-ha-ha-ha.=**
               alri::ght.

25   Class: **=HA-HA-ha-ha.**

The nature of this exchange is similar to that in Extract (9) in that learners jointly orient to an

activity before it takes place; and most notably this is done in a way that reflects attempts to

publicize affective orientations and attempts to align. In line (1) Mary begins to write prompts to

the dialogue they are to perform on the white board at the front of the class and learners begin to

fill in silence with stances. Nina says *uh-oh* in line (3). Lina follows suit with *oh-no* in line (5).

Such actions are interpreted as *Response Cries* with the function of affectively marking 'physical

doings' (Goffman, 1978, p. 787), in this case a future doing. Laughter is immediately fitted to

these moves in lines (4) and (6). After Mary explains the meaning of a key verb, she turns back

to the board and learners again begin to take turns verbally evaluating the conversation they will

have to have in lines (20-21). Note that Ellie counters Milly's *very good* with her joking stance

(*ba:d*). After another laughing response from Vera in line (25) and a pause, another foreboding

response cry and laughter comes from Lina (e.g., *o:h no. no way-ha-ha-ha-h*). Here, she seeks

Vera's gaze, prompting an empathic response *oh yeah we can do it* in line (28). In the final two

turns, Ana inserts another stance token *bue::no* (alright), a playful resignation toward the

conversational terms being set before them. Many of her classmates affiliate with her resiged

tone by laughing. Goffman (1978) notes that response cries are a form of self-talk and appear to

violate our general interdependence in social interaction because they are not usually designed

for hearer response. He also asserts that conversation-like exchanges do not usually result from

response cries, and "self-talk of one type is rarely answered by self-talk of another type" (p.

787). The response cries occurring here are arguably other-oriented, e.g., learners project the

quality of their future doings and attempt to let others know ahead of time how they appraise

such doings. Such, publicizing of affect has consequences because it gets others to orient in

similar ways. Goodwin & Goodwin (2000) demonstrate that affective stance is often a matter of

shared visible access to objects or events. Here, participants create a situation in which they and

others access the coming event in a similar affective way. In other words learners explicitly put

themselves in a position (self-select) so they are able to evaluate the coming activity jointly.

Shared knowledge of their accountability as future speakers may be one reason they do this. As

Chapter 4 illustrates, nonseriousness is a sort of community identifier which emotionally

smooths performances, here it smooths future ones. In short, while response cries are a sort of

'flooding out' of emotion (Goffman, 1967), such a flood is not arbitrary and may reflect

emotional attunement toward future speakership. Since "all speech must be affective in so far as

it is necessarily concomitant with some state of mind" (Classe, 1939, p. 36), participants frame

their state of mind for fellow learners presumed to be able to relate. One question raised by such

an observation is, what is the broader utility of laughter in such exchanges beyond portraying

affective states? There is some sense among subjects that it may help to prepare them for

engagement in novel activities. As the following interview excerpts suggest, laughter as part of

stance taking let the group know where they were headed and invoked a feeling that was useful

and natural for them:

"Sometimes we have to step outside of our comfort zone and that means we might not do so good and it's going to be obvious. It's our feeling that we are going to do a new activity. And when we have different, converse with a person or singing, these new things, interaction right? We might get a little nervous some of us, but [laughing] helps us get there." (Interview with Nina, January, 2012)

"I think it is the result of acceptance ahead of time. It feels better." (Interview with Sam, October, 2011)

"We're laughing at future stupidity-ha-ha-ha. That we're just gonna be pulling words out and pulling and pulling until we finally get it." (Interview with Ellie, 2012)

"I normally feel that everybody's nature is like that, so we don't pretend. I don't think anybody's even thought about what you ask. That's just the way that we are in the group, it's what I meant about when you get older." (Interview with Lina, February, 2012)

"You know, almost everyone is older. The point is that I think they feel pretty comfortable with their mistakes and don't judge. You have to have a sense of humor when you're trying new things. (Interview with Mary, December, 2011)

These perspectives are varied in their content, but most get at the broader reasons and purpose for invoking amusement, which is that it provides both affective and practical benefits. On the one hand, some viewpoints suggest that laughter is 'artifact-like' because it provides a sort of 'affective map' to taking up future activity. As they note "it's our feeling that we are going to do a new activity," "that we're gonna be pulling and pulling words out until we get it" or as Sam claims, "it's acceptance ahead of time." These viewpoints show that laughter may prepare them in some sense to engage in activities such as speaking. There is also some indication that laughter and stance regularly occurred together because it was more natural for them to perceive what they were doing as funny or ridiculous. Insight into human emotion and behavior can be found in unlikely places sometimes. For example, there have been diverse theories as to why prehistoric Magdalenian societies created cave art and what its function was. One utilitarian theory holds that it somehow taught people about the animals or practices depicted on the walls or ceilings. This has been appended with other ideas attributing a ceremonial or ritualistic function to such art. More recently, scholars think that a more likely reason why these societies devoted so much attention and resources to artistic practices, for so long is that they found emotional satisfaction in it. It provided excitement, entertainment, sensual and spiritual relief, and importantly, it added to their knowledge. As Johnson (2003) asserts:

"The main 'ceiling' at Altamira that seems to have been the work of one artist on behalf of the entire settlement, was also an intellectual instrument which encouraged discussion or storytelling, accounts of exploits and the history of the community. It played a creative role not merely in general education but more specifically in the development of sophisticated language, being capable of communicating thoughts on an ever-widening range of subjects" (no page number, online reference).

At face value, such an account of Paleolithic cultural mind set may have very little to do with a group of individuals engaged in language learning some 14 millennia later, yet it provides a good

analogy for how affective practices can lead to the experience of emotions, which when positive, may perpetuate further practice and knowledge. This I would characterize as a pedagogy of emotion that emerges naturally in the group and is informed by previous knowledge. Such consistent positive affect reflects the unthreatening nature of the class environment and the unthreatened nature of its inhabitants. To sum up, these data lead us to the conclusion that a pattern of affective practice takes shape when stance is accomplished through laughter in individual and collective stance taking activities. Examples of joint affective stance taking show how positive affect is needed to frame the activity, especially when misaligning with others or when orienting to novel activity as a group. Serious stances are observable as self-*mutterings*, and are designed to be secondary asjustments to one's own speech or action (Goffman, 1961b). Interviews with subjects tell us that laughter may smooth the uptake of novel activities and convey a sense that learners are in the same boat. Finally, we learn that multi-modal affective stance particles operate in unison rather than as isolates and may have epistomological dimensions related to the participants' awareness of their knowledge and self-failings. Perhaps overall, we have seen that emotional stance is relatively *tame* in this classroom environment owing to several factors. The following two examples demonstrate that participants did not always agree and they display this through emotional stance as a manner of pushing against conventions.

8. *Enacting Frustration and Complaint*

Events that trigger more vivid negative emotional displays must first and foremost be relevant to language learners in some way. As the following discursive and interview data illustrate, responses to and solutions to problems appear to be chosen based on a complex interaction between local action, past experience and judgments of experience and on

understandings of over-arching purpose. In other words, the following counter-examples provide a bit of evidence suggesting that reason matters in decision-making at local and broad levels. Damasio (2003) notes that, emotion is central to the appropriate organization of attention since it provides signals in the form of proprio-ceptive knowledge about an organism's past experience. Emotion gives us a basis for applying or withholding attention to incoming stimuli, especially the social type. In order to provide important contrastive evidence to the practices outlined in this and the previous chapter, the following two counter examples and interview evidence will show that frustration does play out among subjects in class. Indeed, participants did not 'sing Kumbaya' (figurative use) on a daily basis and, in at least one case, it was clear that two classmates did not care much for each other. However, such conflicts are not the primary focus of this section. The following two examples are important because they illustrate how previously underlying frustration with mode of learning or local disagreement with the teacher's actions are reflected in behavior and have consequences for practices down the road. Such displays are interpretable as a form of push-back on the part of learners.

8.1 *Emotional Stance in the Here and Then*

As mentioned in Chapter 3, at least half of the activities observed throughout the seven months of observation were related to oral translation of texts. Sometimes these were translations of articles and other times they were anecdotes that were written on the board. Because the class did not have a predetermined set of materials, i.e., no textbook or workbook, most readings were provided by Mary, and many (if not most) came from magazines on Latin American and South American culture and current events. Because of the informal nature of the class, the appropriateness of readings was rarely questioned. Indeed, 8 of 9 learners felt that it would be inappropriate to ask for more than the teacher was willing or able to provide, that whatever she

brought was "ok with them" (Interview with Nina, March, 2012). One outcome of this was that the level of difficulty in the readings that they were expected to translate varied widely from simple to quite complex, leading to confusion at times and signs of frustration in several instances over a three-month period (Fieldnotes, February-April, 2012). The frustration was made evident primarily by one participant (Ellie) and took the noticeable form of sighing, shrugging and less frequently, eye rolling and interestingly, laughter. In Extract (10) emotional orientations are signaled progressively through a series of multi-modal actions tied to the moves of both the teacher and a fellow learner in the translation activity being taking up. It is worth noting that in the several minutes leading up to her turn, Ellie is observed sighing loudly in response to fellow learners trying to make sense of reading. Here, she has just finished translating an excerpt from the article and Mary provides some glosses in English before confirming turn completion in line (5). Note that before such turn completion, Ellie's embodied orientation toward the activity begins to emerge in line (4).

Extract (10)

1   Mary: the problems, (0.6) que afectan nuestras sociedades- (1.0)
              the problems, that affect our societies,

2   Ana: [???

3   Mary: and hispanic youth.

4   Ellie: **((perse lips and shrug, looking down at paper)).**

5   Maria: ok-uh let's see-uh Ellie you are finished aren't you,=

6   Ellie: **ye̲a̲h-huh-huh. ((raising chin slightly, maintaining gaze down at article with serious expression))**

7   Mary: ok-hana-sin lugar a dudas.
              ok hana-without a doubt.

9   Hana: I didn't have time to translate but I w-

10	Ellie:	**[((gaze at Sam and shake head)) °h-ha-it's <u>dumb</u>.°=**

11	Mary:	=oh-n-n-no-never mind th- ((gaze at Hana))

12	Ellie:	**[((turns to Hana)) it doesn't <u>matter</u>- ((nodding)) it doesn't <u>matter</u>- just read it please.**

14	Hana:	ok-I know-h-h.
16	Ana:	[Ha-ha-h
17	Lina:	[Ha-ha-h
18	Sam:	[Ha-ha-h
19	Mary:	[((smiles))

Just before confirming the completion of Ellie's turn, we see the beginning of her negative stance in line (4). Such emerging misalignment (Stivers, 2008) between the participant and the activity is carried out first by pressing her lips together and shrugging. Shrugging in such a way communicates that there is a problem with her understanding of what was read, e.g., that it has not been adequately clarified before moving on (lines 1-3). Next, Mary confirms that Ellie's turn is at completion (line 5) and Ellie responds with *yeah-huh-huh*. Her affirmative laughing response hearably conveys sarcasm, e.g., I'm done but what's the point. Such ironic laughter is audibly quieter and the serious facial expression following this laugh token adds to the interpretation that she is not amused. This 'fake' laughter reflects a negative evaluation and a lack of the expected affect, amusement or mirth (Haakana, 2012). Mary carries on by selecting a new speaker in line (7), to which Hana responds by disclosing she did not have time to complete the translation by writing it at home as learners sometimes did. Ellie overlaps this turn by turning to Sam and saying in a low voice *h-ha-it's <u>dumb</u>*. As it is quick, Sam does not appear to notice. Again, her facial expression is serious even as she laughs. This verbal stance is perhaps the clearest indication of her feeling toward the activity. It is an other-oriented *mumbling* in line with what (Goffman, 1961b) describes in "The underlife of a public institution." It is direct criticism

and remains on the quiet side. In line (10), Mary attempts to free Hana from her worry and Ellie overlaps again. This time she turns her body toward Hana and says *it doesn't matter* twice, and urges her to just *read it* in line (12). Her actions seem to portray to Hana her frustrated stance that doing the homework is futile and Hana wouldn't understand what she read. Interestingly, while Mary looks at Ellie in line (11), she keeps most of her attention on Hana, plausibly because she is protecting Hana's rights as speaker or because she doesn't pick up on Ellie's sarcasm. Hana nervously responds by saying *I know* and she and other classmates laugh in a subdued manner, suggesting awareness she may be caught in the line of fire. In all, Ellie uses a multi-faceted form of emotional stance to enact a complaint about the reading materials the teacher had been choosing and portray the activity itself as kind of worthless. A question arises as to the origin (trigger) of such perspective taking. While clearly, Ellie's actions are misaligned with those taken up locally by her classmate and the teacher, the following ethnographic data illustrate that the motives underlying behavior are partly derived elsewhere. For some months leading up to this exchange, Mary had been regularly bringing in magazine articles for them to translate, and, while most students gladly accepted whatever the teacher provided, Ellie experienced increasing frustration at the inappropriate level of the readings and the high degree of effort needed to make sense of them (see also Extract 1 from Chapter 4). The following interview excerpt was collected a week after the above exchange took place, and suggests she had a different understanding of what the class should be:

"It's because of the level of the <u>stories</u> and readings [Mary] brings. I would like to have a story that would be at our level that we could read and translate and <u>all</u> participate in equally. And that's basically what this Spanish class is supposed to be, getting everybody involved in the story Because I said last week, well you were there when Lina said she has other exercises. And so I asked her if she could bring them when Mary was right there. It was something that could be <u>used</u>. It was in a bank, and we're not beginners, but you can get the <u>context</u> of the story. I had to say something."

Part of this quote is referring to an instance a week earlier, in which Ellie finally turned to Lina at the end of class as people were getting ready to leave and asked her if she could bring stories and exercises from a Spanish workbook she had at home. Mary stood by and watched, appearing neutral to the whole thing. A few classmates agreed with Ellie's assessment that some readings were too difficult and, after a few minutes they consulted with Mary, who went along with their decision saying, "it was fine with her" (Fieldnotes, April, 2012). Ellie's insights into her behavior suggest that she could not hold in her frustration, e.g., *I had to say something.* Thus her affective behaviors over some weeks represent a trajectory that culminates, so-to-speak in the above exchange and finally, in her explicit request for learning materials. Without such insight into her behavior, we might come away with an impoverished understanding of Ellie's motives and the false interpretation that she was being mildly aggressive, or even, given the content of her talk, trying to reduce Hana's accountability for doing the assignment at home. Using both sources of data we find that frustration and complaint are enacted as part of a larger ecology that is built up over some weeks. Thus the origin of the embodied emotional stance taken up in Extract (10) is plausibly spread out over a wider area. Interestingly, the above quote suggests that Ellie's expectations for how learning should take place and what constituted a useful activity was actually in line with what some other classmates thought, but most chose to bypass this in favor of going along, suggesting it was not as significant to them. Indeed, many appear to accept and enjoy the lack of formal approach and teaching style because it was so relaxed and pressure-free (Interview with Lina, February, 2012). There were other sources of frustration for this participant, stemming from conflicts with approach and a lack of progress. She describes these conflicts in the following way:

"We've been at this for years. I have to say I have not grown in this class at all because the teacher does not believe in teaching grammar. I think if you want to make a sentence that is

usable, that makes <u>sense</u>, you can at least try to say I will go, if you want to try to speak Spanish. And you can also sound more intelligently while talking, instead of pulling the words one out of one. But we have not gained <u>that</u> capability here at all. This hasn't really helped me in communicating with the gardener-I can pull out words but can't form sentences. I would like to ask 'em or tell 'em what I would like him to <u>do</u>. Or I don't want the grass cut short or don't cut the grass because I planted seeds. You know, or just conversation like how's your <u>family.</u> I can look this up in my dictionary, but I feel after all these years I should be able to DO that. Now this <u>other</u> class, you should see this other class across the hall. I understand it's filled to capacity and all they do is speak Spanish."

Clearly, this learner feels that aspects of classroom practice have failed her after so many years, and as such do not count as the right kind of learning. For example, practices do not help her achieve her goal of speaking more fluidly (with the gardener for example). Her attitudes on the lack of progress are epistemological because they reflect a belief that as the 'knower' the teacher should teach in a certain way, and that NOT teaching this kind of knowledge (i.e., grammar) was part of why they had not learned much. Yet her perspectives also have an affective dimension because they reveal a frustrated desire to achieve utilitarian knowledge of language, e.g., her inability to use the second language in a way that would sound halfway 'intelligent.' So why hadn't this learner switched classes? She responds to this as follows:

"I don't know why I'm still here, but I know I could not join that class. I'm not capable of doing that. It's a higher level. Recently, I was really at the point of dropping out because I felt it was pointless to come in, sit down and never use these words again, when we translated. I thought I'm never gonna use these words <u>again</u>. I have no <u>use</u> for them. Why clutter up my mind with this. But no, I probably won't drop out. You gotta keep your mind busy."

This quote gets at the tension that sometimes exists between going along with conventions, giving up or putting up a bit of a fight. She chooses the third option in this case. It also suggests that her decisions are based on diverse sources of knowledge. While on the one hand Ellie says that what they were learning was of little use to her, she does not feel she has the proficiency needed for the other class, even though she characterizes it as a sort of *Mecca* for speaking

Spanish. Quitting is bypassed as well because she appears to share the common belief that keeping the mind busy is preferred and idleness is to be avoided (see Chapter 3). Instead, she opts to enact a course of action where she makes her affective orientation audible and visible within the activity she opposes, a first step. Then later she takes steps to change conventional practice in a way that is amenable to her needs. In general, it would appear that this learner's goals are prioritized in such a way that 'occupying the mind' even with less useful language, is considered better than learning no language. Such an over-arching purpose to stay cognitively active appears to influence her broader decision to stay, and is a common motivational denominator in many cases for other learners as well. In sum, Ellie enacts her frustration in class at a given point presumably as a way to exercise a complaint and let others know where she stood regarding the readings. This is interpreted as a form of push-back, and is arguably also a form of on-line appraisal of the activity, reflected in her behavior. At the same time, emotional significance, understandings of situation and conventions all exert a powerful influence on decision-making. Note that she does not fly off the handle, she uses sarcasm and laughter to temper her responses. This leads us to the finding that while individual perception and volition matter in situated emotional stance taking, different kinds of information are used to carry out decisions at a local level and in a broad sense, ultimately organizing most behavior in culturally specific and subjectively appropriate ways.

8.1.1 *Affective Sanctioning: Putting Emotional Behavior on Ice*

Extract (3) in Chapter 3 gives us a glimpse of how one particular learner could at times take the floor from the teacher in order to comment about an article they were reading, or debate some aspect of a story the teacher told. The following example is actually an antecedent to the Danilova exchange discussed earlier, in which Jim got up from his seat, asked Mary if he could

use the white board marker and proceeded to write and explain the pronunciation of the word for restaurant in Russian. However, before getting up from his seat, he makes known his misalignment with the way Mary writes Danilova's girlhood nickname. In line (1), his misalignment begins to emerge, intensifying as the exchange progresses.

1   Jim: it's cerilic (.) you have to explain that. (0.2) it's not the roman alphabet.

2   Mary: i know xxxxxx-

3   Jim: =yeah well I know (.) but you didn't <u>say</u> that to people. otherwise it's total

         nonsense.

4   (0.4)

5   Jim: cer<u>ilic</u>. (.) CE-RI-LIC.

6   Mary: I know se llama because., porque los los lo inventó san ciro. SAN CIRILO

         ((leaning forward)). he was a monk and he was the one who invented the writing

         of the russian language.

7   Jay: [a-p is a I <u>kno</u>w. ((cross arms and shake head))

8   Mary: I can write you some of that.

9   Jim: ((shake head and run hands over hair, smoothing it))

10   Hal: ((turn around in chair to gaze at Jim))

11   Jim: ((gazing at Hal, does forget it hand gesture toward Mary))

12   Hal: ((does easy does it hand gesture))

13   Jim: ok I know one word. ((stands up)) let me do one word for you ((takes marker

         from mary)).

This extract is evidence of a student engaging in slightly more aggressive turn taking tactics in order to see that epistemic rights he feels he has about the topic are carried out. Jim's frustration

or disatisfaciton with Mary's explanation is made evident when he says 'you have to explain that' and 'you didn't say that.' In effect, he is holding Mary accountable for an instructional detail he finds important, and when she does not respond satisfactorily, he get's louder, shakes his head and smooths his hair which he often did when confused or frustrated (lines 7 and 9).This interpetation was later confirmed in an interview with Jim, who noted that he was aware that he smoothed his hair on occasion, but was unaware until he saw himself on video of the contexts in which he did it and had never thought about its meaning (Interview, April, 2012). We also see that his behavior is sanctioned by another learner (Hal), who effectively 'diffuses' Jims aggressive stance with a hand gesture. This shows that in the event conversational misalignment was becoming too overt, it was smoothed over fairly quickly by hearers, which indicates that feelings were keep cool in order to maintain respect for the teacher.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, there were isolated cases of social dislike in the setting. It is not clear if such conflicts were a social (personality) issue, or political. Suffice to say, outright disagreements in interaction almost never happened in class, and in fact, if not for passing comments made in interviews such as "oh him, my nemesis," or the two viewpoints included below, one would not have known disagreements existed. Aside from the previous two vignettes, the only other indication that subjects did not get along is found in their occasional use of sarcasm, again conveying an opposite feeling to the one actually felt. In such an instance, the nemesis might say in sarcastic way, 'Tonight I'm taking you out to dinner to Pacific Dining Car to spend 200 hundred dollars, cigar and everything!' To this the other would reply in a blasé tone 'ok, sure,' which was code for 'not in a million years.' When asked about how conflicts were handled, most participants noted few if any problems, except for two. In one interview Ana notes the following about a fellow classmate's occasional habit of interrupting: "He has a way of

sharing whether we want him to or not-ha-ha. It's not always frustrating though because he

always gives us some kind of information, he contributes somehow." Indeed, some classmates

such as the one referred to in this quote had more overt communicative tactics and could be

observed interjecting during turns on occasion or even briefly 'taking over' especially where

there was exchange of cultural information unrelated to Spanish. On such occassions (e.g.

Extract 11) he felt he had epistemic rights and would overtly misalign with the teacher's actions.

Over several months it became clear that the turn-taking strategy this learner adopted (at times)

when appropriating and sharing knowledge was to contribute to discussion in a free-style format,

even during moments when such free-style turn-taking was viewed as inappropriate (see

Erickson, 1996 for a description of aggressive turn-taking tactics or 'turn-sharks' in a first grade

classroom). For example, this learner had traveled extensively and could occasionally be seen

and heard providing editorial tidbits he deemed relevant to the topic of conversation or to class

readings (Fieldnotes, February-April, 2012). Nevertheless, Ana's quote also suggests that if

interjections contributed useful information in some way, they were perceived in a more positive

light. Deciphering positive meaning from misalignment or processing negative experiences

effectively involves flexible (fair) thinking, as we shall see next. A quote from an interview with

Sam suggests that reason and experience influenced what participants thought of each other and

likely also influenced why negativity and conflict were kept covert:

"We don't always agree. Disagree in the sense that I don't always agree with what the other person says and how that person acts. I think oh, that's stupid, you know? But I don't express that. I won't tell you shut up, well maybe under the breath you know, but we won't speak it out! Why? Because we try to keep a certain amount of respect, because that person may just think that I'm a dumb shit. We have one fellow in class who has some property in Santa Monica and I needed a recommendation for a painter, so I says shucks why don't I ask him. So I did and he says oh year sure and out comes the cell phone-ha-ha! And the guys did a great job, so I went back and thanked him for giving me the name. It's that kind of interaction that molds the whole area. (Interview with Sam, October 2011)

133

This excerpt illustrates that maintaining respect involved keeping misalignments quiet. It also involved the recognition that one's own behavior might not always be perceived in a positive light by others. It further suggests that how behavior or events were received in class may have been influenced by other knowledge and experience with classmates. In other words, experiences outside of class 'molded' the area of classroom behavior as Sam notes and perhaps how said behavior was perceived on a cognitive level. The above insights tell us that the emotional significance of social experiences and related decisions on one's own conduct depend on reflexive kinds of thinking, and realistic assessments of one's own limitations in relation to those one comes into contact with.

9. *A Brief Discussion of Findings*

To enter into this discussion, it is necessary to ask the question, do the data point to a larger role for socialization practices or for the individual? Or, are global and individual factors somehow mutually influencing in behavior? To take a stab at this question, hard-line structural-functionalists might say emotional behavior is composed of culturally realized sets of sentiments, that is, individuals are raised to conduct themselves and feel in ways that adhere to the conventions. Interestingly, this binary perspective aligns with psychobiological theories in which emotion is thought be hedonistic, and, in its most basic sense, based on neural reward/punishment. That is, under typical circumstances there is an avoidance of pain and maximization of pleasure, thus generating consistency in behavior (Fridja, 1986). While studies of the brain (especially where addictive behaviors are concerned) show that neural reward does motivate behavior in a real (chemical) sense, what these theories do not take into account is that human survival requires adaptation to all kinds of environments, especially the social type (Buss, 1996). Some such environments are low stakes, whereas others are high stakes. It might then

134

follow that rewardingness is also adapted to the different situations we find ourselves in. These data show that in order to affectively adapt, learners construct a positive, low stakes environment that is useful to them. Thus they appear to make use of different kinds of environmental information (e.g., through praxis, experience with others) and a preexisting knowledge base to make behavioral decisions about what is emotionally significant and what is not. Such information may be derived from understandings of purpose and local goals, as well as a reflexive (realistic) awareness of self-other limitations. As it happens then, when in a situation of language learning, we subjectively judge experiences based on their relevance to us along a complex spectrum of goal/need significance (Schumann, 1997). Some of the above evidence suggests that on such a spectrum we will likely find idiosyncratic needs and goals that vary in significance. As we see with Ellie, they are prioritized, but not in a static sense. Idiosyncratic affective displays can be viewed as serving these individual concerns and needs (Fridja, 1994), while common affective displays could likely serve the goals and purposes of the group. A traditional ethnomethodological perspective is also useful here, which holds that people have to work to make sense of mundane and non-mundane experiences with others (Garfinkel, 1967), a complex division of selves and 'habits of the heart' in everyday interaction (Erickson, 2004). In line with this thinking, the example evidence and counter-evidence analyzed above show that while socialization (appropriateness and harmony) are organizing influences on affective behavior in the classroom, learners also exercise will, and this can be a potential source for push-back and change in a learning environment. Such social adjustments enable learners to exercise a degree of control over discourse, and in more informal settings, in the selection of materials thus exerting control over what is learned. Looking back, this chapter has explored the emotional stances that subjects take up as well as their understandings of self and other evaluation in

classroom experience. Such an analysis has been achieved by examining the social particulars of common and idiosyncratic stance taking over time as well as deviant cases. By focusing on how emotional stance is embodied multi-modally and where it occurs in discourse, we see that it is embedded in classroom practice in ways that are culturally competent (Ekman & Friesen, 1975) and in ways that are subjectively relevant and volitional. In the case of laughter in stance taking, it can be characterized as an organizing device in its own right. Affective patterns in joint stance taking provide evidence for a kind collective emotional attunement, where participants show their sensitivities to events as a group. Such positive affect trains attention in a sense for future action and arguably reflects the low threatening nature of the setting and the broader social purpose of learning through social relating alluded to in Chapter 3. In Chapter 6 readers will be given a glimpse into affective practices and the distributed nature of sense making among participants within storytelling activities.

CHAPTER 6

Situated Emotion in Distributed Sense-Making

1. Introduction

The basic goal of this findings chapter is to give readers an idea of how sense making is carried out as part of daily routine in this classroom culture and what the role of affect is in that process. A further aim is to deconstruct the activity of storytelling (exploratory learning) in order to ascertain its affective and pedagogical function. Discoveries from Chapter 3 frame the present analysis and discussion by showing that affective and instructive peer mediation is more prevalent overall in recitative conversation and exploratory storytelling. In this investigation readers will discover how a practice of *distributed sense-making* is invoked when understanding breaks down. Chapter 5 begins to show how this is achieved in converational activities and oral translation, e.g., multi-party cooperation is used help others convey meaning and see or understand what they are reading or translating. Such peer mediation is frequently affective in nature (prosodic lengthening, facial expression and laughter) and in some cases didactic. It is argued that the responsibility of sense-making is shared between peers as a kind of affective *third space* (Gutierrez et al., 1995) whose participation framework is uniquely fitted to the age-related needs and purpose of learners. Such a purpose is arguably reflected in the sharing of stories, allowing the learners and teacher to engage in a form of peripatetic learning in the language classroom (learning through figurative walks). To a more a peripheral observer distributed sense making exchanges could seem disorderly and even chaotic at times, given their turn taking structure; however, as findings reveal, they were organized in an improvised fashion and worked for these elderly language learners for reasons that will be discussed.

Finally, the last section of the chapter explores some possible neural substrates for common affective behaviors observed in Chapters 4 through 6.

2. Making Sense in Traditional Classrooms

Language classes can be thought of as sites for different modes of negotiation. Exactly what is negotiated, as well as when and how it is negotiated likely varies across classroom cultures (Pica et al., 1993). Clearly, an essential objective when language learners and teachers of any age interact is to make sense of new meaning in a way that is relevant to them. In second language acquisition (SLA) literature, meaning negotiation is traditionally considered as input gained via interactional "adjustments" (Long, 1996) or by modifying output (Swain, 1985) and is presumed to occur between non-native speakers (NNS) and native speakers (NNS) and importantly in this case, between NNS (peers). Little to no second language research has investigated the ways peers learning other languages help each other when negotiating as a whole class with the teacher. In other words, most research looking at traditional activities involving whole class interaction often entail studying dyadic teacher/learner negotiations, plausibly due to the discursive restrictions of such activities (see Chapter 3). Here, I am concerned with how dyadic interaction is transformed into joint meaning brokering as a group (Bolden, 2012).

2.1.1 *The Importance of Engagement and Cooperation*

Researchers employing interactionist perspectives to study social behavior have shown that learning, and especially language-learning occurs through diverse levels of co-participation using multiple modes of communication (Ochs and Schiefflin, 2011). In the context of family interaction, Goodwin (2007) demonstrates that learning involves getting a novice to attend to

features of the environment and engage in an activity in a particular way. The author demonstrates how family members use a range of semiotic resources such as emerging talk, gesture, and the arrangement of their bodies to mutually orient to the activity of doing math homework. He illustrates that a cooperative stance and specific bodily positioning allow the participants to engage with each other as well as see and understand the assignment. He also shows how speech structure has implications for the organization and emotional tone of the exchange. Understanding how engagement is established and sustained is important since learning, especially language learning, occurs through co-participation (Peter & Boggs, 1986). In my view, the more directly engaged people are in an activity, the more likely they are to pick up on meaning important for carrying out said activity more effectively, and, engagement is more likely when learners have a sense that their contributions to meaning are necessary and 'fit' with the contributions of their peers. In other words, increased understanding is possible when more resources are thrown at a communicative problem. There is some sense in studies on peer assistance in classroom settings that understanding is scaffolded in particular ways by learners for other learners, such as through 'play' (Cekaite & Aronsson, 2005). Additonal research shows that such assistance in classrooms with children and young adults can have unique emotional and cognitive benefits, and that there are implications for what is learned (Cekaite et al., 2012; Cekaite, 2009; Rogoff et al., 2001; Cazden et al., 1979). Nevertheless, peer assistance can also be problematic. For example, in an important mixed-methods study of an elementary bilingual classroom, Beaumont (1999) found that 'helping interactions' were complicated by the students' social agendas, particularly their desire to achieve mastery, show competence, establish their place in the classroom social network and, save face. This suggests that people do not approach the learning world as blank slates and that there may be stores of established knowledge

139

consisting of 'structures of expectation' (Fowler, 1986 p. 19). Such findings are exceedingly useful for looking at ways in which people in different life stages orient to language learning by drawing on previous structures of knowledge and for examining the unique affective behaviors that inform the process at a local level. As Erickson (1996) notes, one thing that appears to be common in learning is that people are "taken to the leading edge of [their] competence to perform without assistance and then asked to move just beyond that edge" (p. 99). What is not as clear is how language learners in different groups deal with that challenge. In sum, interactants of all ages must cope with meeting the demands and expectations they encounter; and we can assume that affective conduct differs when people are faced with such a challenge.

3. *Gaining Access to Experience: Some Evidence of Distributed Sense Making*

Storytelling in this setting is important from a pedagogical and social standpoint because it entailed the telling of detailed anecdotes designed to develop receptive language and share meaningful experience. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Mary spent a good portion of class time telling detailed and sometimes empassioned anecdotes in Spanish (and English) about cultural figures, travels, family, or about her life in Bogotá, Colombia in the 1930s and 40s. During these stories, the class assumed the role of audience as one might expect, giving varying types of hearer responses including affectively neutral head nodding or shaking, questions through repetition (if comprehension was a problem) and more affiliative signals of understanding such as eye-brow flashes (raising), empathic tokens such as ooh, or mmm, smiling and laughter. On some (less frequent) occasions learners added their own second stories as a more explicit form of affiliation with the teacher (Sacks, 1992). As this and the following examples show, learners had the choice of keeping their affective positions and experiences quiet or publicizing them in some way as part of story uptake. While at times narratives were shared in ways that were

140

affectively neutral, analyses reveal that more often than not, the teacher told stories in a manner that emphasized emotional experience and subjects responded by endorsing the teacher's stance in a salient manner. Sense-making was observed across a wide range of stories in this classroom, and invoked the distributed participation structure described in Figure 2 in Chapter 3. One general observation that can be made is that whether or not there are breakdowns in understanding, participants tended to build participation structures in ways that served communicative needs, and, it would appear affective needs, such as the teacher's desire to reminisce with students or take up stances toward her own experience. In doing so she playfully reconstructs events in order to provide learners access to her experiences, in turn invoking affiliation and enjoyment from them. For the sake of time, four exchanges are examined which broadly fit the description of storytelling or *exploratory learning*.

Such contexts are chosen because they represent one of the three key activities described previously and because they engender some form of negotiation and/or affective display. As noted, the instructor's hearing challenges often necessitated involvement from different hearers to make teacher-directed actions 'heard.' Sometimes this worked and sometimes it did not. Given this detail, repair in this setting is not always just an issue of second language comprehension, it is an issue of facilitating the hearing of speech. Such a feature of interaction becomes noticeable in the first example, and while it prolonges the interaction, it does not lead to added communicative difficulty. Extracts (1) and (2) investigate the management of *not understanding* in storytelling and elucidate the kind of cooperative work that went into figuring something out and showing empathy or endorsing another's affective stance.

Consider the following in which Mary told about the reasons her daughter had to break off her almost-engagement to her boyfriend.

Extract (1)

1   Mary: Actually she had already said yes to him, ((erasing board)) and uh (.) y un día,
             (0.2) vino y me dijo mamá (.) él tiene mal genio.
             and one day he came and said to me mom, he has a bad temper.

2   *(1.0)*

3   Mary: mal genio?
             bad temper?

4   Milly: ((shake head, furled brows)).

5   Class: ((gazing at Mary, some shaking heads)).

6   Nina: [ba:d genio h-ha.=

7   Mary: **=bad temper.**

8   Class: **o::h. ((some shake heads))=**

9   Milly: **=oh-I need that. ((smiles and jots in notebook))**

10   Class: **ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.**

11   Mary: **[((ha-ha-ha)).**

First, Mary code-switches from English to Spanish mid utterance in (1), which is typical of how many stories were told. As suggested in Chapter 5, such code switching is viewed as legitimate when used as a scaffolding mechanism by the teacher or other learners. Next comes a one second pause and the question *mal genio?* (bad temper) from Mary in (2) and (3). These simplified questions (comprehension checks) regularly follow silences, showing that extra efforts are made when learners might not understand a piece of information or when confusion visibly sets in (e.g., squinched eyebrows and head shaking). Thus learner silences display and are understood as gaps in understanding that would need to be filled. Next, Nina (seated in the back row) self-selects and provides half of the meaning in English, half in Spanish by saying *ba:d genio* with prosodic lengthening in line (6). Such a prosodic shift and laughter reflects her understanding of what Mary means. However, not lengthening prosody on the word *bad* in this

instances would hearably convey less affiliation with what is heard. Mary fills the next slot (line 7) with the gloss and learners collectively utter a token of understanding *o::h* in line (8). The tone of the token arguably conveys some sensitivity toward the nature of the information. Finally, Milly says *oh-I need that,* and jots the expression in her notebook in (9). Milly's action is pragmatic in one sense because it illustrates a move to appropriate language that she deems useful to her in the future. However, it notably follows the class finding out that Mary's daughter was dating a person with anger issues, as such it is also an affiliative move, which classmates lighten by laughing about it. In other words, *oh I need that* creates the humorous implication that Milly also knew someone with this negative personality trait with whom she would presumably use the term. Thus she is indexing her own experience in line with the teacher as a second story of sorts (Sacks, 1992). Note that an alternative move would have been for Milly to keep the comment to herself and quietly write the words in her notebook. If this were the case, the class would not have been allowed the same kind of access to her thinking about the information the teacher was sharing. By making this announcement, Milly affiliates with the teacher's experience and invites classmates into her linguistic discovery and indexes her own experience as similar to the teacher's. A similar story structure can be found in the following example in which Mary tells the class about a trip to a bed store to purchase a new bed for her son Paul. In line (1) she describes how her son lays on several beds in a row hoping to find one that he liked and later indexes her affective stance about the price of the bed he chose. As we shall see, in Extract (2) condensed syntax is used to indicate the teller's stance and affective signals are fitted to the telling as both affiliative actions and a form of understanding.

Extract (2)

1   Mary: **esta cama (.) otra cama, (0.6) se acostó en seis camas.**
                   this bed, that bed. he laid on six beds.

2   Ana: **ha-ha-ha-ha. ((leaning forward))**

3   Mary: ninguna le sirvió.
                none of them worked.

4   Hal: **a:h. ((smiling))**

5   Mary: había una por mil doscientos,. (.) dólares.
                there was one for one thousand two-hundred dollars.
6   (0.6)

7   Mary: mil doscientos?
                one thousand two-hundred?

8   Ana: hundred twenty-two,=
9   Celia: =one-thousand,-
10   Mary: one thousand two hundred dollars.
11   Ana: **((mouth drops open))**
12   Mary: forget it.
13   Ana: **[oh one thousand s-((palm to cheek))**
14   Mary: **pero fue y se acostó,. (.) y dijo oh this is VE:RY nice.**
                but he we went and laid down on it and said, oh this is VE:RY nice.
15   Class: **HA-ha-ha-ha-ha.**

This story contains the same type of code-switching as the previous example, again to

render it more comprehensible for hearers at key points. In this story Mary reconstructs how her

son laid on several beds saying, *this bed, that bed, he laid on six beds.* By condensing language

in this way (ommitting the subject and verb at the beginning of the utterance), Mary is arguably

showing more emotional involvement in the telling as a way to stage dramatic, emotionally

loaded events for co-participants to "re-experience" (Goffman, 1986, p. 506). Further evidence

of this comes from Ana who shows she understands and is enjoying the telling by laughing and

learning forward in line (2) a display of increased interest in the story. Mary then reveals that

none of the beds worked to which Hal replies with an elongated empathic token of understanding

A:h and smile in line (4). Actions follow in which Mary tells them in Spanish how much the bed

cost and when none show visible uptake to what is said (via silence), she checks comprehension.

144

This prompts distributed sense making in lines (5-10) in which two learners become involved in trying to figure out the price. Ana says what she thinks the price is in line (8), while Celia (seated in the row behind Ana) attempts to repair understanding in line (9), Mary assists in the negotiation by providing the full gloss in line (10). Upon understanding how much money is involved, Ana enacts an iconic look of shock with an open mouth and by putting her hand to her cheek in (11) and (13). When Mary says *forget it* in line (12) we see that Ana's actions flank those of the teacher and show an affiliative stance with her about the price. Finally, Mary delivers the punchline in (14) *pero fue y se acostó y dijo o:h this is VE:RY nice*. Here, a code-switch to English is used strategically to highlight the affectively important part of the story for hearers, to which they respond by laughing, a sign of affiliation regarding the teacher's predicament. In all, this example shows how affect is used mutually to animate affectively important parts of stories, and thus provide learners increased access to experience. When asked in her interview about what kinds of class activities she enjoyed with her students, Mary noted that she knew that she told a lot of anecdotes and that it was probably because as as a child she and her sisters always told stories. She also noted that the stories gave her a way to share her background and experiences with the class and expose them to more authentic uses of Spanish (Interview with Mary, December 2011). This is interesting because it suggests that while her stories clearly have a pedagocial function, they were also a way for Mary to engage in an activity that was emotionally relevant for her, e.g., reconstructing her past experiences for nostalgic purposes and in a way that would allow those that weren't there to 're-experience' them and/or relate.

In Extract (3), the body is used to bring the image of a birthday cake to life and display joint affective stances about chocolate. Again, *dense* syntactic constructions are used in the

telling (Günther, 2011) to construct an image for the class and the teacher's emotional stance, thus bringing the experience to life. In this example, a narrative ensues about a birthday celebration given by Mary for her grandson a week prior. In lines (1) and (3) Mary uses mild exaggeration to convey the large size of the cake, prompting laughter from (Ana). Later in line (6) she uses gesture to re-construct the multiple layers of the cake, prompting affiliative actions from several classmates.

Extract (3)

1   Mary: tuvieron pastel para comer por mu:cho tiempo.
                  they had enough cake to last a lo:ng time.

2   Ana: **eh-ha-ha-ha.**

3   ?:   **[ha-ha-ha-h.**

4   Mary: era un pastel <u>gran</u>de.
                  It was a <u>big</u> cake.

5   Ana: **.hh-sí:. ((smiling))**
                  h-h-ye:ah.

6   Mary: **dos pisos. (.) dos con (.) chocola:te., (0.6) ((looking at class)) chocolate., ((holding out hand)) chocolate-((slice through air))-chocolate-((slice through air))-chocolate.=**
                  two layers-two with ch:ocolate, chocolate, chocolate, chocolate.

7   Class: **=ha-ha-ha-ha-ha=**

8   Mary: **I l<u>i</u>ke chocolate. ((smiling))=**

9   Vera: **=she loves chocolate-ha-ha-ha,**

10   Ellie: **who doesn't-ha-ha.=**

11   Milly: **=who doesn't ((nodding, smiling)).**

This story is re-animated through Mary's use of verbal and gestural resources, which are picked up and reciprocated affiliatively by learners. For example, an emphatic speech style is used for humorous effect (Selting, 1994) to exaggerate the size of the cake and perhaps convey

146

that it was too large to eat in one sitting. Ana and others affectively aline in lines (2), (3) and (5).

Mary then focuses on the specifics of the cake in line (6) by using a dense structure (i.e., cutting out the subject, verbs and ajectives). This condenses the telling to some essential features, e.g., by repeating what the cake was made of, *chocolate-chocolate-chocolate*. As she repeats each lexeme she holds her hand out moving it horizontally, as if slicing through the layers of a cake. Such an enactment of the cake is similar to that of the beds in the previous example, only here it is done verbally and gesturally. In both we see that syntactic fragments are used to index affective stance and make the tellings affectively interpetable and thus emotionally accessible to hearers (Günthner, 2011) Note how Mary elongates the first chocolate in line (6) and then repeats the lexeme elaborating each with a separate horizontal movement of the hand. (unfortunately, no images are available for this moment). Many in class show affiliation by laughing in line (7). Finally, Mary verbalizes her stance in (8) by saying *I love chocolate* and Vera affectively endorses this in (9) by saying *she loves chocolate* and laughing. Ellie and Milly further align although perhaps more indirectly in lines (10-11). In sum, the story provides increased affective access to the teacher's experience, leading to a situation in which learners join her, both endorsing the stances in the story reconstruction and affiliating with them. Not much negotiation occurs in this instance due to the simple nature of what is told and the clear storytelling tactics of the teacher, nevertheless, it provides some materials for looking at how the teacher and learners communicate their emotional involvement.

4*. Repetition as a Device for Distributed Sense Making*

In the following, we see how repetition is used as a device by both the teacher doing the telling, and for the learners attempting to make sense of some piece of the story. Here Mary begins to recount a trip to the Bronx Zoo, but does not get far due to a lapse in understanding on

the part of several learners. Here, confusion quickly sets in as to the meaning of a crucial Spanish

lexeme (zoo) and resources from multiple learners are deployed toward the problem. Note that

even as two classmates seated in the back row are able to figure it out, Mary does not hear them

and continues waiting to see if the class can come up with the answer.

Extract (4)

1 Mary: yo conocí el Bronx (.) el zoológico.
      I went to the Bronx, (.) the zoo.

2 Hal: zoológico. ((squinching eyebrows))
      zoo.

3 Mary: zoológico-del bronx.
      the bronx zoo.

4 Hal: °what's zoológico?° ((look at Milly)).
      what's zoo?

5 Mary: [cuando estuve en nueva york.
      when I was in new york.

6 Milly: ((shake head, squinch eyebrows, gaze at Mary)) what's zoológico.
      what's zoo.

7 Mary: zoológico? ((gazing at Milly))
      zoo?

8 Hal: zoológico.=

9 Celia: =zoológico.

10 ??: zoológico.=

11 Lina: =zoológico,
12 Ellie: [((shaking head)) what's that.

13 Mary: zoológico, ((gazing around class))

14   (1.0)
15 Hal: No.

16 Mary: **((widen eyes, draw head back))=**

148

| 17 | Ellie: | =**ha-ha-ha-ha.** |
| 18 | Susi: | [**zoo.-h-h.**= |

19	Vera:	=**we never learned this-h-h.**
20	Susi:	[**°zoo.°**=
21	Nina:	=**°zoo,°**

| 22 | Mary: | zoológico no? ((gaze at back row)) |
| | | *not zoo?* |

23	Celia:	[°the bronx zoo: yeah.° ((looking at Susi, then back to Mary))
24	Susi:	[°bronx zoo° ((nodding))
25	?:	[(xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)
26		(0.4)

| 27 | Mary: | **I-can't believe this**↑ **(.) the ZOO (rising pitch)** |

28	Ellie:	**ha-ha-ha-ha.**
29	Ana:	**[h-ha-ha-ha.**
30	Hal:	**The ZOO: ((smile))**=
31	Milly:	=**Oh the ZOO::. ((rolling eyes, smiling))**

| 32 | Vera: | **Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.** |
| 33 | Class: | **(?????????).** |

| 34 | Hal: | **A::h zoológico.**= |
| 35 | ?? | =**Ha-ha-ha-ha.** |

In this instance, classmates engage in a joint search for meaning. The exchange features a participation structure which is typical in some ways of how they arrived at understanding when engaged in negotiating the meaning of story fragments. Such a search is carried out via a series of actions which are designed to repair collective understanding, rather than just that of a single individual. In this instance, a repair initiation is carried out via repetition of the lexeme *zoo* first by Hal and Milly, then gradually once Mary becomes aware, by the rest of the group. The brokering of repair is likely prolonged because the teacher does not hear Susi and Celia's attempts to provide a gloss (lines 18 20, 23 and 24). This is in part because of the overlapping turns of classmates who also initiate repair in lines (19 and 21). While hearing is a problem,

arguably individual classmates do not want to take the floor by speaking up because they are waiting for the teacher to "officially" fill in. Mary seems surprised that the group does not know what the lexeme means e.g., through her enactment of surprise (lines 16 and 27), and she finally provides a gloss in line (27). Many in class appear surprised in turn, perhaps by the relative simplicity (obvious nature) of the lexeme, given it has the same root as the English. Such learner surprise is conveyed through laughter and prosodically lengthened tokens *o:h* and *a::h* in lines (28) through (35). Such prosodic lengthening seems to convey that the answer came at the end of a prolonged wait, while the laughter from some appears to portray their prolonged efforts as sort of ridiculous. In sum, resources are combined in such a way that we can see multiple people enacting the role of language broker (Bolden, 2012), whereby speakers self-select to provide repair initiations and solutions. What is interesting here, is that knowledge of the language appears to be involved in who initiates repair and who carries it out. As such, most classmates jointly enact their rights to know, while only two or three actually carry repair out. Also significant is the fact that Susi and Celia do not provide the answer in a way that is designed to be heard, as such their actions appear to be 'swept up' in the repair initiations going on around them. Again, the overlapping turns of classmates complicate this, but in general it is likely they are leaving the instructive actions to Mary. This suggests that while most participants demonstrate they have the right to know, those who have knowledge show they are not necessarily entitled to provide the answer, especially when the attention of so many is directed at the teacher. Taking epistemic rights from the teacher at such a moment could be perceived as showing off, which was not a common practice in this community. But why do so many become involved? In a study of turn-taking in a first grade classroom, Erickson (2004) demonstrates that when young students fail to comply with conventions (e.g., raising hands) by talking out of turn,

they may do so as a way to remain engaged and portray themselves as knowledgable participants rather than as a way to actively resist rules. Here, frequent overlapping turns demonstrate that in this kind of activity, turn-taking rules are rather pliable, as long as the epistemic rights of the teacher are protected. Finally, at the end of the exchange, a series of consecutive parallel stances are desployed one after the other regarding the newly discovered information. Such joint affective orientations within sense-making can be seen as both aligning and affiliative. They are aligning because they show that learners share the same perspective on a state of affairs (e.g., not knowing) and facilitates the repair sequence. It is affiliative because many actions appear to affectively cooperate with the preferences of prior ones e.g., smiling or positive facial expression and laughter (Stivers, 2008). What is most significant about this and similar examples is that learners do 'not knowing' as a cooperative endeavor in my view, and they engage in such behavior as a form of empathic understanding of needs. To adapt Garfinkel's view, it is how people "isolated, yet also in odd communion, go about building an order together" (1952, p. 114). In all, these examples show that students often deploy parallel emotional stances in order to endorse tellings and jointly access experiences. When understanding becomes a problem, sense making tends to shift from dyadic participation structures, to cooperative structures in which multi-party repair is carried out. Learners frequently align with other learners in such instances using repetition and in about 1/3 of cases may attempt to repair understanding directly.

5. *A Synopsis and Brief Discussion of Distributed Sense-Making*

First, the extracts in this data set illustrate how understanding and affiliation are achieved in storytelling activities. It is thought that Aristotle conducted discussions while walking around the Lyceum with his pupils, such walking about and learning from the surrounding environment,

was known as the peripatetic school. The analysis of interactive practices suggests that Mary engages students in a form of *peripatetic* learning of Spanish, or knowledge acquisition via affective walks through experience. Such figurative 'walking' with learners is plausibly a way for the teacher to reminisce or reconstruct experiences that are meaningful and do so in a way that is emotionally relevant to her and her students. This implies an understanding by the teacher that learners will relate emotionally to what she has to say (i.e., many have children and grandchildren and are of similar age). While clearly, Mary has primary epistemic rights to such stories (i.e., she is the experiencer), learners gain collective emotional access through the storytelling tactics of the teacher (syntactic simplification, prosodic shifts and gesture) and show similar perspective through parallel actions of their own (e.g., vis-à-vis prosodic shifts, affective stance, and laughter). While in some instances repair sequences are prolonged plausibly due to hearing difficulties, the above data are notable for the way limitations in competence are shared by peers. They demonstrate how meaning and understanding are negotiated in a distributed and often spontaneous fashion, shifting the burden of making sense from individuals to the group, maximizing positive emotions while doing so. In essence, subjects distribute competence and communicative capabilities in ways that capitalize on collective potential. Data from participant interviews reveal that the practice of *distributed sense making* is meaningful on two fronts, it enables learners to show a form of empathy with fellow classmates and facilitates more successful participation. When asked in her interview how she requested help Ana noted, "I don't have to, it's offerred from all over!" (Interview, March, 2012). Consider also the following quote from an interview with Lina. As in previous interview transcripts, parts of discourse are underlined to mark where the volume increased while speaking:

When I first came I didn't know that was a rule or something. But then gradually I realized that some classmates are ninety or eighty-something. And a lot of people, they try their best, but they

may not be able to <u>hear</u> very well or <u>see</u> very well or uh, <u>retain</u> Spanish that well, when they are asked to read or talk or whatever, we can <u>feel that</u>. From my own understanding, my own <u>feeling</u> I mean. Then help them a little bit, it doesn't matter if they remember it. So after I realized that, I just sort of joined in. So we do that for each other. (Interview with Lina, February, 2012)

This quote is revealing in many respects because it shows that the practice of distributing help

across learners was something that this subject only gradually came to understand and value.

Comprehending the impact of limited hearing, visual and memory capabilities of some

classmates and yet seeing their motivation is a crucial part of knowledge acquisition for Lina.

Her increasing awarness of the practice eventually enabled her to empathize with others when

they experienced difficulty. Her empathic awarness is illustrated when she says "we can FEEL

that" and "we do that for each other." Arguably, part of the process of becoming a member of

this communicative community is displayed through participation in affective practices. As Lina

notes, "After I realized that, I just sort of joined in." This suggests that she witnessed peer

assistance being carried out in a somewhat common way over a period of time, which is how she

was socialized into it. The following learner perspective is similar in some ways, and illustrates

that assistance was preferred over competition and enabled one to enjoy seeing others learn:

I'm happy when others get it. I like my classmates so I'm happy when they get something that was confusing. I'm not thinking-oh, I <u>know</u> that already-ha-ha-ha. I think, oh good—good the class is working, you know? Their positive experience is my experience.
                                                                            (Interview with Susi, May, 2012)
This learner insight is notable because it suggests that emphasizing one's own competence was

not prioritized as much as achieving understanding in a coordinated way. Being able to witness

and derive satisfaction from the success of peers is a significant factor in peer helping. As a

result, competitition or misalignment in order to show epistemic knowledge (knowing of, that or

how) rarely if ever occurred. In all, these quotes reveal why classmates provided help, and the

kind of empathic valence that such behaviors acquired. Though less frequent, there were two or

153

three instances when peer assistance did not go off without a hitch. This could engender

confusion and mild frustration as the following learner account suggests. In this excerpt the

researcher asks Ellie whether or not offerings of assistance could lead to communication

breakdowns:

"Oh yeah. Today when Hal asked Mary to translate a sentence she didn't do it. She didn't hear
him I'm sure. I can't remember what it was but h-ha Hal was very frustrated ha-ha 'cause
everybody was giving their opinion of what it meant. And she didn't translate it because of that.
You can figure out what a sentence means for the most part.

Ellie's comments reveal she is not on board with the way help was provided because it defeated

the purpose, which was to try. According to this subject, sense-making was frustrated when too

many became involved, preventing the teacher (the knower) from hearing and providing the

answer (see Extract 4). In essence, more is not always merrier. In a later part of the interview,

Ellie is asked about her views on the practice as it related to Hal and Milly, a married couple who

she was good friends with and always sat next to her in the front row. As noted, Hal had macular

degeneration and often could not see the board located at the front of the class. As such, his wife

helped him, by saying the words he could not see, and providing glosses as he translated. The

interview with Ellie went as follows:

R: And the way you guys help each other. Like you and Milly help each other. Milly with
        the hearing, and you reading for her.
E: Yeah well, that's what we do outside of class.
R: But in class Milly is Hal's eyes. I mean-
E: Oh yeah, and she translates for him.
R: Yeah she gives him the words and he repeats them.
E: Yes but that doesn't help him.
R: But does it provide some support?
E: True. But that also frustrates me a little bit because she doesn't allow him to try and come
        up with an answer. She'll fill it in for him right away.

This exchange with the researcher further exposes how peer assistance is carried out,

as Ellie puts it by "filling in" the slots with missing information. For her, such a practice of filling in was considered counterproductive because it prevented one from coming up with the answer. Overall, this participant's perspectives suggest that she prefers more autonomous kinds of sense-making, indicating that the social and affective role of such interactions were less relevant to her and she was more concerned with their practical effects. What is interesting is that Ellie is observed on many ocassions consulting with Milly and Hal on something that is read or said, suggesting that it was only when spontaneous peer assistance became over-fraught that it was considered unhelpful. Such a view was not common in the setting and while mild frustration appeared to occur on occasion, it was mostly true for newcomers who were not socialized into such helping 'assaults.' Indeed, after a long negotiation involving nearly the whole class regarding the exact number of nieces and nephews in her family, a newer student, Betty was heard saying in a low and distinctly frustrated tone "I thought I sai:d." (Fieldnotes, November, 2011). Such counter-evidence is important because it shows that in a few cases where learners had not been exposed to or disapproved of this affective practice, it could be perceived as overwhelming or, in actuality counter-productive because it might confuse and thus hamper the progression of talk. From these data we extract an important finding on this classroom culture, and it is that overall peers freely contribute their communicative resources in order to maximize the potential for understanding in the most people. Positive affect (laughter and stance) are a central feature of the process of making sense in many instances. As such, these affective displays are 'emotionally orienting components' in the collective promotion of understanding as a "complex skill" in a group (Schumann et al., 2004).

6. Empathy Invoked in Distributed Sense Making

Taken together, sense-making practices and participant insights into their behavior suggest that competence is shared across individuals to the meet affective and didactic needs of peers. By engaging in cooperative assistance, more learners are able to participate in the completion of activities and thus can appreciate the *process* of achieving understanding and seeing others succeed. Practically speaking, this kind of meaning apprehension enables them to manage unknown information more effectively. The occurrence of laughter and reciprocal stance taking embedded within the practice of assistance in storytelling and other activities unearths an empathic dimension to learner behavior, I would argue that this is owed in part to their reasons for being there (see Chapter 3), to the environment they construct and social familiarity. The observed pattern of distributed sense making produces a more salient positive resolution to problems and thus is arguably more rewarding. It is worth noting that laughter was only one of several affective resources combined in a sort of *bricolage* of actions brought together at specific moments to indicate when learners were or were not understanding. At the same time, laughter provides a social mechanism for displaying cooperation and selective attention toward recognizable information in the stories. Izard (2009) maintains that along with a short list of discrete (basic) emotions, one of the most overlooked is that of *interest*, which is "continually present in the brain under normal conditions, and is the central motivation for engagement in creative and constructive endeavors and for a sense of well-being. Interest and its interaction with the other emotions (e.g., joy) account for selective attention, which in turn influences other mental processes" (p. 4).[4] The point being that in many of the data examined in Chapters 4

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[4] The author further maintains that the brain automatically generates interest in order to capture and sustain attention to particular objects, events and goals (Izard, 2009, p. 18). However, it is not clear to what degree interest is operating when for example the brain responds to internal or external conditions that activate other emotions. Nor is it clear what neural substrates might correlate with emotional interest. Perhaps those involved in working memory?

through 6, learners display a 'positive interest trait,' by selectively attending to knowns, unknowns and difficulty in a way that does not appear to be hampered by vulnerability to image threats, arguably because participants feel they no longer have to prove anything and are just enjoying the ride. Together such displays constitute a sort of affective 'third space' between peers (when things go wrong) and an affective third space between the teacher and learners when understanding was not a problem. These kinds of parallel actions in sharing experience and sense-making could implicate what Panksepp (2007a) refers to as tertiary emotional processes, or, "emotional processes that allow the higher brain to develop networks of social knowledge, as instantiated in mirror neurons" (p. 10).

7. *The Study of Language Learning Behavior and the Brain*

While useful information about how we take in and categorize social and emotional stimuli can be derived from imaging techniques, clearly a disconnect still exists between multi-dimensional 'real world' interaction and the simple social stimuli that subjects are exposed to in most neuroimaging studies. Nevertheless, it is no longer uncommon for social neuroscientists to work with researchers in other fields in order to get a more complete sense of the social aspects of the brain as it relates to particular behaviors. As Brothers (2002) argues, interdisciplinary research incorporating knowledge from a range of fields will likely contribute the most to studies of the social brain and, studying language learning behavior in real time, especially in age groups that are not as widely studied, can augment our understanding of the brain/emotion/language learning connection. A systematic study of affective conduct in an elderly population as compared to that in other classrooms or to conventional social behaviors (carried out in Chapters 4 through 6) is relevant to our understanding of the neural substrates that subserve social emotions, which is the aim of the following section. It is important to note however, that the

following neural substrates are hypotheses generated from brain studies and by the previous observations of behavior and should be read as such.

7.1 Core Positive Affect

While several emotion categories are alluded to in previous chapters, a generalized positivity or 'well being' effect is most notable in learner and teacher affective behavior. Such an effect is observable in affective practices such as nonseriousness (laughter), and was also reflected in the participant's tendency to respond adaptively to communicative challenges and in the use of a broad range of information to reason about events or people students disliked or disagreed with. Such broad or flexible reasoning capacity is a signal of positive affect (Schumann, 1997). Recent neuroscientific research suggests that important information (e.g. positive or negative) is processed and the conscious experience of emotion occurs in different but interconnecting areas of the brain. The processing of very basic stimuli likely begins in the reticular formation (the brainstem) and then may branch out to the somatosensory cortices and other areas with increasingly specific inputs from higher cortical areas. While the amygdala is the emotional 'center' (LeDoux, 1996), it would appear that the center is more responsible for determining the emotional signfcance of stimuli and adjusting downstream responses, and may have little to do with the actual feeling state of emotion (Höistad & Barbas, 2008). As Panksepp (2008) notes, "The central nuclei of amygdala are clearly part of the unconditional fear circuit, but their capacity to promote fearful feelings probably relies on intact hypothalamic and midbrain fear circuitry" (p. 53). It would appear then that the amygdala shifts downstream responses via cues taken from the external environment, namely social cues such as gaze, suggesting an interpersonal function for this set of brain structures (Adolphs, 2003, Adams et al., 2003). The correlation between amygdala activity and affective cues (even those outside of

158

awareness) is strong and may predict subsequent behavior in an emotional-learning domain (Baumeister et al., 2007). Apparently, no discernable difference is made in the conscious experience of emotion when there is insult or damage to the amygdala, so what other areas might create the conscious awareness of emotions and of course relevant affects? The affective neuroscience view holds that feelings arise from long swaths of subcortical tissues controlling the visceral processes, known as the limbic system. The emotional brain extends from medial frontal regions throughout the core of the midbrain and areas in between (Panksepp, 2008). Evidence for subcortical behavioral circuits related to the generation of feelings is robust for humans and animals (Panksepp, 2005a). There is also some agreement in the literature that the insula (Isle of Reil) is involved in the mapping of bodily states associated with the experiences that give rise to concious feelings. One particularly notable finding is that the insula is activated when subjects are asked to think about emotional memories, and when the area is injured or lesioned, people can lose the ability to conciously feel (Damasio et al., 2000). A further search of the the literature suggests that the insula contains a neural representation of the state of our body and substrate of how we feel (Craig, 2009), when imitating or perceiving visual emotional stimuli, e.g., disgust (Wicker et al, 2003). And yet, other brain regions, such as the anterior cingulate cortex and crucially, the prefrontal cortices (PFC) may work in conjunction with regions of the amygdala and insula in providing relevant 'updates' if you will of social stimuli and information on bodily changes. Indeed, when one of the highest brain regions, the anterior cingulate, which encodes sadness, mirth and social bonding, is damaged, individuals may fall mute, retaining the ability to speak, but losing the urge or desire to communicate (Devinsky et al., 1995). In other words, while the amygdala and insular cortex have traditionally been associated with the processing of threat or fear (in studies of post-traumatic stress for example),

159

these regions are involved in the appopriate processing of various kinds of experiences, which is why they do not operate in isolation. Much neuroscientific research has focused on maladaptive affective styles or processing, while relatively few studies have looked at mechanisms of happiness and well-being. This is starting to change somewhat. Research on the neural processes of trait happiness have found so far that well-being does not so much entail an increased resonse to positive activity at the cost of losing sensitivity to negative stimuli, rather trait happiness is associated with a balanced amygdala response to both positivity and negativity (Cunningham & Kirkland, 2013). This suggests most importantly that enhanced amygdala activation as long as it is balanced, can be linked to a positive emotional outcome. The authors further note that individuals with positive affect are not insensitive to negative cues in the environment; instead they are tuned toward the most important aspects of that environment. Such tuning may reflect a higher degree of affective flexibility, allowing adaptive responses to environmental challenges and opportunities. This corresponds (hypothetically), with the finding that the elderly learners and teacher in this study show increased coping skills, or ability to adapt to challenges by either portraying them as nonserious or as interview data show, by reasoning about them in flexible ways. Such findings align with other brain studies suggesting that 'wisdom' (e.g., enhanced emotion regulation, reason-based decision making, prosocial behaviors) in late life may be facilitated in some by the gradual balance between functions of phylogenetically more primitive brain regions in the limbic system and those that are newer such as the PFC (Meeks and Jeste, 2009). Such shifts in functioning also appear to correspond with psychological theories such as socioemotional selectivity. This life span motivation theory is essentially based on the idea that when perceived limitations on time are made salient, there may be an increased motivation to derive emotional meaning from experiences and social interactions. These changes may lead to

differences in social/environmental choices, coping and a tendency to process positive information over negative late in life (Carstensen et al., 2003). This up-regulation of the amygdala by different areas of the prefrontal cortices may occur naturally as part of aging, enabling a 'positivity effect' in the ability of some elderly to process emotional stimuli. As this dissertation demonstrates, some affective displays (such as laughter) appear to be contagious and as such they serve important communicative roles. According to Adolphs (2010) empathy is one such example of emotional contagion because it 'regulates social behavior and provides us with a mechanism for figuring out how others feel" (p. 552). This entails perceiving the actions of others in relation to ourselves and may account for the contagion of laughter, smiling or helping behaviors. The insula is involved here as well and is activated not only by experiencing pain, but also when seeing another in pain. Such effects are increased when there is social proximity with the other person, e.g. a friend or spouse as opposed to someone we dislike. There is also recent evidence suggesting that the right anterior insula and precuneus (posterior) are involved in verbal perspective taking in relation to others, specifically because these areas revealed diminished functional activity among autistic adults as compared to controls when engaged in a perspective-taking task that required deictic shifting e.g., shift in he use of personal pronouns (Mizuno et al., 2011). Finally, patterns of peer help and laughter in this study suggest that the social engagement system composed of somatomotor abilities like facial expression, vocalization and listening (Porges, 2003), may be optimized for *empathy* and *play* in at least some of the elderly participants observed. Indeed, it is suggested that fixed-action patterns of laughter are common during human play (Scott & Panksepp, 2003). Interestingly, much of the underlying brain circuitry for *empathy* also underlies some of the proposed neural systems for *play*, e.g., mesolimbic dopamine systems innervate nucleus accumbens and medial prefrontal cortices

161

(Panksepp, 2008). Additionally, dorsomedial regions of the thalamus are important for processing somatosensory stimuli in both types of emotional behavior and within the hypothalamus, laughter induced dopamine release facilitates the good feelings associated with these positive behaviors (Siviy & Panksepp, 1987). It is also worth noting that subjects remain in the learning situation for many years, and do not switch classes even when learning needs or goals are not met (Chapter 5), suggesting that risk in the environment is likely perceived as low, and there is sufficient enjoyment, bringing about decisions to maintain the status quo. Although the above neural substrates as related to observed behaviors in the classroom are speculative, they point to the integration of information relating to the social environment and bodily states into higher order cognitive and emotional processes involving the amygdala (including thalamus and hypothalamus) insula, the prefrontal cortex and also the cingulate cortex. They further provide support for the claim that decision-making requires emotion that is mediated is a real way by the prefontal cortex, specifically the orbitofrontal cortices which are involved in working memory (Bechara et al., 2000). Such an integration of information enables learners to process and live experiences in ways that are appropriate to their learning needs, and also to their stage of life. One drawback of using subjective verbal reports of experience is that such reports were often ellicited after the fact. As such, judgments of behavior or events are distanced from the events themselves, making it hard to determine if reports are an accurate description of experience, or are overly general. Such a problem could be addressed in future studies by adding a questionaire that more rigorously controls the information extracted from participants about their classroom experiences and/or by having participants produce journal entries regarding their experiences at the earliest possible opportunity following an event.

162

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions, Implications and Questions for Future Research

1. A Look Back at Findings

This study sought to characterize situated emotions occuring in the classroom praxis of a group of elderly learners of L2 Spanish and their teacher. This investigation was further aimed at characterizing the insider perspectives of subjects regarding their experiences. Given that the lifeworlds of elderly learners and teachers of other languages have scarcely been studied in second language research, I wanted to explore the question of how learners and teachers "past their prime" manage classroom interactions, with a distinct focus on infelicities or difficulty in communication, and explore what if any impact life stage related perspectives have on experience and affective behaviors. The introduction establishes several broad aims: 1) to get a sense of the range of activities that participants accomplish on a daily basis, 2) understand their goals and broader purposes for learning language, 3) determine the kinds of affective practice and participation structures that are more frequently invoked in the setting, and discover reasons certain emotions are or are not considered relevant, 4) discover any coping skills learners might have to manage different kinds of activities and interaction, and 5) discuss some possible neural substrates revealed by neurobiological and/or gerontological studies for one or more of the emotion categories observed. Chapter 2 establishes the methods employed in this study and methodological implications for studying emotion using such methods. The first two aims are addressed mainly in Chapter 3, while the other three aims are discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 with respect to specific affective practices and behaviors, in particular laughter as *nonseriousness*, *emotional stance* as a product of local and broad context, and *empathy* and *enjoyment* in storytelling. Chapter 6 further sought to accomplish the last aim in a brief review of

literature on neural substrates and other relevant research in brain sciences. Chapter 2 was designed to paint a general portrait of the setting, (with broader brush strokes). It provides the contextual backdrop of classroom life including the type and structure of everyday activities, the function of such activities and common participation structures invoked in each. Evidence was also provided in the form of vignettes describing transitions between activity, key events and cultural terms used. This chapter is built primarily from field observations, corresponding notes of the researcher and from interviews with participants. The video footage recorded during site visits was reviewed at length, and in the process of cross-comparing field notes, interviews and video data, some broad assertions were developed regarding the informal nature of the setting, patterns of activity and common affective practices. This laid the inductive groundwork so-to-speak for the detailed empirical investigation carried out in subsequent chapters. Such an investigation of classroom affective conduct was motivated by some broad research questions such as, 1) what kinds of activities were observed and what was the structure of participation frameworks within these? 2) How did preexisting knowledge and purpose influence the types of activity found and participant understandings of situation? 3) What were common and less common affective behaviors, how were these distributed in different activities and how did hearers treat such practices? 4) Did affective involvement and the quality of affective displays shift and under what conditions? 5) What kinds of information do subjects use to judge their experiences, how do knowledge and purpose play into these judgments? To answer the first question and part of the second, Chapter 3 revealed in line with (Gutierrez et al., 1996) that activities with less-restricted discourse structures such as conversation and exploratory learning tend to provide more opportunities for didactic peer mediation.

The present findings extend this by showing that such mediation is also affective in nature bringing about discourse structures that very often reflect positive affect on the one hand and facilitate more symmetrical participation frameworks on the other. The chapter further analyzed motives for learning, revealing that learners were engaged in language learning for a variety of reasons, a key motive being the desire to maintain an active mind (and brain) to fight cognitive decline. A related finding is that while linguistic attainment was on the list of priorities, it was not very high up. In fact, many learners expressed in their interviews that they were not in the class to attain language in any complete way. Instead, learning was motivated by a general desire for meaningful interaction in order to gain social and cultural knowledge. Such a finding suggests that purpose and the social value attributed to classroom experiences shift across the life span, and, given the right social conditions, the social dimension of language learning is allowed to thrive in a way that is perhaps different from classrooms where goals and activities are narrower and the stakes higher. Finally, these findings suggest that purpose and activity affect the kind of knowledge that is acquired. This finding is supported by the additional observation that after extended time on task, many subjects had good receptive ability, but had not developed fluent conversational skills in the L2. Thus, using the foreign language classroom as vehicle for meaningful social and cultural learning over linguistic learning may be key in later life and while it is freeing in a sense, it also has consequences for what is learned. Such a finding set the stage for later discursive analysis demonstrating that age-related knowledge base and purpose are used as important sources of information when judging classroom experiences and for decision making at a local level.

Inspired by the findings in Chapter 3 as well as the above research questions resulting from these findings, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 investigate three patterns of affective practice running as a common thread through all data sources. Chapter 4 addressed the third and fourth research questions by examining laughter within performance and finding that it was related to a feeling of nonseriousness (Chafe, 2007) occurring regularly within communicative difficulty. Discursive and interview evidence reveals that in contrast with studies of younger learners (Kurhila, 2006; Beaumont, 1999; Amador and Fox-Adams, 2010), face threat was not considered a significant issue, given that most often phenomena such as embarrassment were considered irrelevant to the learning situation and life stage that subjects found themselves in. As a result, self-directed humor was common and by contrast, shows of ego or competition were rare and were generally downplayed in some fashion by fellow classmates. Given the general dispreference for competition and seriousness, self and other-directed laughter emerged as a more fitting social response, becoming a way to identify with peers in the speech community regarding communicative difficulty and as such share the responsibility for said difficulty. Laughter paved the way to more symmetrical discourse structures and smoothed performance, optimizing the exertion of a skill such as using or trying to figure out novel language. A second finding on laughter which addresses the fourth question is that acoustic prominence (pitch) measured with PRAAT software appears to correspond with the nature of the information exchanged (e.g., the activity). In other words, more discursively restricted exchanges found in oral translation for example tended to result in less prominent pitch contours. Coversely, laughter intensified under conditions of humorous self-disclosure or when learners discovered previously unknown information about fellow classmates or their experiences. The point being that the quality of

laughter reflects differences in the meaningfulness of interactions. Emic insights into affective behaviors (nonseriousness) reveal an underlying informal code of conduct (unknown to participants). A central feature underlying such a code was the belief *to err is human*. Being overly serious about one's own actions related to learning or those of fellow learners would have been misaligned with this perspective. Such participant thinking is interpreted as a form of age-related reasoning used to appraise experiences, self-regulate and conduct oneself in ways that are emotionally relevant. It was determined that positive feelings in interactions (interpreted by the brain Schumann, 1997) and reason (age-related understandings of experience) are both exploited as sources of information to carry out appropriate affective behavior.

Chapter 5 explores the third, fourth and fifth question by examining emotional stance as a socially constructed phenomenon in classroom conversation. It was found that in order to affectively adapt, participants constructed an optimal environment for themselves that is reflective of their purpose, and also useful to them. Subjects appeared to make use of environmental information (e.g., praxis, experience) and preexisting knowledge to carry out decisions about what was emotionally significant and what was not. While examples overall show a prevalence of postive stance-taking, instances of serious and negative stance were also observed reflecting self-critique. Learner insights reveal that such stances had a self-appraisal dimension, reflecting mild frustration regarding difficulty with recall. A few examples of counter-evidence further illustrated how subjects did not always agree and while most of the time negative affect and disagreements were kept under the radar, if an issue was considered significant, misalignment and push back resulted as a way to exercise epistemic rights and control over learning. In all, Chapter 5 demonstrated that while socialization exerts a powerful influence on behavior, learners also exercised affective volition through stances in order to meet

their unique needs. In the case of laughter in stance taking, it is found to be an organizing device in its own right because it trains positive attention to communicative difficulty. Such positive affect prepares attention for future action and arguably reflected the low threatening nature of the setting. These findings suggest that reduced face threat and the ability to draw from broad information sources to make decisions are crucial because they enable subjects to bypass negative events or at least treat them rather lightly and shift goals accordingly. As proposed by Fridja (1994), affective displays can be viewed as serving concerns and needs adaptively at the local level. Finally, the subtle nature of affective stance does create a bit of a conundrum for language teachers who may not pick up on, have the time for or see affective issues as appropriate. As we saw with Ellie in this study, her negative affect was tempered and the teacher may not have noticed it in the first place. Consequently, the learner was propelled into a more direct course of action (i.e., requesting materials outright) and because of the informal nature of the situation she found a solution that fit her needs. While Chapters 4 and 5 primarily focused on communicative lapses or difficulties, the talk in interaction approach used also demonstrated kinds of affective practices peers are capable of when working as a cooperative team. Chapter 6 explored such team work, finding that empathy and enjoyment were often invoked as part of storytelling praxis. Empathy was invoked specifically through the practice of *distributed sense making*, and laughter was central to affiliating. During storytelling (as well as conversational exchanges), it was found that learners frequently engaged in collective word searches or provided glosses in meaning when others were stuck. This created an affective and didactic 'third space' between peers in large group interactions. Such an affective practice was more frequent in activities featuring a less restrictive discourse structure. That means that when the class engaged in less 'conventional' activities, more symmetrical participation structures were

168

built. Such participation frameworks in turn had consequences for affective exchanges. For example, as long as the epistemic 'rights' of the teacher were protected, there was no 'magic number' of people that could initiate repair or broker meaning. Such a turn taking structure was found to be quite free and was rarely if ever controlled by the teacher or portrayed as inappropriate. Chapter 6 further revealed that laughter is a vocal deictic of sorts used to signal different affects and orientations, above all affiliation and understanding. The teacher, (Mary) animated her storytelling in Spanish by using dense constructions (Günthner, 2011), prosody and gesture to reconstruct emotional experience for hearers and thus help them to gain access to it. Analysis of student responses to teacher narratives reveals that laughter, prosody, facial expression and second stories (Sacks, 1992b) were used to endorse the tellings of the teacher and display affiliation rather than simple alignment. Findings are in line with what Stivers (2008) has suggested, showing that alignment and affiliation are affective features of interaction that are designed to accomplish different but related things, e.g., facilitating the telling of a story versus endorsing it with emotionally parallel actions. Such findings on parallel actions in this setting provide support for what Panksepp (2007a) refers to as tertiary emotional processes, or, "emotional processes that allow the higher brain to develop networks of social knowledge, as instantiated in mirror neurons" (p. 10). Finally, Chapter 6 concluded the focus on learner and teacher behaviors by discussing the possible brain regions implicated in positive affect, the influence of frontal regions on emotion and underlying related with emotions such as *empathy*. While this last section is brief and speculative, it provides some insights into the possible (overlapping) neural underpinnings of reason as it relates to the processing of emotional stimuli. Such a synthesis of emotional and cognitive substrates is presumed to involve both phylogenetically older brain regions and newer areas used for complex higher order thinking. In

169

particular, interactions between the amygdala, insular cortex, thalamus, hippocampus and prefrontal regions are discussed as to their collective roles in determining the emotional relevance of learning experience.

To sum up the findings, it is shown that subjects exercise a form of individual and cooperative reason by feeling that is reflected in their behavior and constrains how they manage their language learning. One of the ways age-related wisdom is exercised is by poking fun at oneself and assisting others while also taking up actions that shape learning in ways that are amenable to needs. One thing that is often overlooked in studies of classroom language learning, or second language acquisition in general is that there are other kinds of knowledge acquisition that go on, aside from that of language. This is an important oversight because in reality practitioners are teaching language learners of all ages to be culturally, symbolically and affectively more competent. While there have been some calls to teach social and cultural competence, these findings suggest that those who make decisions on pedagogy might want to take a more serious look at this possibility. Indeed, the present dissertation shows that the acquisition of social and emotional knowledge extends well into the Winter of our lives.

2. Some Implications for Classroom Praxis and Areas for Future Research

Knowing what kinds of information language learners of different age groups use to manage experiences and construct affective behavior is valuable because it gives language practitioners (and learners for that matter) a rare example of how positive emotions (laughing at oneself) is used to create an environment that may be favorable for learning the L2. The findings have implications for theories of cognitive appraisal in language learning because they suggest that emotions are regulated by reasoning that is unique to stage of life and the situations learners find themselves in during such stages. At the same time the impact of reason is reflected in

170

affective practices at a local level because participants appear to fit their affects in ways that are socially appropriate and useful. In essence, language-learning affects are contingent on age-related awareness, and are tempered socially with others in real time. Increasing awareness about emotional behavior in the classroom could shape the way we think about and approach notions of aptitude (language ability) and competence in language learning. For example, the finding that learners adopt nonserious stances for the most part toward their own communicative difficulty and that of fellow classmates illustrates that displays of linguistic incompetence may shift from being a significant issue in early adulthood, to a less-significant one in later years, given the right social climate. Interestingly, such a lack of vulnerability to face threat may provide a sense of interactional freedom, priming elderly learners in certain ways to face the negative pitfalls of L2 use and performance. Yet, the low stakes and lack of need or desire to become 'competent' speakers appear to simultaneously constrain how much and the kind of language skills that are acquired. Looking to the future, it is worth exploring if and how learner awareness of competence and incompetence shifts in second language use as we age. Studies on laughter in aphasic conversation illustrate that the loss of language can result in disempowerment and threats to 'core competencies' (Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010). It is worth exploring in future research if communicative difficulty in L2 use leads to similar disempowerment, or if in fact issues of competence in L2 use are of a peripheral rather than core nature for learners of various ages. Other findings in this study suggest that empathy plays a role in peer assistance in the classroom, which could be augmented by further investigation of empathic helping behaviors among language learners in other age groups. For example, if we reduce the significance of variables such as competition in the classroom, would be see an increase in helping exchanges between young adult learners? Such a phenomenon could potentially be measured using a questionnaire

and combined with observational data in other classroom settings to provide a more complete picture. An additional question for future research is whether or not there is such a thing as distributed language aptitude and if so, it would be interesting to find out if something like communicative competence is distributed for affective reasons, in addition to didactic ones. Findings provide L2 acquisition researchers with some materials with which to examine features of elderly discourse from multiple angles, and a portrait of behavior if you will that can be compared with affective conduct in other classroom settings. Such future comparative work might examine the types of knowledge that are acquired in traditional language classes beyond the canonical skills of speaking, reading, writing and listening and the degree to which younger learners are seek out language classes for reasons other than travel or college requirements. In other words, how does the nature of language learning desire shift over the lifespan? If language learners are not aware of what *else* they are acquiring besides language perhaps they should be. They would gain a sense that emotion is a central component of the socio-cultural knowledge base that they draw from when using the L2 in real-world situations. Getting learners to reflect on how they manage their language learning experiences and having them design activity based on their affective inclinations might also be advantageous for developing out of the box thinking that facilitates more empathic kinds of interaction with peers. In short, creating awareness for praxis is key in my view.

The findings on laughter in this dissertation have broad theoretical implications because they suggest that the meaning of laughter varies with context, as such it forms an indexical field with vast meaning potential (Eckert, 2008). Such a finding aligns with current acoustic research suggesting that laughter sounds are appraised and classified according to different emotional dimensions e.g., joy, tickling, taunting (Szameitat et al., 2009). The present study elaborates such

findings by showing that emotional categories are not only perceived, they are enacted as social phenomena in a way that is tailored to activity, needs and purpose of individuals. In other words, by examining laughter as part and parcel of the activities and social context in which it arises, we can begin to see how it becomes a flexible behavioral artifact of sorts, which is adapted to and derives its affective meaning from the activity. Findings are also useful from a research standpoint because they demonstrate that laughter in the classroom and events that are considered laughable are likely determined culturally and as such cannot be predicted or 'planned,' nor can their effects. As such, it is probably wiser to consider findings on laughter in terms of what is possible if the right classroom environment is created based on the needs of learners and teachers. In other words, certain practices may be more advantageous for positive affect in some age groups and some cultures but not in others. Counter-evidence in this study demonstrates that if language learners are given more control over their learning and discourse, opportunities for more symmetrical participation may be afforded. While situated emotion and decision making related to emotion regulation appear to be influenced by a complex intermix of top down and bottom up variables, positive emotions may be facilitated by increasing teacher/learner awareness in order to see where needs and goals align. The findings on emotional stance have implications for praxis given that stance is used variably, often as the affective means to an end. It might be worthwhile to provide practitioners with pedagogical training on the function of affective stance in classroom discourse, in order to further both didactic and affective projects. Of course, this may be easier said than done. Emotional orientations are not always salient (especially when non-verbal) and while generated in local activity they may have multiple origins, e.g., they may derive from previously established misalignments with the teacher or others in class. While there is clearly no way to predict or 'diagnose' a learner's emerging affect

toward the learning experience, there are likely advantageous and not-so-advantageous ways of dealing with negative orientations if they are noted. It seems to me that increasing teacher education about learner psychology and different appraisal systems may be one way to go, however this may be too broad given the level of complexity and variability of emotional experience and learner dispositions. A more indirect route could be to create activities that give learners more control of classroom discourse, because as we have seen in this study, less tightly controlled interaction plausibly engenders affective mediation between peers who have similar needs. Clearly, affective stance and peer mediation will play out in different ways depending on the learning situation, however it would be worth exploring affective stance in L2 use both in and outside of the classroom (including study abroad) to see where stance behaviors intersect, where they diverge and how they evolve.

Finally, these findings on language classroom conduct have important implications for future research on emotion as part of learning *process* versus learning *product*. Life stage appears to deeply influence the subjects' purposes, affective behaviors and perceptions of experience, making the *process* of skill-seeking a goal in and of itself. As a result, grasping new social skills or seeking information as a group and accessing experience contribute as the primary source of pleasure, rather than the end. This provides support for the real possibility that the 'doing' sometimes constitutes the enthrallment of skilled action and optimal experience rather than the outcomes (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It is my hope that by studying patterns of affect in spontaneous classroom interactions this dissertation has shed needed light on situated emotion as socially constructed phenomena within the context of elderly language learning. While some objections may be raised as to the investigation of situated emotional behavior using diverse empirical approaches and theoretical insights, such research only enriches our

174

understanding of emotion as an adaptable utilitarian feature of culture and language learning

over the lifespan, and provides insight into how affect organizes unique social niches of learning.

APPENDIX 1

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Transcription symbols:

?	Rising intonation
.	Falling intonation
.,	Continuing or stable intonation
,	Slight rise in intonation
[ ]	Overlap
:	Prosodic lengthening, stretching
w<u>or</u>d	Underlining used to indicate word stress
WORD	Upper case used to indicate loud talk
↑↓	Indicates rise or fall in pitch
(.)	Micropause
.hh	Inbreath
(0.1)	Silence or Pause in tenths of a second
=	Latching speech (no noticeable pause)
°words°	Low or whispered speech
-	Talk cut off
>>	Compressed or rushed speech
Bold	Indicates lines of transcript relevant to point being made in the text

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Adapted from Sacks, H., Schegloff, E.A. & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simpless systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language, 50(4):* 696-735.

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