

Applying insights from Conversation Analysis to the didactic use of synchronous chat

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In a previous paper on the application of blended learning to seminar classes in the Japanese university (Tomei, 2012), the use of synchronous chat for guiding the production of undergraduate student seminar papers was advocated as part of a larger program of blended learning for upper class seminar students to address specific challenges in the current Japanese university environment. This paper will explore that concept further, applying the insights from the field of Conversation Analysis (CA) to derive the best pedagogical effect. After providing an overview of origins of CA, followed by a literature review of the use of synchronous chat and examples of both gmail and google docs chat, an analysis of a guidance session with a student writing a graduation paper using notions of CA will be presented. After that analysis, the paper will discuss how the process of didactic chat can be improved with reference to CA. Finally, this article will list some guidelines that can be taught to and utilized with seminar students as well as discuss possibilities for further research.

日本の大学のゼミ授業への blended learning の応用に関する先行論文 (Tomei, 2012) にて、学部生レベルのゼミレポートの執筆に際して blended learning プログラムの一部としてチャットを利用した論文指導を提案し、現在の日本の大学にみられる特定の問題に対処することを論じた。本稿ではこれらの概念を掘り下げ、最良の教育的効果をあげるための会話分析の分野の洞察の応用

を議論する。まず会話分析の起源について概観し、チャットの使用例と gmail や google docs チャットの例についての過去の議論を振り返った後、卒論を執筆する学生を対象とした論文指導目的のチャットを会話分析の概念を用いて分析する。さらに、会話分析の観点から、論文指導のチャット活用の過程をいかにして改善していくかを論じる。最後に、ゼミ受講学生に指導し、活用されるガイドラインを示し、さらなる研究の可能性について論じる。

Abstract

In a previous paper on the application of blended learning to seminar classes in the Japanese university (Tomei, 2012), the use of synchronous chat for guiding the production of undergraduate student seminar papers was advocated as part of a larger program of blended learning for upper class seminar students to address specific challenges in the current Japanese university environment. This paper will explore that concept further, applying the insights from the field of Conversation Analysis (CA) to derive the best pedagogical effect. After providing an overview of origins of CA, followed by a literature review of the use of synchronous chat and examples of both gmail and google docs chat, an analysis of a guidance session with a student writing a graduation paper using notions of CA will be presented. After that analysis, the paper will discuss how the process of didactic chat can be improved with reference to CA. can improve synchronous chat interventions with students. After that, this paper will present examples of the use of chat to illustrate those notions. Finally, this article will list some guidelines that can be taught to and utilized with seminar students as well as discuss possibilities for further research.

Introduction

Blended learning (Driscoll, 2002) is an approach where in-class instruction is combined with online instruction. While several other terms, including hybrid learning, integrated learning, and multi-method or mixed-mode learning are used, the growing consensus is towards the use of the term blended learning, as is indicated by the choice of the Library of Congress to make blended learning as a major subject heading, (Snart, 2010), making the term the most accessible.

The online component of blended learning is a range of applications and ideas that can be divided into two groups, synchronous and asynchronous. To define those terms, synchronous is used to describe applications in e-learning and computer-mediated communication such as chat and other communication systems where the response can be almost instantaneous. This is contrasted with asynchronous, where response are separated by time; applications which include bulletin boards, email, wikis and blogs. The difference between synchronous and asynchronous applications is discussed in greater detail in Lavin, Beaufait and Tomei (2008) and Beaufait, Lavin and Tomei (2008). A four way division between self-paced asynchronous, paced asynchronous, paced synchronous and a paced combination of both synchronous and asynchronous styles of online education is presented in Tomei, Beaufait and Lavin (2008) and the activities discussed in this paper fall under the third category of paced synchronous online learning, which allows immediate interaction between teacher and student and is identified as having a fair to significant engagement with both content and teacher. While there is discussion concerning the balance of synchronous and asynchronous activities in the classroom (Neal, 2005), in this paper, the focus will be on synchronous applications, specifically chat.

Literature Review: Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication (SCMC) and Chat

Though chat is relatively ubiquitous today, it arises from the evolution of online applications, telecollaboration and networked learning, with the term ‘telecollaboration’ being introduced by Warschauer (1996). Telecollaboration, for Warschauer, is collaboration that is separated by distance and while the focus of the book is on asynchronous applications, one article in the collection by Sanchez (1996) discusses the use of MOOs (Multiple user domains Object Oriented), which are “computer applications that allow multiple users to connect simultaneously in a text-based, virtually reality environment and to synchronously interact with each other ‘verbally’ by typing on their keyboards.” (p. 145) While this is quite different than the system discussed in this paper, the same notion of synchronous ‘verbal’ interaction applies, despite the fact that it is written. So too is the benefit, which is that the synchronous nature of the communication forces people to ‘think and respond quickly to the on-going discourse’. (p. 149) An earlier foray into synchronous written language instruction (for students of Portuguese) (Kelm, 1992) found that it encouraged student participation and lowered student anxiety and further research by Beauvois (1992, 1994) and Kern (1995) underlined those results, leading Kelm(1996) to suggest that the Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) allows the instructor to function in roles such as coach, guide, mentor and facilitator.

With the increasing sophistication of computers and software and the availability of robust data networks, synchronous (or ‘real-time’) communication has taken off and as they have been refined, the benefits, have been clearly identified and include immediacy of feedback, just-in-time support, and making complex topics manageable.(Driscoll, 2001). The interested reader is directed to Lamy and Hempel (2005) who have an excellent overall

examination of the role of online communication teaching and learning.

Bearing in mind those advantages, synchronous communication has been adopted by many companies and businesses as a way to deliver educational content to its employees, with evidence in texts such as Hoffmann's *The Synchronous Trainer's Guide* (2003), Finkelstein's *Learning in Real Time: Synchronous Teaching and Learning Online* (2006) and Lehman and Berg (2007) *147 Practical Tips for Synchronous and Blended Technology Teaching and Learning*, to mention only a few.

While computer technologies have made great inroads into lower level classes, as noted in Tomei (2012), upper level classes have been relatively resistant to the use of these technologies and that is particularly true of synchronous communication, even though it has been noted that can often be less teacher-dominated than face-to-face interactions. (Walker, 2006). Furthermore, computers have been tasked with enhancing group dynamics rather than one on one interactions.

This is not to say that synchronous chat is a panacea. Giguere (2003) cites research that suggests that while synchronous applications were more highly favored because they replicate traditional face to face instructional environments, they were generally ranked lower by distance education experts vis-a-vis asynchronous interactions. Fiori (1995) accepts that they may increase student motivation and participation, but notes research that leaves the question of whether formal accuracy and grammatical acquisition are enhanced by SCMC, a conclusion challenged by her research. Sykes (1995) compares written chat, oral chat and traditional face-to-face discussion with undergraduate Spanish students, and finds that not only did the written chat group outperform the other groups in terms of acquisition of pragmatic strategies, both forms of SCMC outperformed

traditional face-to-face discussion. On the other hand, perceived weaknesses in SCMC have led to work towards richer forms, including the previous mentioned MOO and other additions of multimedia to SCMC, which include video and visual feedback. This led Hoven (1996) to suggest that SCMC that requires the use of a keyboard or other similar input device be termed 'delayed synchronous', because the user has the option of withholding the communication. This nomenclature has not been taken up, but it does serve to remind that synchronous chat is not a glamorous cutting edge type of SCMC. This also suggests that specific steps need to be taken to have chat reach its full potential. To do this, we turn to Conversation Analysis (CA).

An Overview of Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (usually abbreviated as CA) is, as the name implies, an approach to the study of social interaction in general and conversation in particular. Recent interdisciplinary work places it as under the heading of interactional linguistics, which encompasses linguistics, sociology and anthropology. While there are a number of overviews of CA (cf. Drew, 2005; Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2008), that the interested reader is directed to, a summary of the origins of CA is useful.

The founder of the basic methodology of CA was Harold Sacks, a researcher in ethnomethodology, an ethnographic approach to sociological inquiry (referred to as an 'ethnomethodology') introduced by the American sociologist Harold Garfinkel that seeks to understand recurrent patterns in society through sociological observation (Garfinkel, 1967, 1996). Sacks, analyzing recordings of calls made to a suicide prevention center (see Schlegloff, 1989 for a detailed background), created, using a specific system of transcription, transcripts which were then analyzed in

detail to reveal the basic rules and competencies necessary to understand and produce conversation that is acceptable social interaction. Further collaboration with colleagues, most notably Emmanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson refined this approach to reveal insights in turn-taking (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) conversational openings (Schegloff, 1979a), self-correction and conversational repair (Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977, Schegloff, 1979b), and sequencing in spoken story narratives (Jefferson 1978), among others. Other researchers joined the field to yield insights on an immense range of topics including invitations (Drew, 1984; Davidson, 1984), the coordination of verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Heath, 1984), and storytelling (Cuff and Hustler, 1982). And while other casual conversations were the original focus, interactions such as those between doctor-patient (cf Frankel, 1983), courtroom interactions (cf. Holstein, 1988) and other settings soon came under the remit of CA. Because of this, the ‘conversation’ in CA is misleading, unless one chooses to judge conversation as any non-text based communication.

While CA has expanded to embracing the full range of verbal and non-verbal conduct, including body language, gaze and non-linguistic vocalizations in everyday situations, the source of the initial transcriptions, phone conversations, served to eliminate, or at least occlude, all non linguistic behavior except that which could be heard in the recordings, a point which we will return to in the conclusion.

CA is separate from Discourse Analysis in that the method is much more rigorous and it seeks to provide context-free rules of conversation. The term ‘context-free’ is a potential source of confusion here, in that in formal linguistics, context free is the way of describing a particular portion of a formal grammar. On the other hand, the use of context-free in CA is to simply suggest

there are some structures that exist outside of the information imparted in the conversation, and these structures form part of our sociolinguistic competence.

Before applying CA to didactic chat, it is useful to see an example of a CA transcript. The edited example, for undergraduate and MA students below was taken from Beeke and Wilkinson (2000)

| | | | |
|-----|---|---|------------------|
| | 4 | | |
| 001 | C | you had your light trousers and your white shirt | |
| 002 | | with yer sleeves (0.4) rolled up | |
| 003 | A | <u>ohhh</u> yeah | |
| 004 | C | he said oh what are we this- oh yeah bowls umpire | |
| 005 | A | bowls yeah | |
| 006 | C | he says huh huh huh | |
| 007 | | (2.5) | <i>lapse</i> |
| 008 | A | 's one o' those things I 'spose there's one thing er: (.) | |
| 009 | | <u>casual</u> and <u>bowls</u> at the same time | |
| 010 | C | heheheheheh | |
| 011 | | (2.0) | <i>lapse</i> |
| 012 | C | mind you w- we never <u>did</u> go an' find out about the | <i>new topic</i> |
| 013 | | bowlin' did we | |

In the first column is a line reference number. The second column refers to the participant and the final column is for notes. This is a relatively simple example, but CA transcription systems include markings for relative volume, intonation and stress, protocols for overlapping speech, rough notation to represent phonetics, and time values for pauses. A general consensus in the field has grown around the system set out by Gail Jefferson, now known as Jeffersonian transcription (Jefferson, 2004), an edited example of which is given below (taken from Hepburn and Potter, 2009, layout added)

| | | |
|----|--------|---|
| 1 | CPO | Is that o[-ka:y.] |
| 2 | Caller | [Fine.] =yes. |
| 3 | | [°that's fine.°] |
| 4 | CPO | [˘Brilliant] okay, |
| 5 | Caller | °.Hh° (0.2) u:m (0.1) >I'm sorry |
| 6 | | I'm a little bit< emo:~tional |
| 7 | | to-d[ay~ .hih] |
| 8 | CPO | [Tch Oh::] go:sh I'm so:rry, |
| 9 | Caller | ~I've got a little four year old grandson,~ |
| 10 | | [huh] |
| 11 | CPO | [Yea]h:., |
| 12 | | (0.3) |
| 13 | Caller | ~My son w(h)as s(h)ixtee:n~ (0.5) er fif˘teen when |
| 14 | | he was bor:n. |
| 15 | | (0.3) |
| 16 | | .Hhh [And um (.)] he and his er (0.2) |
| 17 | | [°-Mm::°] |
| 18 | Caller | girlfriend split up. |
| 19 | | (0.9) |
| 20 | | ((swallows)) ~and since then um:~ (0.2) |
| 21 | | she's had (0.4) several boyfriends, (0.6) .hh but since |
| 22 | | the baby was bor:n |
| 23 | | I've had him (0.3) every week |

This raises an interesting point about the ideal methodology of CA, which is to record as much data as possible without interfering in the naturalness of the interaction. This is a reaction to perceived weaknesses in hypothetical data enunciated by Schegloff (1972), which is not that data can easily be invented, but that it can serve to hide or reduce context.

Because CA focuses squarely on social interaction and seeks to illuminate the processes involved, it avoids analyzing written texts, so

it is distinct from discourse analysis, which not only takes written texts but also larger patterns in society and culture (cf. Foucault, 1967). The emphasis of CA is to enlighten the reasoning of the participants and their view of the context of the communication and to create a model of the methods used. By “written texts”, these are texts which the author has an opportunity to restate or rephrase. (This distinction of written versus spoken text will be discussed later in this paper.) This means that the bulk of CA studies have been ones done of audio (and now, as it has become more common, video) taped interactions that are transcribed and analyzed. However, with the rise of chat applications, a handful of researchers have turned to synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC), taking a CA approach to native speaker CMC interaction. These include turn-taking systems in SCMC and comparing them to the previously noted findings of sequence organization in oral communication (Garcia and Jacobs, 1999; Werry, 1999; Hutchby, 2001), openings (Rintel, Mulholland, and Pittam, 1997), and lack of response (Rintel, Pittam, and Mulholland, 2003). However, the majority of these studies were on Internet Relay Chat (IRC), a SCMC that is group based. A smaller number of researchers have looked at SCMC done by language learners, including Kitade, 2000 and Negretti, 1999). (see Thorne and Payne (2005) for a useful overview) However, like the research into native speaker SCMC, the majority of these studies deal with group interactions.

With the improvement in almost everything associated with computers and computing, chat has become a viable and often used alternative to spoken communication. However, because verbal recordings are relatively ubiquitous and because synchronous transcripts often lack context, the research literature on them is much smaller, so it is not clear if now

similar the rules and structures are for these types of interactions. Lawson (2004) presents the possibility of using CA to analyze IRC (Internet Relay Chat) transcripts, but only as a way to beginning researchers learn how to do CA. There is a rich research effort in relation to Second Life, a virtual world that utilizes text based messaging in a virtual reality, but research on only text based communication without the extra cues of a virtual world has not been taken up to any great extent. On the other hand, lower production of second language users and an imperfect grasp of both grammatical and social competencies means that chat is a fruitful avenue for research. Possible research areas can be divided into three areas. The first is possibilities and challenges in using chat (Freiermuth, 2002; Freiermuth and Jarrell, 2006), a second is to put together second language learners and native speakers of the language (cf. Freiermuth, 2001) and a third is to examine teacher-student interaction. A growing body of research seeks to apply CA to classroom interaction (see Mori and Zuengler, 2008 for a full survey) but the specific use of written chat for guided NS teacher-NNS student interactions has not been discussed to any extent and this paper represents an initial attempt at its utilization.

Utilizing synchronous written chat: some examples

Keeping the history of CA in mind, we now turn to the basic implementation of synchronous chat for seminar guidance. The implementation of chat relies on the Google suite of online applications and when students are logged into their google accounts, it is possible to communicate with them using text chat or 'gmail chat'. This chat has a number of special features, some of which impact the use of the tool for didactic purposes and an explanation with illustrations serves to delineate those tools. Please refer to the illustrations below.

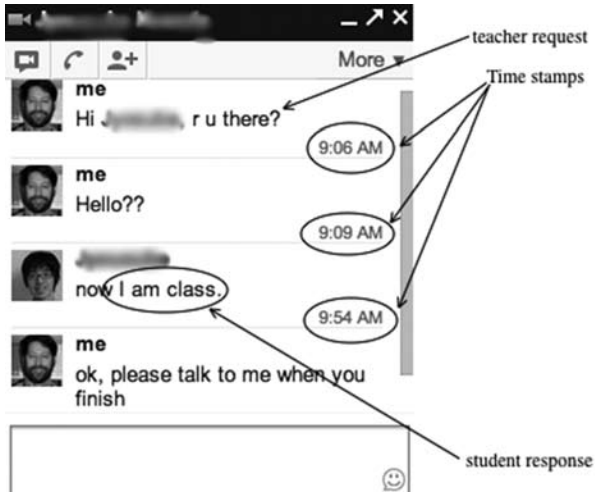


Figure 1

Figure one show a chat window which has been opened at the bottom left corner of a gmail window. The chat window is of a fixed size when attached to the gmail window, but if the window is made separate, it is possible to resize the window to reveal more of the conversation.

In the figure above, the student is online, but does not respond for 50 minutes, either because he is ignoring the message or he fails to note the chat window. Also note that time stamps are added only when a long (2 minutes or more) gap in the response is detected. Further, note the error by the student and the absence of correction.

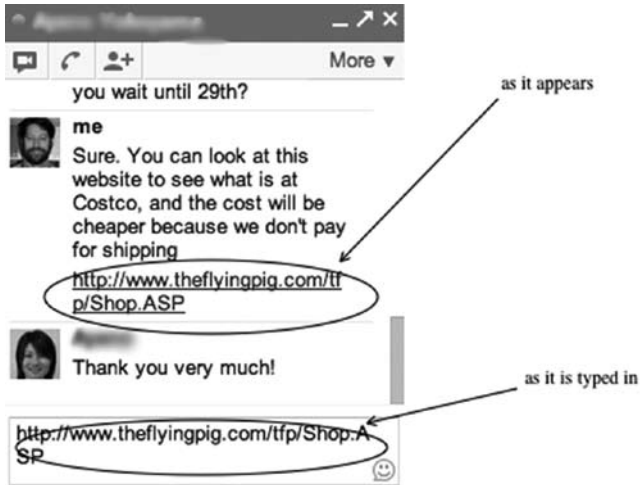


Figure 2

Among the cosmetic aspects, the participants' avatars, which are the small images are included as are several other options at the top. Figure 2 shows the automatic hot-linking of urls (i.e. addresses of webpages) which are written in the chat, allowing (at the cost of opening a separate browser window) another page at a different site. This is important because students can be directed to sites quickly, without errors that might arise from opening new browser windows and copying and pasting or typing in urls.



Figure 3

There is also the provision for adding a limited number of illustrative emoticons, such as the smiley face in figure 3. Figure 3 also shows the activity indicator, which indicates if the other person is typing or 'has entered text'. This is very crude, and only indicates if the person is actually using the keyboard, or has recently used it and is possibly pausing.

Finally, and most importantly, Gmail chat permits the default saving of chat dialogues, though one can set the preferences to hold the chats 'off-record', which means they are not saved.

Gmail chat gives a notification sound when a new message and while the chat window appears as a separate window at the bottom of the screen, but it can be detached and relocated to another part of the screen as a separate window.

Gmail chat is a rather sophisticated application, and future work will consider whether to adopt this as a tool to help guide students in writing seminar papers. However, because of the possible confusion with

windows, a second chat application is used, which is the chat built into Google docs and is show in figure 4.

Google docs “offer[s] unparalleled collaboration experiences in terms of low software requirements, ease of use, data ubiquity, and availability” (D’Angelo, Vitali, Zacchiroli, 2010: 826), and Dekeyser and Watson (2006) argue that the absence of a required installation of both server and the client side applications makes Google Docs a compelling option. However, Google Docs chat has a few drawbacks. It has no notification sound so it is very easy to not realize that the other participant wants to speak with you. Also, it does not save the chats, though one can copy the chat and save it as a text file. Some further points are presented in the illustration below.

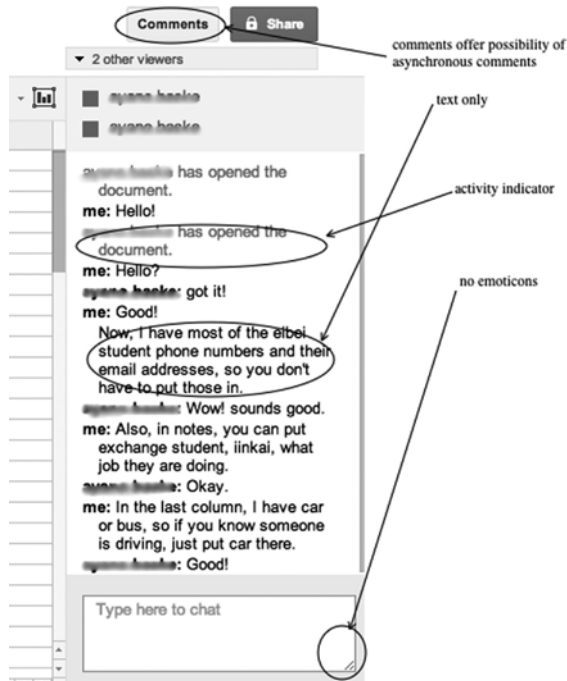
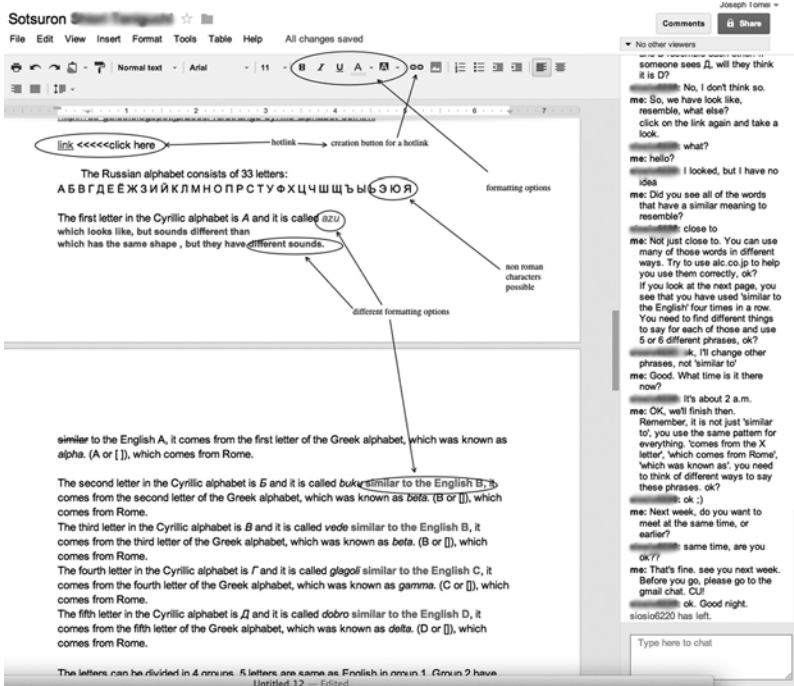


Figure 4

Furthermore, as can be seen in the figure, the activity indicator only indicates if the other participant has opened the document, urls are not hotlinked and emoticons are absent. However, the fact that the chat appears with the document being edited makes it the best choice, despite its drawbacks. Before analyzing a sample interaction, I will discuss the procedure followed.

The student arranges to view the Google document online at the same time as the teacher. In the example examined below, the student has had a previous term at the university to learn the basics of synchronous chat, but had travelled overseas, so the guidance is strictly virtual and there was no opportunity for the teacher to meet face to face. It was noted in Tomei (2012) that combining asynchronous and synchronous activities with face to face support was important, citing MacDonald (2008) in support. However, the ideal must sometimes give way to the circumstances.

After arrangements were made through google, the student and the teacher move to the google doc. The session analyzed began at 4:00 pm local time (midnight in the student's local time) and lasted almost 2 hours. The student was working on a paper discussing the Cyrillic alphabet and her current assignment was to write short descriptive paragraphs about each letter in the Cyrillic alphabet. A model was given to her by the teacher and the student dutifully replicated the model for each letter, so the challenge was to have her provide some variation in her paragraphs. Figure 5 shows the final state of the document and chat window, with important features of the google docs application marked. These include the possibility of various formatting options to draw attention to specific points, the use of embedded hotlinks to give the student other webpages to visit, and the possibility of using non-roman fonts.



From here, we will look at a rough analysis of the chat exchange

Analysis of chat exchange

teacher: hi xxxxxx

student: Hi (Lines 1-2)

In CA terms, these two lines consist of two turns which make up an *adjacency pair*. An adjacency pair is basically two statements that are connected and the second statement is a response to the first. One of the insights of CA was to view these units as discrete entities.

teacher: OK, go to the bottom of the 2nd page

student: ok (Lines 3-4)

In the next adjacency pair, the instructor uses a location based description rather than a content based description. Also, rather than introduce the content in a less direct way (“You know where you talked about the letters in the Russian alphabet?”), the instructor chose a more concrete way of locating the student.

teacher: OK, let’s write a paragraph about Б

How would you start it?

student: 4th page’s I wrote. another writing??

teacher: Give it a try

Ahh, ok, copy it to where we are working. (Lines 6-4)

In this example, we see some of the challenges of using SCMC effectively. Normally, the initial turn (“OK, let’s write…”) would be replied to, either with a verbal statement or some sort of physical action (such as taking out pen and paper). However, because SCMC does not have the facility for this, the instructor uses the first statement to establish the task and then provides a more directed question. However, the student has already composed the paragraph, and is asking if she should repeat the task. Also, this demonstrates the possibility of overlap, where the teacher gave phatic statement for encouragement (‘Give it a try’) just after the student entered her reply.

Also note that mistakes within the chat are not corrected. More on this below.

Another insight of CA was that fluent speakers could recognize *Transition Relevant Place (TRP)* and could present their turn with only the smallest of pauses (0.1 seconds). In the context of SCMC, the pause is much longer, however, the student, who had a semester’s experience with SCMC, was able

to detect these TRP, underlining the conclusion of Sykes (1995), that written chat allows students to acquire some pragmatic competencies.

teacher: You want to make this order

student: where ? What's mean??

teacher: The Russian alphabet consists of...

Each letter in order

Letters divided into groups

ok?

student: ok. (Lines 11-17)

These two adjacency pairs underline another shortcoming of SCMC. If this were face to face communication, either intonation or gesture would indicate that the teacher was not finished, and 'this order' was referring to the three phrases below that. However, it is significant that the student immediately asks for clarification, even as the teacher is keyboarding the first item on the list. This is not natural behavior, but the result of first term instruction on best procedures in using chat.

This exchange also highlights another lacuna is text based chat, which is figures or drawings can't be shown. Sorapure (2010) proposes that developments in information visualization (or as she terms "infovis") provide an opportunity to enhance student's digital and critical competencies and the topic under discussion here, the ordering of ideas for the section, might benefit from such technology.

teacher: Let's rearrange that now.

student: I rearrange in the 2nd page?

teacher: yes

so move the red section as the first part. You don't need to write, you can カット andペースト

The red section

Good! now, put the paragraphs about the individual letters next, so go to page 4 and move them to here.

Good, you can move the other letters there later, ok?

Let's work on these paragraphs.

student: ok??

teacher: Yes, now let's look at the A paragraph.

student: ok. (Lines 18-28)

The next section is procedural instructions describing what the student should do on the document. Note that the teacher has code switched here. Also note that because the teacher can see the document being manipulated, there is no need for the student to provide confirmation.

teacher: Yes, now let's look at the A paragraph.

student: ok.

teacher: When you have a word in foreign language, it should be in *_italics_*, You did it for *_alpha_*, but...

So, change that to italics, right?

student: Should I write about A from animal's shape??

teacher: Yes, you should, but first, let's get the paragraph started.

student: ok (Lines 18-28)

At this point, the student has rearranged the document appropriately and the teacher wants to begin working on the main topic, which is to

add variety to the paragraphs. The student comments about the fact that both the letter A (identified in Cyrillic as *azu*) originally derive from the Phoenician *aleph*, which was represented by the abstract head of a cow but the teacher wants the student to make formatting corrections to what she has written rather than deal with content. Also notice how the teacher, unable to use any rich formatting, uses an underbar to highlight words.

teacher: OK, you can do that later.

Is azu the end of the sentence?

hello?

student: What?

teacher: OK, good! (Lines 34-38)

At this point, the first breakdown, in terms of misreading TRP occurs, where the teacher has to use ‘hello?’ to attract attention, but as it turned out, the student was working on something and posted it.

teacher: Now, you have used the SAME pattern each time. We need to use some different patterns.

What are some other phrases we can use for ‘similar’?

student: Thanks.

the same or, like??

teacher: the same means 全く同じ

which letters can you use it with?

student: resemble?English

teacher: If it is the same, it looks the same and represents the same sound. If the sound

is different, you have to say that it looks the same. Is the sound different for azu and english A?

student: not same.

teacher: so it ____ the same but represents a different _____ (Lines 39-49)

In this section, we note that the teacher is using a third means drawing attention, all capitals, to emphasize the similarity of the passages. Interestingly, that use of ‘same’ seemed to prime the student to suggest that ‘similar’ and ‘same’ were synonyms appropriate for the task, at which point, the teacher makes a relatively long intervention to discuss the problem.

student: Can I use ‘looks like?’

different sounds

teacher: yes, because ‘look’ means に見える

student: ,,,,,,,I don’t know,,

teacher: So, you could have a phrase after that that says “ _____ like, but _____ different than.....”, right?

How would you fill in those blanks?

Hello?

student: seem?

teacher: No, the part in the red, I want you to fill in the words. (Lines 50-58)

At this point, the linguistic problem begins to emerge. In Japanese ‘looks like’ and ‘sounds like’ are often both translated as nani *nani mitai da/nani rashii*, so the student is failing to make any distinction between appearance and sound.

Line 53 in this context is particularly interesting, in that the student may

be using repeated commas as an equivalent of an ellipsis, or a series of dots. In English text, an ellipsis usually indicates an intentional omission of material, but a secondary use, quite common in Japanese manga, is known as an *aposiopesis*, which is where a sentence is deliberately broken off to indicate speechlessness (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2012). In this case, the figure appears before the student's statement, so it represents a novel use of a traditional figure.

Finally, the teacher uses a cloze sentence to identify the specific location he wants the student to insert new vocabulary items, with the target being “looks like, but sounds different”.

student: I know, but I don't know ---like

it means, similar to? right

as//

as??

teacher: Hmmm, xxxxx, do you see the part in red?

に見える

student: ya

teacher: OK, so fill it in now.

student: I'm thinking but I don't know. same mean, similar? what?

teacher: You just used it. Look at our chat and see where I have 見える the first time and then look at what you wrote.

right above it

student: looks like?

teacher: yes! (Lines 51-60)

The student is clearly struggling to find the correct response, so the

teacher, wanting to draw to student's attention, uses her first name ("xxxxxx") and the Japanese phrase previously referenced in the conversation, as well as the changed font color in the document. This is still not sufficient, so the teacher draws the student's attention to the location in the chat where the point was discussed.

teacher: so what goes in the second space?

student: some different

teacher: no, 発音

click on this link

and tell me when you have looked at it.

student: I looked.

teacher: ok, so is pronunciation correct?

look is a verb, what is pronunciation?

student: not correct. sounds

teacher: Good. In Japanese, you use らしい for appearance, sound, but in English we make a difference

student: ok ;)

teacher: So that would be good for a letter that has the same appearance, but a different pronunciation, right? (Lines 73-84)

At this point, the student is now working to produce the second cloze completion ('sounds') and the teacher hotlinks a url (specifically <http://eow.alc.co.jp/search?q=sound+like&ref=sa>) in the target document to get around the lack of hotlink functionality in Google docs chat to give the student some concrete examples. In this way, the teacher can model revision behavior.

teacher: What about Б ??

student: shape

teacher: OK, use the word shape and write another phrase below the one we just did
click on the link and tell me when you have looked at it.

student: I looked it

teacher: looks and sounds are 動詞、名詞or形容詞？

student: 動詞

teacher: shape is?

No, I want you to use shape. How do you change the sentence. Look at that link again.

Good, has the same shape... What's next?

It's just like the one above, right?

hello?

student: we are talking about A section??

teacher: No, we are just making a set of phrases that you can use with the different letters.

But, A and azu have the same shape, but they have a different _____, right?

student: sounds

teacher: ok, so complete the phrase (Lines 85-101)

The paragraph in question, which discussed the English letter A/Cyrillic *azul*, now has a phrase that captures the similarities and differences, the teacher and student turn to the third letter of the Cyrillic alphabet, *buku* [Б]. As this letter and the Roman letter *beta* [B] both derive from the Greek *beta* [β], and the time difference makes it approximately 1 am for the student, the teacher opts for simply discussing the first letter and leaving the more complex sentence for the next session. and reemphasizes that with code switching.

student: sounds

teacher: ok, so complete the phrase

The part in the red

a different soundS? 単数/複数

which one?

student: 複数?

teacher: so why do you have “a”?

student: sorry (Lines 100-107)

At this point, the teacher takes the opportunity to make a low level grammar correction in the target paper. Please note that there are no discussion of corrections in the chat. This is to help the student develop the awareness of the different genres and the different requirements, and addresses the suggestion that student formal accuracy suffers in SCMC (Kern, 1995; Lee, 2002, Sotillo, 2000, for an alternative view, see Stockwell, 2010).

teacher: OK, are there Cyrillic letters that sound the same but look different?

student: look is so resemble!

teacher: look like is resemble. Finish this sentence

Д ____ ____ look like D

student: the shape look like

teacher: Д the shape look like D

does that sound correct?

student: sound is little difference

teacher: 見えない

Д ____ ____ look like D

student: Д the sound doesn't look like D

teacher: Don't worry, we are almost finished. Maybe 5 more minutes. (Lines 108-119)

Rather than tackle the more complex case of *buku* and *beta*, the teacher has opted to have the student consider the Cyrillic letter *dobro* [Д]. However the session is now in its second hour and it is not clear if the student is having any uptake.

teacher: Д does not look like D, right?
hello?

student: shape is look like, but sound doesn't ?
not look?

teacher: Azu and A look the same. Д and D resemble each other. If someone sees Д, will they think it is D?

student: No, I don't think so.

teacher: So, we have look like, resemble, what else?

click on the link again and take a look. (Lines 120-127)

Another link is embedded in the document, this time to <http://thesaurus.com/browse/resemble?s=t>.

student: what?

teacher: hello?

student: I looked, but I have no idea

teacher: Did you see all of the words that have a similar meaning to resemble?

student: close to

teacher: Not just close to. You can use many of those words in different ways. Try to use alc.co.jp to help you use them correctly, ok?

If you look at the next page, you see that you have used 'similar to the English'

four times in a row. You need to find different things to say for each of those and use 5 or 6 different phrases, ok?

student: ok, I'll change other phrases, not 'similar to'

teacher: Good. What time is it there now?

student: It's about 2 a.m.

teacher: OK, we'll finish then. Remember, it is not just 'similar to', you use the same pattern for everything. 'comes from the X letter', 'which comes from Rome', 'which was known as'. you need to think of different ways to say these phrases. ok?

student: ok ;)

teacher: Next week, do you want to meet at the same time, or earlier?

student: same time, are you ok??

teacher: That's fine. see you next week. Before you go, please go to the gmail chat. CU!

student: ok. Good night. (Lines 128-147)

Because of fatigue on the student's part (as well as the teacher's!), the teacher summarizes the important aspects of the session and makes arrangements for the next session.

Conclusions

Because of the lack of timings, the absence of additional context and the written nature of the text, some CA researchers would probably dismiss a CA analysis of synchronous chat. However, this analysis suggests that there are a number of things to be gleaned from a CA analysis that can help improve the pedagogic value of synchronous chat in guiding students in composition.

First is that by identifying the typical tendencies of casual conversation that are identified by CA, it may be possible to specifically teach students to attend to these points or to develop alternatives within written chat. Texting has already developed a number of paralinguistic clues, such as acronyms

and emoticons (see Warschauer (1999) for an in-depth discussion of the notion of electronic literacies and his identification of the need to take the characteristics of the medium into account in order to make that medium most effective) that if a set were devised and taught to students, it would improve the didactic nature of the chat. Furthermore, CA strives to create a set of context-free rules that can explain conversational patterns. Precisely because these rules are context-free, they can be taught to a wider range of students. Second, instruction in this form bypasses the complaint that SCMC, while producing improvements in fluency and pragmatic competence, fails to improve accuracy. As the target document is the locus for accuracy, the student can work on both and Pennington (2004) has observed how word processing and other tools lead to different ways of writing, ways which can have a great impact on the way writing is taught to EFL students.

While conventional CA researchers may not accept using the tools of CA analysis on exchanges of this nature (written with reduced contextual clues, timings absent), the origin of CA began with recordings of calls to a suicide hotline, which were necessarily reduced in context. It was this boundedness of the corpus that permitted the first insights of CA to be generated.

This also suggests that the distinction between written and spoken is, in this case epiphenomenal, and these exchanges constitute unplanned and unrevised language, which lies at the essence of CA.

While this is a single transcript, and one which reflects a previous semester of instruction on the use of written chat, it represents a possible research program that would examine these types of interactions and develop best practices for the language teacher to use and promulgate.

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Appendix 1: Chat transcript

- 1 *student has opened the document.*
- 2 **teacher:** hi xxxxxx
- 3 **student:** Hi
- 4 **teacher:** OK, go to the bottom of the 2nd page
- 5 **student:** ok
- 6 **teacher:** OK, let's write a paragraph about E
- 7 How would you start it?
- 8 **student:** 4th page's I worte. another writing??
- 9 **teacher:** Give it a try.
- 10 Ahh, ok, copy it to where we are working.
- 11 You want to make this order
- 12 **student:** where ? What's mean??
- 13 **teacher:** The Russian alphabet consists of...
- 14 Each letter in order

- 15 Letters divided into groups
- 16 ok ?
- 17 **student:** ok.
- 18 **teacher:** Let's rearrange that now.
- 19 **student:** I rearrange in the 2nd page ?
- 20 **teacher:** yes
- 21 so move the red section as the first part. You don't need to write, you can
- 22 カットandペースト The red section
- 23 Good ! now, put the paragraphs about the individual letters next, so go to
- 24 page 4 and move them to here. Good, you can move the other letters there
- 25 later, ok ?
- 26 Let's work on these paragraphs.
- 27 **student:** ok ??
- 28 **teacher:** Yes, now let's look at the A paragraph.
- 29 **student:** ok.
- 30 **teacher:** When you have a word in foreign language, it should be in *italics*, You
- 31 did it for *alpha*, but... So, change that to italics, right ?
- 32 **student:** Should I write about A from animal's shape ??
- 33 **teacher:** Yes, you should, but first, let's get the paragraph started.
- 34 **student:** ok
- 35 **teacher:** OK, you can do that later.
- 36 Is azu the end of the sentence ?
- 37 hello ?
- 38 **student:** What ?
- 39 **teacher:** OK, good !
- 40 Now, you have used the SAME pattern each time. We need to use some different
- 41 patterns.

42 What are some other phrases we can use for 'similar' ?

43 **student:** Thanks.

44 the same or, like ??

45 **teacher:** the same means 全く同じ

46 which letters can you use it with ?

47 **student:** resemble ? English

48 **teacher:** If it is the same, it looks the same and represents the same sound. If the

49 sound is different, you have to say that it looks the same. Is the sound

50 different for azu and english A?

51 **student:** not same.

52 **teacher:** so it ____ the same but represents a different _____

53 **student:** Can I use 'looks like' ?

54 different sounds

55 **teacher:** yes, because 'look' means に見える

56 **student:** ,,,,,,,I don't know.,

57 **teacher:** So, you could have a phrase after that that says " _____ like, but _____

58 different than....", right ? How would you fill in those blanks ?

59 Hello ?

60 **student:** seem ?

61 **teacher:** No, the part in the red, I want you to fill in the words.

62 **student:** I know, but I don't know ---like

63 it means, similar to ? right

64 as//

65 as ??

66 **teacher:** Hmmm, xxxxx, do you see the part in red ?

67 に見える

68 **student:** ya

- 69 **teacher:** OK, so fill it in now.
- 70 **student:** I'm thinking but I don't know. same mean, similar ? what ?
- 71 **teacher:** You just used it. Look at our chat and see where I have に見える the first
72 time and then look at what you wrote.
73 right above it
- 74 **student:** looks like ?
- 75 **teacher:** yes!
76 so what goes in the second space ?
- 77 **student:** some different
- 78 **teacher:** no, 発音
79 click on this link
80 and tell me when you have looked at it.
- 81 **student:** I looked.
- 82 **teacher:** ok, so is pronunciation correct ?
83 look is a verb, what is pronunciation ?
- 84 **student:** not correct. sounds
- 85 **teacher:** Good. In Japanese, you use らしい for appearance, sound, but in English we
86 make a difference
- 87 **student:** ok ;)
- 88 **teacher:** So that would be good for a letter that has the same appearance, but a
89 different pronunciation, right ? What about Б ??
- 90 **student:** shape
- 91 **teacher:** OK, use the word shape and write another phrase below the one we just did
92 click on the link and tell me when you have looked at it.
- 93 **student:** I looked it
- 94 **teacher:** looks and sounds are 動詞、名詞or形容詞 ?
- 95 **student:** 動詞

96 **teacher:** shape is ?

97 No, I want you to use shape. How do you change the sentence. Look at
98 that link again.

99 Good, has the same shape... What's next ?

100 It's just like the one above, right ?

101 hello ?

102 **student:** we are talking about A section ??

103 **teacher:** No, we are just making a set of phrases that you can use with the different
104 letters. But, A and azu have the same shape, but they have a different
105 _____, right ?

106 **student:** sounds

107 **teacher:** ok, so complete the phrase

108 The part in the red
109 a different soundS ? 単数／複数
110 which one ?

111 **student:** 複数 ?

112 **teacher:** so why do you have "a" ?

113 **student:** sorry

114 **teacher:** OK, are there Cyrillic letters that sound the same but look different ?

115 **student:** look is so resemble !

116 **teacher:** look like is resemble. Finish this sentence

117 Д ____ ____ look like D

118 **student:** the shape look like

119 **teacher:** Д the shape look like D

120 does that sound correct ?

121 **student:** sound is little difference

122 **teacher:** 見えない

- 123 Д ____ ____ look like D
- 124 **student:** Д the sound doesn't look like D
- 125 **teacher:** Don't worry, we are almost finished. Maybe 5 more minutes.
- 126 Д does not look like D, right ?
- 127 hello ?
- 128 **student:** shape is look like, but sound doesn't ?
- 129 not look ?
- 130 **teacher:** Azu and A look the same. Д and D resemble each other. If someone sees Д,
- 131 will they think it is D ?
- 132 **student:** No, I don't think so.
- 133 **teacher:** So, we have look like, resemble, what else ?
- 134 click on the link again and take a look.
- 135 **student:** what ?
- 136 **teacher:** hello ?
- 137 **student:** I looked, but I have no idea
- 138 **teacher:** Did you see all of the words that have a similar meaning to resemble ?
- 139 **student:** close to
- 140 **teacher:** Not just close to. You can use many of those words in different ways. Try
- 141 to use alc.co.jp to help you use them correctly, ok ?
- 142 If you look at the next page, you see that you have used 'similar to the
- 143 English' four times in a row. You need to find different things to say for
- 144 each of those and use 5 or 6 different phrases, ok ?
- 145 **student:** ok, I'll change other phrases, not 'similar to'
- 146 **teacher:** Good. What time is it there now ?
- 147 **student:** It's about 2 a.m.
- 148 **teacher:** OK, we'll finish then. Remember, it is not just 'similar to', you use the
- 149 same pattern for everything. 'comes from the X letter', 'which comes from

150 Rome', 'which was known as'. you need to think of different ways to say

151 these phrases. ok ?

152 **student:** ok ;)

153 **teacher:** Next week, do you want to meet at the same time, or earlier ?

154 **student:** same time, are you ok ??

155 **teacher:** That's fine. see you next week. Before you go, please go to the gmail chat. CU!

156 **student:** ok. Good night.

157 *student has left.*