



Teacher Practices in Establishing Understanding in a Foreign Language Classroom

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ABSTRACT: This paper describes the resources drawn on to build understanding and participation in an Italian as a foreign language classroom. Extracts for analysis in the study were taken from two 50-minute lessons with 26 students aged 13 to 14 years at A2 (CEFR) level who were in their second year of high school in an Australian public school. The lessons focused on language practice in which the teacher subscribed to a L2 use only policy as part of her teacher talk. This pedagogical stance provided an opportunity to analyse how this policy affected teacher expectations with respect to what students *ought to* have comprehended in Italian. It did this by analysing the resources the teacher used to display these expectations through her pursuing actions, the deployment of the *do you remember* recognition check (Schegloff, 1988; Shaw & Kitzinger, 2007; You, 2015) and the *no-one knows* epistemic status check (Sert, 2013), and her alternation to the L1 when all these resources failed to lead to a display of student understanding. The study is also concerned with examining the degree of multimodal unpacking required to establish shared understanding through which the teacher's plan as a dynamic process becomes visible.

Keywords: language alternation, epistemic expectations, Italian as a foreign language, recognition checks, epistemic status checks, plans for learning, multimodality

1. INTRODUCTION

Irrespective of teacher experience or of teacher pedagogical orientation, an essential part of teachers' work is to create plans for student learning. Given the social nature of the classroom, lesson plans are not static. Rather lesson plans, and the planned tasks that they foreshadow, are contingently shaped and brought into being through interactions in the classroom. This has led researchers to distinguish between task-as-work-plan and task-as-process (e.g., Jenks, 2006; Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004; Seedhouse, 2004).

The socially situated and distributed nature of classroom participation (Eskildsen & Markee, in press; Markee 2000, 2011) routinely gives teachers the task of having to make adjustments to their plans as a result of their own as well as the actions of their learners through the ongoing interactions that unfold in the classroom. The planned learning tasks, which are a contingent part of any lesson plan, are accomplished with reference to the shifting participation frameworks and knowledge states of the students. In the language classroom, an additional layer to planning is how the languages will be distributed. Analysis of the phenomenon can thus reveal changes to the work plan in the making.

Teachers' plans are premised on their assumptions about students' prior knowledge and understanding about a topic or language structure as well as on their assumptions about the experience students have in carrying out a task based on what is presumed to have been learned in previous lessons. Teachers seek evidence for displays of such knowledge and for ways in which it is built on through interaction during instructional sequences. These occur in, and are observed through, the micro-details of the interactions (Pekarek Doehler, 2013). It is in these unfolding displays of the presence or absence of topic knowledge and application of prior experience that adjustments and a reconfiguring of the plan become visible as teachers look for evidence of learning and provide formative assessment. (For discussions of formative

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assessment see Black & Wiliam, 2012.) Visible action can include repair, pursuit, extended pauses and, in the language classroom, the deployment of language alternation. How language choice affects understanding, and how managing understanding results in reconfiguring the plan to restore or establish a shared teacher/learner epistemic domain through language alternation practices, is the main interest of this paper.

Specifically, the study is an exploration of the practices of a teacher in an Italian as a foreign language secondary school context in which her main medium of interaction is the target language (TL), Italian. It is concerned with examining the degree of pedagogical unpacking or adjustment required to restore or establish shared understanding through which the teacher's plan as a dynamic process rather than a fixed product becomes visible. It will do this by tracking the teacher's actions that index what she expects or assumes students to know (for example through her use of interactional resources such as the recognition check *do you remember?*, epistemic status checks *you don't know?* and her non-verbal actions), and by showing that when such actions fail to elicit student understanding, a switch to English, the students' first language (L1), ensues so that she can monitor what students know.

The paper begins with a brief overview of language alternation studies as a background to the analysis and discussion of the data before discussing the research on epistemics with particular reference to epistemic checking.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Studies of language alternation in the classroom

Studies of language alternation practices in the foreign and second language classroom that are grounded in conversation analysis have become a growing focus of research (Filipi & Markee, forthcoming a). While teachers' alternation practices were initially the main focus of research interest (for example, Lin, 1996; Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005), more recently, attention has turned to how learners avail themselves of their languages as important resources in managing their learning and their classroom interactions (for example, Kunitz, 2013; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005; Markee & Kunitz, 2013; Morton & Evnitskaya, forthcoming; Reichert & Liebscher, forthcoming). These studies have shed light on students' use of their languages to conduct different tasks; for example, task planning in the L1 and task performance in the L2 (Kunitz, 2013, forthcoming; Reichert & Liebscher, forthcoming). Importantly, the investigations show that learners' language alternating practices are not simply the result of a gap in vocabulary. On the contrary, these alternating or 'languaging'¹ practices can be deployed for the discourse related purposes of indexing a change in orientation to the other speakers and to the interaction itself (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005).

The more recent focus on student talk does not indicate a declining interest in language alternation as a feature of teacher talk. Rather teachers' language alternation practices still warrant attention because there is an ongoing need for applications of findings from CA to teacher education (Filipi & Markee, forthcoming b) which will affect the place and the quality of classroom interaction generally.

In order to frame the discussion of teachers' language alternation practices, it is useful to discuss three issues which are particularly pertinent: classroom language policy (e.g., Amir, 2013; Amir & Musk, 2013; Bonacina-Pugh, 2010, 2012), the interactional order (e.g., Gafaranga, 1999) and the Initiation Response Evaluation (IRE) (Mehan, 1979) sequence structure. With respect to the former, a recurring and controversial issue in the language

classroom has been the place of the L1 in many of the contexts that are still influenced by the early practice in communicative language teaching of minimising or indeed negating the place of the L1 through the adoption of a TL only policy or “language policing” (Amir & Musk, 2013). It should be noted, however, that teachers and learners have continued to find space for the L1 in actual practice despite the force of such TL policies (Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

In classrooms that are dominated by what Bonacina and Gafaranga (2011, p. 331) refer to as “a policy-prescribed medium of instruction”, language policing emerges in situ and functions to re-establish the target language as the medium of classroom interaction, particularly when there has been a perceived breach in language choice. Noteworthy too is that both students and teachers visibly orient to the practice through self-policing (Amir, 2013). The language policies may be imposed externally from above by education bodies that dictate an English only policy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. Such contexts include those described for example in Hoang and Filipi (2016) (EFL in Vietnam) and Üstünel (2016) (EFL in Turkey). However, policies can also be established from within by teachers themselves as is the case in the current study.

The second issue that can be useful in framing the discussion of teachers’ alternation practices relates to the organisational or local and overall order in interaction. Gafaranga (1999, 2017, forthcoming) and Gafaranga and Torras (2001) distinguish between the local order and the overall order. The former (originally conceptualised by Auer, 1995) governs the organisation of language alternation at the level of the turn or sequence. The latter (overall order) governs language choice at the level of activity or episode. Gafaranga (2017, forthcoming) argues strongly that these two orders need not be seen as competing with each other; rather they complement each other. The overall order is particularly relevant to understanding how the languages are chosen for what Gafaranga (2007) and Gafaranga and Torras (2001) refer to as the medium of interaction of an episode of talk or an entire conversation which can be in one or a mixture of languages (Gafaranga, forthcoming). The overall order is thus a useful frame to analyse and determine the medium of classroom interaction. It permits a focus that firstly identifies the medium and then analyses the functions of the language alternation.

In turning our attention to the IRE structure, the teaching practices revealed in this sequence organisation were maligned and discouraged in the 80s because they were associated with very teacher dominated practices (Mercer & Dawes, 2014). More recently, however, they have been validated. Studies with young children, for example, have shown the important work of follow-up actions such as yes/no questions subsequent to an initiating turn that does not receive a response to a wh question (e.g., Filipi, 2017, 2018). Similar follow-up actions have been reported in high stakes tests by Filipi (1994) and Seedhouse and Egbert (2006). Teacher actions of holding the IRE sequence open by withholding the acknowledging or evaluating third turn that would otherwise close the sequence down, have also been shown to serve a number of pedagogical purposes including inviting learners to elaborate or to self-assess (Zemel & Koschmann, 2014). These variations within the third turn of the IRE sequence in teacher’s talk have been described in a number of studies (e.g., Hellermann, 2003; Ko, 2014; Zemel & Koschmann, 2014), and display the complexity of the structure.

In applying an analytical lens that combines language policing with overall order and the IRE sequence structure in studies of language alternation, a number of findings emerge. Filipi (forthcoming), using the same corpus, set out to investigate how a TL only policy affected the medium of classroom interaction. She reports a differential overall order in the classroom. One applies to the principal use of the L2, Italian, by the teacher. The other applies to students,

whose medium of interaction is English, their L1, for answering the teacher's questions, and Italian exclusively for the practice of language drills. In adopting a TL use only policy for herself, the teacher deals with issues in understanding through a range of resources. Eventually when all other actions are exhausted, the initiation is restarted in the students' L1. The evaluating turn is also formulated as a return to the TL. These actions give rise to a complex IRE shape.

Similar practices of scaffolding and then switching to the students' L1 are noted in Üstünel and Seedhouse's (2005) study of English as a Foreign Language in a Turkish university where one of the three preference structures that were uncovered involved a pattern of alternating to the students' L1 after long gaps of over one second and the failed use of modification in the TL. This pattern is in contrast to the common practices revealed in the novice Vietnamese EFL teachers' language alternation which involved teacher initiations in the TL translated immediately into Vietnamese with no wait time (Hoang & Filipi, 2016). Finally, an early CA study by Lin (1996) in a bilingual context in Hong Kong also unveils an overall order built into two IRE structures: L1 (Cantonese) use for the story-telling and L2 (English) for linguistic work.

Clearly then, in planning, teachers do create their plans on a base language which is reflected in the overall order. However, while their expectations about language choice are not made explicit, nonetheless their language alternation practices and how they react to student responses in a third turn, for example, do reveal what they implicitly expect of students both as a response and the language in which the response is given. As Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) maintain, this expectation is based on the pedagogical focus of the task.

1.1.2 Establishing epistemic congruity

In ordinary conversation, speakers design their talk based on what they expect their recipients to know. They also interpret talk based on the assumed or actual knowledge of the speaker (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979). These expectations are reflected in speakers' turn designs, in the sequential structure of their talk and in the use of specific conversational resources (You, 2015). Speakers monitor each other's turns and make adjustments to their epistemic imbalances in order to achieve intersubjectivity. Indeed, epistemic imbalances between speakers contribute to the establishment of continuance and contingency in talk as participants work to establish mutual understanding and shared knowledge states (Heritage, 2012).

Included in the conversational resources deployed to establish what co-participants in interaction know are a range of devices for checking, and for ensuring and displaying an expected or shared understanding of topics under discussion. Two such devices are the recognition check (i.e. *do you remember?*) and the epistemic status check (ESC) (i.e. *you don't know? no idea?*) (Sert, 2013). Previous studies on the recognition check have shown that it is located in a pre-sequence prior to a main sequence (Melander & Aarsand, 2017; Schegloff, 2007; Shaw & Kitzinger, 2007; You, 2015). They have also shown that memory, and displays or claims of remembering and forgetting are used as interactional resources (Goodwin, 1987; Shaw & Kitzinger, 2007). For example, You's (2015) study shows that the recognition check can be used not only in conveying or establishing epistemic status but also in the management of interaction. His findings with respect to the stand alone (*do you remember*) is of particular interest to the current study because it is launched to display a lack of or a missing response and to solicit or pursue alignment in the interests of progressing the lesson.

Similarly, ESCs are also launched to progress the lesson, or in the words of Sert (2013), the teacher's "pedagogical agenda". They do this by making visible students' insufficient or inadequate knowledge states so as to prepare or claim the grounds for a speaker change. While the recognition check is deployed to elicit a yes/no confirmation from the co-participant that the speaker's assumption about what is known or shared is correct or not, its starting point is that it *was* known and may now be forgotten. The ESC on the other hand is produced from a displayed starting position of potentially not knowing what information is known or shared. However, it also elicits a yes/no confirmation response. In both cases assumed or actual information states are established interactionally (Sert, 2013).

To sum up, in the classroom, teachers make continual reference to what is considered to be established, shared domains of knowledge. Printed lesson plans for novice or pre-service teachers will specifically ask them to state what students should already know, and how teachers intend to build on this information. This provides the foundation for either consolidating or for further building on what is already known. The current study is aimed at investigating how this is done through specific epistemic resources and how language alternation as an action is implicated in this work.

2. METHOD and PARTICIPANTS

The data for the analyses is derived from two 50-minute middle high school Italian as a foreign language lessons in a public school located in Melbourne, Australia. The majority of the 26 students in the class were 13 to 14 years old. They were at a proficiency level of A2 in the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). Most of the students had been learning Italian since year 7 (the first year of High School). Students received three x 50 minute lessons per week.

The teacher initially collected this data at two levels—Year 7 and Year 8—as part of the requirements for an assessment task for a post-graduate course she was undertaking. She was required to document her teaching using the TL in a series of lessons at different levels over the course of a week by filming herself teaching. The videos were subsequently made available for analysis. The language alternation behaviour selected for analysis in the two lessons provided ample evidence of the phenomenon more widely observed in her teaching in the week during which data was collected.

As the teacher had recently decided to adopt a policy of L2 use only in her teaching as part of a self-study, this was in fact the first year that students in this class had been exposed to this approach. The lesson analysed here is part of a wider series of lessons on the topic of *Conoscere Melbourne (to know Melbourne)*.

Instances of turns including recognition checks and epistemic status checks as well as turns involving language alternation were selected for analysis. The data were transcribed using the conventions of conversation analysis with the addition of P>> to denote pointing, ND to denote nodding, LH and RH to denote left and right hand and NV to denote non-verbal actions. Names used in the transcripts were pseudonyms to safe-guard participant anonymity. Given the importance of capturing non-verbal features, their onset relative to their co-occurring verbal utterance is indicated by the curly bracket { derived from Filipi (2009). Glosses appear in the line immediately following the verbal utterance while translations in English are bolded for easy reference.

3. ANALYSIS and DISCUSSION

Analysis starts by following the actions of the teacher as she indicates what she expects students to know as a result of past exposure, recent history of participation or general background knowledge, and the actions she takes when these expectations are not realised. In the first three extracts, she uses the recognition check *do you remember* as well as a switch to the students' L1.

Excerpt 1 ((The start of the lesson as the class transitions to the first practice drill))

1T: va bene. andiamo avanti adesso con:: um (0.3) quello che
Trans: okay let's proceed now with um (0.3) what
 2 abbiamo fatto l'altro giorno;
Trans: we did the other day;
 3 (0.6)
 4 vi ricordate, vi ricordate, do you remember,
Trans: do you remember, do you remember,
 5 (0.3)
 6 °va bene.°
Trans: all right.
 7 (0.7)
 8 <come si può andare in città> ...
Trans: how can you go into town...

We note that the recognition check is repeated three times, twice in Italian and then once in English followed by a pause (lines 4 and 5). In alignment with previous research (e.g., Melander & Aarsand, 2017; Schegloff, 2007; Shaw & Kitzinger, 2007) it is located in a pre-sequence. The pause that follows it is brief, but it nonetheless provides enough time for the class to respond. While there is no audible verbal response, it appears that a non-verbal response is provided (although it is not visible in the recording) given the teacher's subsequent acknowledging and sequence closing action through the token *va bene (okay)* (Beach, 1993).

The function of the remember recognition check is to establish a shared, collaborative knowledge domain (You, 2015) between the teacher and her students. Here it is achieved through the teacher's invitation to students by appealing to their memory of what transpired in the previous lesson. This is important as it links material covered in the previous lesson to the material to be covered in this one on which the present lesson will build. Thus comprehension is necessary as it provides a way of establishing the learning goals of the lesson which are based on the assumption that students are ready to build on the foundations laid there. It also offers a display of epistemic expectation: what students should know by remembering material covered in the previous lesson. However, as this activity is a quick check at the start of the lesson, a possible lack of understanding of the key word *remember* in Italian is dealt with quickly through direct translation by resorting to the equivalent in the students' L1 (Mortensen, 2011; Stoewer, forthcoming). Stoewer (forthcoming) states that where equivalents are available, then lengthy explanations are avoided based on the assumption that participants are discussing the same topic. Hence, getting the lesson off the ground needs to be done efficiently, so possible lack of understanding of the key word is dealt with expeditiously. The teacher is thus in a constant process of having to make decisions to execute her lesson plan with reference to student (re)actions. This is done in the moment as she decides what she will let slide and what warrants intervention through the deployment of a range of resources. The next extract provides a good example of the latter.

Prior to this activity, the class has been participating in a drill on how and with whom to go into town. In excerpt 2, the class returns to this drill after some intervening work. This time the teacher is after a complete sentence from students in their response. However, as will be seen, this is only made explicit retrospectively.

Excerpt 2 ((Return to the practice drill: *how do you get into town*))
 1T: ... um {vediamo chi non ha parlato molto? caitlin (0.2) tu non
Trans: um let's see who hasn't spoken much? Caitlin (0.2) you haven't
 NV {((circular motion with index finger; rests on caitlin))
 2 {hai parlato molto, {°you haven't spoken very much.°
Trans: spoken much,
 NV {(stops)} {(P>> quickly to caitlin again)}
 3 {dimmi (0.2){TRE modi (0.3) con chi puoi andare in città.
Trans: tell me three ways of going into town.
 NV {(P>>)} {(holds up 3 fingers, hand in a rolling action)}
 4 (0.5)
 5 {tre maniere. (0.2) a piedi:::, (0.3){tre.
Trans: three ways. on foot three.
 NV {(holds up 3 fingers; walking; (holds up 3 fingers NDs))
 6 (0.2)
 7Cait: nella (macchina.)
Trans: in the car.
 8T:→ {con::?
Trans: with?
 NV {(holds up her finger)}
 9 (0.3)
 10 {°tsk can I have a whole sentence?°
 NV {(gesture of tapping as she says each word)}
 11Cait:→oh!
 12T:→ {IO posso andare in città::?
Trans: I can go to town
 NV {(indicates herself, NDs, P>> to her right on città, turns to
 NV the board)}
 13Cait? [()
 14T:→ [vi ricordate?
Trans: do you remember?
 15 (0.4)
 16 um (0.5){IO o- instead of posso- {what does posso mean?
Trans: um (0.5) I o- instead of can- what does can mean?
 NV {(writes on the board)} {(looks at the class)}
 17 (0.6)
 18T:→ I can::: (0.2) {but let's just actually say how you're actually
 NV {(produces beats with a closed hand gesture)}
 19 going to get to the city {va bene? (0.2)<io vado in città,>
Trans: okay? I go to town,
 NV {(turns to the board and writes io
 20 vado in città while saying it.)}
 21 (1.0)
 22 caitlin=
 23Cait: =yeah=
 24T: ={tutta la frase.=
Trans: the whole sentence.
 NV {(produces a rolling hand gesture)}
 25Cait: =um io vado in città il treno.
Trans: um I go to town the train
 26T: (0.6) ((eyebrow flash))

27 {col treno. okay. sandra, come ...
Trans: with the train okay. (0.2) Sandra, how ...
 NV {(NDs slowly, hand gesture with palm up)}

The extract opens with the teacher's search for a student who has not yet had a turn. She spies Caitlin whom she nominates as her addressee. This is done firstly in the TL and then parenthetically through an immediate translation into the L1. We note, in line with Walker (2013), that this parenthetical talk is prosodically marked. It is uttered more softly in comparison with the surrounding teacher's talk in Italian. It behaves in a similar way to the structure of the side-sequences described by Mori (2004) and Lehti-Eklund (2012) when speakers switched to the L1 as a way of solving language problems.

Once reciprocity is established, the teacher goes to some length (both verbally and non-verbally) to support the student in producing an answer by offering examples (line 5). Caitlin's answer in line 7 shows that she has completely understood what is expected of her. However, the teacher's subsequent turn (*con? with?*) suggests that she considers the answer to be inadequate or incomplete, although in what ways is not made clear until her next turn when she switches to English in line 10. Like her earlier switch in line 2, this is also marked prosodically by being uttered more softly than the preceding and following language practice turns. The student's reacting turn *oh* indicates a 'penny drop' moment and an altered state in her understanding (Heritage, 1984). However, the teacher proceeds to provide a model for the response through a designedly incomplete utterance (Koshik, 2002) thereby delaying the student's revised answer. We note an unclear student turn in overlap with the teacher's *vi ricordate* (*do you remember*) in line 14 which is now addressing the class thereby marking a shift in the participation framework (as indicated by the syntactic choice of the plural *you* (*voi*) as opposed to the singular (*tu*)), and appealing to class memory. This allows the teacher to press ahead with a "teaching moment" when she turns to the board to provide further support through a written model. The explanation is conducted in English as the teacher writes the Italian on the board. Through her actions of appealing to student memory, of writing the structure on the board and of switching to English momentarily, the teacher is leaving nothing to chance. She also establishes the groundwork for an expected student production—an accurate response but in a full sentence. In Caitlin's turn (line 25) she does in fact meet this expectation by producing a complete response to the drill in Italian after a further explicit instruction.

With respect to overall order and language alternation, the analysis has uncovered the following practices. Firstly, from the perspective of the student, Caitlin used English for interactions other than the language drill which she conducted in Italian, an emerging pattern described in Filipi (forthcoming) for the same data set. Secondly, from the perspective of the teacher, there were three distinct moments of alternation to English. As noted, the first two were examples of parenthetical talk, and as per Walker (2013) who described shifts in prosody as being associated with such talk, they were produced in a softer voice than the surrounding teacher talk. The first in line 2 functioned to translate the preceding Italian statement exactly while the second in line 10 was to elaborate. Both were addressed to Caitlin. Through these actions the teacher is orienting to the possibility of non-understanding by Caitlin so the actions are deployed to scaffold. They also mark reciprocity. The third instance of switching to the L1 was associated with the work of explanation, and unlike the first two, there was no prosodic difference in how it was delivered relative to the surrounding TL talk. Rather it was a "teaching" moment for the whole class to attend to. Thus, while all three instances are examples of a temporary switch or medium repair (Gafaranga & Torras, 2002), they function to mark a different participation framework exposing a further complexity in the design of the practice which also contributes to a complexity of the IRE sequence structure itself through the embedded sequences.

With respect to teacher planning, an interesting action here is that the teacher has changed the drill model to eliminate *posso (can)* which simplifies it linguistically. So we have evidence of a split moment decision by the teacher to transform the drill even though it is not clear what drives the need to do so. Also noteworthy is the fact that the teacher did not explicitly instruct the students to use a complete sentence in their responses *before* commencement of the drill. This requirement emerges *on the fly*. Both actions provide examples of a slight altering of the *plan* that emerges in the course of the *process* of the practice drill.

So far we have been examining teacher epistemic expectations explicitly delivered through the *do you remember* recognition check and the switch to the L1. In the next extract, the teacher displays her epistemic expectations through a range of interactional resources. She starts by launching a series of epistemic status checks through her question *does anyone know*.

The activity occurs in the body of the lesson as it builds on the vocabulary just practised in the drills. It entails an introduction to famous landmarks in Melbourne's Central Business District. The teacher is using photos that she expects students to identify to establish a shared formulation of place. This is conducted in Italian through the typical IRE sequence structure.

Excerpt 3

1T: ...<benissimo.> >{cos'e' questo?<
Trans: **very good. what's this?**
 NV {((holding up the photo))
 2SS: rialto.
 3T: {ecco. {le DUE {DUE torre di Rialto. (0.2) due torre.
Trans: **yes the two towers of the Rialto two towers**
 NV {((ND)) {((holding up two fingers))
 NV {((P>> to the two towers on the photo))
 4 {um (0.6) qualcuno mi {sa dire,
Trans: **um can someone tell me,**
 NV {((taps photo)) {((holds up the index finger))
 5 {<questo> <nome> <rialto>
Trans: **this name rialto**
 NV {((produces a beat on each word; still holding up the photo))
 6 (0.2)
 7 c'e' un altro {posto famoso in Italia? {che si chiama rialto?
Trans: **is there another famous place in Italy called Rialto**
 NV {((raises LH)) {((RH taps photo))
 8 (0.4)
 9 {qualcuno lo sa?
Trans: **does anyone know?**
 NV {((waving her index finger))
 10 (0.4)
 11 {un altro posto famoso.
Trans: **another famous place**
 NV {((produces a flat hand gesture))
 12 {°is there another famous place in Italy or something famous
 NV {((produces a circular hand gesture across the photo))
 13 in Italy named after this.°
 14 (1.1)
 15 {nessuno?
Trans: **no one?**
 NV {((produces a flat hand gesture))
 16 (1.1) ((gestures to the head))
 17 think.

18 (0.2)
 19 {emma (0.2) you've just come back.
 NV {(the class looks at her))
 20 (1.1)
 21 Emma: °(no)°
 22 T: sei stata a venezia?
Trans: did you go to venice?
 23 Emma: {(°mm, °)
 NV {(NDs)
 24 T: venezia?
 25 (0.2)
 26 you must have (02) WALKED on this famous thing that I'm
 27 talking about.
 28 (0.8)
 29 no?
 30 (0.5)
 31 {no one?
 NV {(incredulous voice; holding up her index finger))
 32 {ne↑ssuno.
Trans: no one
 NV {(shakes her hand))
 33 (0.4)
 34 {nessuno lo sa?
Trans: no one knows?
 NV {(shakes her index finger)
 35 (0.8)
 36 okay. have you ever heard of rialto bridge,
 37 (0.2)
 38 il ponte di rialto.
Trans: the rialto bridge.
 39 (0.2)
 40 {MA DAI::: {il ponte di rialto si trova a venezia e' il ponte)
Trans: come on::: the rialto bridge is found in venice it's the most
 NV {(produces a flat hand gesture))
 NV {(waves in a circular motion))
 41 (0.2){PIÙ famoso (0.4) {del mondo.
Trans: famous bridge in the world.
 NV {(produces a series of beats as she points to photo)
 NV {(shrugs, shakes her head))
 42 {most MAGNIFICENT bridge in venice.
 NV {(produces a sweeping gesture in the shape of a bridge))
 43 (0.6)
 44 {um:: (0.3) °you've never heard about it;°
 NV {(holding her hand up, then waves))
 NV {(a student in view of the camera shakes her head))
 45 {°you did you just don't remember.°
 NV {(NDs, gestures with the index finger))
 46 i'm sure we spoke about it. {Robyn's nodding.
 NV {(indicates Robyn, NDs))
 47 sì?
Trans: yes?
 ((Interruption: a knock at the door.))
 48SS: there's someone at the door.
 49T: um ...

The landmark (LM) named in this extract is a building called the Rialto Towers. Its naming provides an opportunity for a display of knowledge about the other more famous

landmark—the Rialto Bridge in Venice—with which it shares its name, and the Rialto’s historical commercial quarter in Venice after which it was named. It also provides an opportunity for incidental learning and/or consolidation of (expected) past knowledge.

After the successful naming of the LM in an IRE sequence (lines 1–3), the teacher launches a new sequence in line 4 on a topic that is related to the first but that is disjunctive to the instructional focus of the identifying/naming activity which is in train. While the sequence could be characterized as being tangential to the main pedagogical focus because it takes away from the main task at hand and might not have been explicitly planned (i.e. it appears to arise spontaneously in the interaction), nonetheless what is going on here is not subordinate to learning. The teacher is using this as an opportunity for students to make connections that are relevant to the learning of Italian by asking them to display cultural knowledge about the famous Rialto Bridge in Venice. She starts by asking a question of the class about what they know. She does not at first use a recognition check as she did in the earlier excerpts; nonetheless as the sequence develops it becomes clear that she does indeed have a clear set of epistemic expectations that students should know about the Rialto Bridge. In fact, her initial pursuit hinges on this knowledge.

We note that her first question, and its subsequent elaboration and pursuit of response is designed through a set of embodied resources. She points to and subsequently taps the photo she is holding up. She uses prosodic packaging (Hellermann, 2003) that delivers a beat on each word in *questo nome rialto* (*this name rialto*). Furthermore, *nome* and *rialto* are given prosodic prominence by being uttered slowly. After repeating the question in Italian (lines 9–11), to which she continues to receive no response, she reformulates her initial question (line 7) in English in line 12, and then switches back to Italian. As with the example in the previous excerpt, the switch to the L1 here is also designed parenthetically by being uttered softly. It too is oriented to the possibility of non-understanding, so the actions are deployed to scaffold. However, the prosodic features also mark English as not having status as the main language in this part of the task.

Despite the alternation to the students’ L1, the question remains unanswered. So the language in which the question is delivered is not the problem here as it was in excerpt 2 above. Indeed, we now note a shift in the teacher’s own question formulations in her pursuit of her epistemic expectation from *who knows?/does someone know?* to an increasingly less likely expected state of knowing, formulated through the use of ESC—*no-one?/no-one knows?* The pauses at this stage become longer (lines 14 and 16), in between which the ESC *nessuno?* (*no-one?*) is produced in Italian. After the gap in line 16 of 1.1 seconds, the teacher delivers an instruction to the class in English to *think* accompanied by a gesture to the head. She is asking students to make an informed deduction. This request in the sequential context of the long pauses provides a strong indication that the teacher does indeed expect students to know the origin of the Rialto name. This action is almost immediately followed by a shift in the participation framework as she nominates a student, Emma, who has just come back from Italy. The action casts Emma as someone with experience and knowledge acquired outside the classroom. Thus she is being called on to draw on her experience of the world to answer. This is a common, legitimate domain of prior knowledge that a teacher might reasonably expect students to use for making inferences. The class defers to Emma’s status as potential “knower” by looking at her. However, Emma is unable to satisfy the teacher’s question.

At this point the teacher relaunches another series of ESCs as reciprocity shifts back to the class as a whole. This occurs first in English in line 31, then in Italian in lines 32 and 34. It is also at this point that the teacher starts to express surprise (beginning in line 26 addressed to

Emma—you *must have WALKED*) that escalates to incredulity. These emotions are conveyed verbally through her lexical choices (*ma dai, come on*) in both the L2 and L1, non-verbally (lines 31 to 45) through her hand gestures, and prosodically through raised pitch, louder volume and rising intonation (the intonational properties identified by Local, 1996; Selting, 1996; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2006, as conveying surprise and disbelief). In order to reach resolution and to bring this activity to a close (indicated by the closing *okay* that initiates the resolution sequence in line 36), the teacher herself names the Rialto Bridge that she has thus far sought but failed to elicit. However, this too results in a “no show” of recognition. We note that the talk about the bridge once it is identified is conducted entirely in English (indicating that she does not expect students to understand this talk if it were to be delivered in Italian). We also note that the overall order is not restored until her *sì* (*yes*) in line 47.

Finally, the teacher’s actions in lines 44 to 47 provide further evidence that in fact she did expect students to know about the famous bridge in Venice from the outset; we note her *you just don’t remember, I’m sure we spoke about it* and her bid for student confirmation and affirmation of her claim—*Robyn’s nodding* in line 46. These actions provide the pedagogical grounds and justification for her earlier pursuit of the connection in name between the Rialto Towers in Melbourne and the Rialto Bridge in Venice.

The sequence has provided a complex structure both sequentially and in terms of how the languages are deployed as the teacher’s pedagogical focus is dynamically shaped through a set of resources to both establish (the connection in the Rialto name) and restore (knowledge about the Rialto Bridge) a shared epistemic territory (Heritage, 2012). In this process the teacher appears to have decided that it was worth “straying” from the pedagogical focus of naming and identifying which has been the main activity in this part of the lesson. This provides evidence for how a teacher can usurp the lesson plan in the interests of incidental but nonetheless relevant and important learning or displays of learning which become relevant actions at any given moment.

In the final excerpt, the teacher displays her epistemic expectation through a complex organisation of verbal and non-verbal resources without having to resort to an overtly verbal epistemic recognition or status check.

Excerpt 4 ((Practice drill: *when do you go into town?*))
 1T: {noelene, (0.2) chiedi um::: (0.3) a mark- marco (0.2)
Trans **Noelene, (0.2) ask um::: (0.3) mark- marco (0.2)**
 NV {(points to Noelene then to Marco)
 2 quando LUI va in città,
Trans **when HE goes to town,**
 3Noel: quando vai città?
Trans: when do you go to town?
 4 (0.5)
 5T:→ {quando, when,
 NV {(shrugs shoulders, palms up then down)
 NV: {(Mark is looking at T)
 6Mark:→ um (0.2) {io vado in città lunedì.
Trans: um I go to town on Monday.
 NV {(looking at his book)
 7T: lunedì.
Trans: Monday...

As is evident from the subsequent take-up by the student and his successful completion of the answer in line 6, the teacher has assumed that the word *quando* (*when*) is the likely trouble

source after the lack of response to Noelene's question in line 3. This aligns with Üstünel and Seedhouse's (2005) finding that when teachers alternate to the students' L1, it is in response to the absence of a student response in the L2.

The teacher quickly launches a repair by repeating the word first in Italian and then immediately in English. The action of switching to English is a medium repair (Gafaranga & Torras, 2002). It indicates that the teacher views the trouble source as the medium in which the prior version (*quando*) was delivered. *Quando* has an 'equivalent' in English, so the strategy used here of translating is a quick and efficient way of dealing with the problem of understanding (Mortensen, 2011; Stoewer, forthcoming) as we saw in excerpt 1. Furthermore, unlike instructions, which warrant greater resources and time because if students do not understand them then the activity cannot get underway, here the interruption to the flow of the drill is kept to a minimum.

In dealing with the source of Marco's lack of understanding so expeditiously, the teacher treats *quando* as a word that is, or at least should be, known as established through the language practice drill that has been ongoing. She conveys this through the following concurrent non-verbal actions: a slight shrugging of her shoulders, the production of an iconic gesture with her hands which are in a palm up position, the shaking of her head and her eyebrow flash. The shrug on its own is normally associated with lack of knowing or a show of indifference (*Cambridge Online Dictionary*). However, here where it co-occurs with the other embodied actions, its meaning indicates "you should know this". In other words, *quando* is part of a shared (whole class) epistemic vocabulary domain. The teacher deploys this gesture throughout the lessons to convey that the meaning of the word or phrase should be obvious or within a student's epistemic domain. She is thus conveying to the student that he should know this Italian word through both her embodied and verbal actions.

The teacher's assumption here is derived from the context of the language activity the class has been engaging in for some time which explains both *what* should be known and *how* it should be known, which in turn does impose an obligation on Marco not merely to know but to show that he knows (see Heritage's, 2012, p. 5–6, discussion about epistemic territories). In other words, although the epistemic gap here is an issue of language as medium and not content, nevertheless, successful participation in the drill activity does entail the display of the correct form of the structure being practised as part of Marco's TL production skills. This includes understanding the meaning of *quando* in Italian not just in English.

One final important point in the analysis of this excerpt is that the minimal impact of the gesture and the meaning it conveys on the flow of the drill avoids open verbal rebuke for Marco's possible inattentiveness. It is thereby a face saving gesture. When coupled with Marco's action of maintaining silence rather than asking for help, this teacher action provides evidence for both the teacher's and Marco's orientation to the principle of assumed student competence as discussed by Waring (2016).

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study was concerned with investigating a teacher's choice of the TL (Italian) as her medium of interaction (Gafaranga, 2007; Gafaranga & Torras, 2001), and with how she managed students' non-understanding through a series of scaffolded actions that included prosodic and gestural scaffolding before ultimately switching to the students' L1. A key focus of the study lay in analysing what she expected or assumed students to know through her use of

the recognition check (*vi ricordate? do you remember?*) and her epistemic status checks (*nessuno lo sa? no-one knows?*).

The findings from the study contribute to and extend studies in CA in two broad strands. The first is to the body of work on language alternation from the perspective of the teacher. Here the findings build on investigations by Cheng (2013, 2014), Üstünel (2016) and Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) on teachers' pedagogical adjustments achieved by switching languages. They also accord with Gafaranga's (2017, forthcoming) concept of the complementarity of the overall and local orders of organisation that govern language choice: the teacher's choice of the TL as her medium of classroom interaction (overall order), and the switches to the L1 constituting medium repair at the turn or sequence level (local order). The second contribution is to the study of epistemic status and stance; specifically, to how language alternation, multimodally organised, is implicated in establishing epistemic status thereby extending the work of Cheng (2014) and building on Filipi (forthcoming). These findings are briefly elaborated below.

In managing student understanding, several practices were uncovered including the degree of unpacking or pedagogical adjustment required to restore or to establish shared understanding. On some occasions the teacher would deal with student displays of non-understanding expeditiously by expending minimal resources; for example, through direct translation, a practice which accords with previous research by Mortensen (2011) and Stoewer (forthcoming). On other occasions, the teacher would treat such displays as warranting a greater expenditure of resources and time. Here her actions included a series of pursuits, delivered initially in the TL and involving scaffolding of understanding. They also included shifts in the participation framework in line with research by Cromdal (2004). In both sets of practices, prosody was marked by being softer than the surrounding talk giving greater prominence to the TL as the medium of interaction. Such marking of prosody has been found to be important for its role in scaffolding learning; for example, in the study by Hellermann (2003) in the context of physics and American history classes. When such actions failed to lead to success in displays of understanding, the teacher would ultimately switch to the L1. The work around the establishment of understanding was achieved in the moment as the teacher decided what she would let slide and what warranted intervention with reference to student (re)actions.

The analysis also centred on an unfolding lesson in action which entailed: establishing links with previous learning on which to build in the current plan (excerpt 1); extended (excerpt 2) or minimal (excerpt 4) interruption of a drill for the purposes of explaining a teaching point (excerpt 2) or for translating a trouble source (excerpt 4); and an altering of the plan that emerged in the course of the process of introducing new vocabulary (excerpt 3). The teacher's language alternation indicated a further complexity in the design of the practice which also contributed to a complexity in the IRE sequence structure itself through a series of pre-sequences (housing the recognition checks), embedded and extended sequences. Such analyses of the intricacies of the IRE structure accord with previous research by Hellermann (2003); Ko (2014), and Zemel and Koschmann (2014).

In closing, the study offers possible insights for the ways in which formative assessment as a practice might be studied in future to microscopically reveal how teachers conduct the constant and important monitoring of what students know or display as known moment-by-moment, how they adjust and design their own talk and how they provide feedback in alignment with these displays. Such actions are at the very heart of understanding that formative assessment practices are interactional achievements. The analytical tools that enable the micro-level capture of the practices thus offer an opportunity for reconceptualising such practices as

being quintessentially interactional. The potentially richer findings arising from such analyses will better place researchers to be able to provide evidence for quality teaching, which in turn can have important applications in teacher education.

¹ See Musk & Cromdal (forthcoming) for a definition and discussion about languaging from CA's emic perspective.

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