Title: Towards Specification of Communicative Competence:
　　　　Condition of L2 Instruction or its Objective?
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The concept of communicative competence is one of the most influential theoretical developments in language education as it helped redefine the objectives of L2 instruction and the target language proficiency.

While acknowledging these contributions, this paper asks if the conceptual formulation of communicative competence has other relevancies for our understanding of the realities of language use in L2 instructional settings.

<u>**Classroom interaction**</u> itself is an occasion of language use that relies on the competence of the parties to the interaction; the competence that is already in the room is then a constitutive feature of the work-practices of teaching and learning. Informed by Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis, this paper proposes that communicative competence may be as much the condition of L2 instruction, one that makes L2 instruction possible in the first place, as its target outcome. Brief analyses of transcripts from ESL classrooms are offered to demonstrate how the communicative competence found in L2 classrooms is a contingent resource for language teaching and learning.

<u>Hymes' formulation (1971) of communicative competence</u> has been one of the most influential theoretical developments in natural language studies and in applied linguistics (Ellis 1994; Firth and Wagner 1997; Stern 1983).

<u>This question traces back to Hymes'</u> call (1971) for language studies that take the organization of living speech as a viable object of study and thus, recognizes the language classroom as a natural social setting in which members carry out various interactional tasks through competent language use.

If so, what we need is a more closely considered account of language use in L2 classrooms and examine how that figures into the realities—and resources—of what goes on in the practical course of L2 instruction. This paper begins by questioning what language behavior could count as evidence of competence and what the parties to the interaction accomplish with it. L2 classroom interaction is then not just an instrument to accomplish communicative competence as an instructional objective, but is also a practical occasion that exhibits competent language use.

This alternative undertaking of competence examines the interactional detail in an L2 classroom in order to describe <u>how the actual interactional contexts and contingencies are managed by and made intelligible to the teacher and students as practical matters of their competent hearing and productions</u>. Brief analyses of transcripts from undergraduate ESL (English as a second language) classrooms are offered to demonstrate how communicative competence sustains the very thing that goes on there, namely, the work of teaching and learning.

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE ACTUAL CONTEXT OF LANGUAGE USE
<u>Communicative competence for L2 instruction</u>

This alternative interest in communicative competence in L2 instruction begins with the question that prompted Chomsky and later Hymes, '<u>What is so competent and remarkable about language behavior?</u>'

While Chomsky (1965) found competence in the generative possibilities of language systems, Hymes (1974) expanded the scope of competence to include knowledge of social and cultural norms and rules of speaking that underlie language use and an individual's ability to realize it in actual speech. Competent speakers are capable of producing adequate ways of speaking that each situation demands and of making use of the rules for their own ends (Hymes 1973, cf. Widdowson 1983). As a rejoinder to Chomsky's cognitive essentialism, Hymes reinstated the social realities of communications in language studies that Chomsky had suppressed for analytic reliability (Taylor 1988).

Hymes' call to take interest in the sociability of language has been a catalyst for the field of language education as it expanded the scope and epistemic content of target competence that concerns L2 curriculum. Furthermore, it offered a much needed theoretical rationale for L2 research, which was leaning toward a more functional approach (Richards and Rogers 1986). This resulted in the development of various theoretical constructs for L2 instruction (e.g. Canale and Swain 1980; Celce-Murcia, et al. 1995;

Behind this development was a common disciplinary interest, namely, to generate broadly acceptable frames of reference that identify the essential components of target competence. The adequacy of the given theories is then to be assessed by the degree to which they offer systematic ways of characterizing language phenomena in terms that can effectively identify and organize the objects and objectives of L2 instruction. This would allow language professionals to design their instructional programs and evaluate the language proficiency of their L2 students from within a common or unified perspective. This point is put forth in the seminal paper by Canale and Swain (1980).

These (theoretical) principles serve as a set of guidelines in terms of which communicative approaches to second language teaching methodologies and assessment instruments may be organized and developed. Such a theoretical analysis is crucial if we are to establish a clear statement of the content and boundaries of communicative competence—one that will lead to more useful and effective second language teaching and allow more valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills (Canale and Swain 1980: 1).

This has been an enormous theoretical undertaking that has shaped the direction of L2 instruction significantly. However, it also entails a precarious task, namely, representing in a few abstract constructs the complex realities of language use across an unforeseeable range of variation and situational contingency.2 the success of this enterprise depends largely on the capacity of the theories to abstract the realities of language use into stable and recognizable constructs.

Nonetheless, there is a disciplinary consensus that communicative competence points to an underlying cognitive knowledge system, and therefore, specifying distinctive properties of the system is an important goal of language acquisition research.

Doughty and Long illustrate the case in point:

The focus is firmly on identifying the nature and sources of the underlying L2 knowledge system, and on explaining developmental success and failure. Performance data are inevitably the researchers' mainstay, but understanding under-lying competence, not the external verbal behavior that depends on that competence, is the ultimate goal. Researchers . . . recognize that language learning, like any other learning, is ultimately a matter of change in an individual's internal mental state. As such, research on SLA (Second Language Acquisition) is increasingly viewed as a branch of cognitive science.

Interaction and interactional competence

One issue that figures centrally in this debate is the role of interaction and what it shows about competence. Firth and Wagner (1997) argued for the importance of contextual and interactional dimensions of language use and the need to treat them analytically on their own terms. To this charge, there was a firm stance on the generality and stability of cognitive organization as a primary objective of L2 research (see Gass 1997: 83, 1998; Kasper 1997; Long 1997); competence displayed in social interaction is considered to represent the cognitive outcome of learning. That is to say, the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use are recognized only insofar as they contribute to building global language acquisition systems (see Liddicoat 1997). Not all that can be found in interaction counts because the aim of acquisition research is to distill a language structure that could be mapped on an underlying knowledge system. The formulation by Gass is illustrative:

The goal of my work has never been to understand language use per se, but rather to understand what types of interaction might bring about what types of changes in linguistic knowledge . . . the emphasis in input and interaction studies is on the language used and not on the act of communication. (Gass 1998: 84)

In this regard, for both sides of the debate, what can be seen in interaction and how to characterize it is a central issue for understanding competence.

There have been several analytic programs in language studies that center on interaction. Hymes' own ethnography of speaking is one such undertaking that aims at 'discovering and formulating rules for appropriate language use' (Saville-Troike 1996: 353) in specific contexts that are culturally defined and socially determined. This focus is also echoed in the undertaking of interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 2001) that provides 'a framework within which to analyze social context and to incorporate participants' own understanding of context into the inferencing of meaning' (Schiffrin 1996: 316).3

These analytic programs tend to find competence in the social/cultural systems that underlie communicative conventions and in the speakers' abilities to make use of them in interactional contexts.

A great deal of research has ensued by examining how social and cultural contexts become embedded in language use and how they interact with language teaching and learning (e.g. Allen 1992; Brooks 1992; Bryant 2001; Cheng and Warren 1999; Foster-Cohen 1990; Riggenbach 1991; Sato and Kleinsasser 1999; Shehadeh 1999; Tyler 1995; Wilkins 1982). These analytic programs offered a completely different epistemic stance toward interaction from the prior emphasis on language cognition as they attempted to substantiate what interaction reveals, for example, how actual interaction displays different social and cultural conventions among the participants and how those differences can render particular forms of language use relevant or problematic.

Accordingly, the term **'interactional competence'** has been used increasingly in applied linguistics as several L2 researchers find it important to examine what can be seen in actual interaction (e.g. Hall 1995a; Kramsch 1986; Young 2000). For example, interactional details are important in socio-cultural theories because 'the language that we learn to use in these practices comes to us packaged with particular histories, already dialogized, spoken about, and evaluated and we encounter it already ''used''' (Hall 1995b: 218). Interaction brings into view how individual competence is connected to, and partially constructed by both those with whom she is interacting and the larger sociohistorical forces (Hall 1995b; Vygotsky 1978). It is then through the regularities of communicative practices that L2 learners gain access to conventionalized means and activities; in a way this becomes another dimension of target competence.

The analytic focus on interactional competence in applied linguistics carries on its back a certain degree of tension between two conflicting interests: on the one hand, there is a disciplinary interest to formulate

interaction as stable and recognizable constructs that can be transformed into target objectives for language teaching while, on the other hand, analysts have to preserve in some way the detail of interactional organizations that are complete with contingency and variation.

This tension can be found in the papers by He and Young (1998) and Young (2000) that attempted to define speaking abilities in a way to represent normal conversation in the target language authentically. In their account, interactional competence is co-constructed by all participants via discursive practices that are specific to practice because 'individuals do not acquire a general, practice-independent competence; rather they acquire a practice-specific interactional competence by participating with more experienced others in specific interactive practices'(He and Young 1998: 7).

The tension is thus clarified as the dialectic of goals and process. Yet the question remains: what does this 'process' look like in actual language use in L2 classroom interaction and how do we understand it analytically in relation to the activities of the members who carry it out?

Analytic resources of conversation analysis

A central resource for addressing this question may be found in the literature of conversation analysis (CA). Conversation analysts are concerned with the competences that underlie ordinary social activities and interactional routines. They focus on describing a common set of methods and procedures that ordinary speakers use when they engage in intelligible conversational interaction (Heritage 1984a). The emphasis on the procedural aspects means that CA researchers consider language interaction 'an achievement out of structured sets of alternative courses or directions which the talk and the interaction can take' (Schegloff 1986: 114). CA's analytic task is to explicate how language interaction is posed as a problem to members and how they (members of interaction) resolve it by constructing their talk methodically

Over the years, CA's detailed findings about the sequential production of talk-in-interaction have been appreciated and set to work across various settings of social studies. As Wagner and Gardner noted, one of the real strengths of CA that makes it attractive is that it is 'based on the regularity of behavior as documented in the collection of cases' (Wagner and Gardner 2004: 7), which makes CA findings robust and cumulative.5

In the Modern Language Journal debate, Kasper expressed optimism that CA's analytic program may enable us to 'reconstruct links between L2 discourse and the acquisition of different aspects of communicative competence' (Kasper 1997: 311).

Mondada and Doehler (2004) identified the contribution of interaction to learning by examining how grammar exercises in second language classrooms in Switzerland are being accomplished in and through the interaction.

Kasper (2004) showed how the definition of character of the task by a native and nonnative speaker, whether it is conversation among friends or meta-lingual focus for learning, is procedurally consequential in their deployment of repairs and topic initiation of talk. In their examination of one-on-one interactions between an adult ESL learner and his writing tutor over a period of time, Young and Miller's research (2004) identified change in the ESL learner's ability to engage in pedagogical interaction. In his book on conversation analysis, Markee (2000) explored the possibility that CA's regularities would 'enable SLA researchers interested in understanding the effects of conversational repairs on language learning to investigate whether the moment-by-moment sequential organization of such talk has any direct and observable acquisitional consequences' (Markee 2000: 42).

Communicative competence in L2 instruction

The recognition of CA's structural resources has energized various language researchers to examine acquisition issue (e.g. Hall 1998; Young and Miller 2004). It is not entirely clear, however, to what directions CA for SLA will take in coming years. As for my interest in an alternative undertaking of communicative competence, I want to stay a little longer with what CA's sequential analysis can offer.

The sequential analysis of talk-in-interaction can show us how the parties undertake their own discourse and assemble courses of action that we commonly speak of as teaching and learning. While the promise of explanatory adequacy implicates going beyond what the interactional details reveal, the sequential analysis treats the descriptive analysis as a production account. That is to say, interactional details are examined because they show the competent and orderly production of the discourse as the members produce and experience it. Interactional details exhibit structural regularities but they also pull into view how members accomplish social action and activities by managing and acting on those organizational regularities.

The characterization that interaction is itself a competent production contrasts sharply with the prior research that treats communicative competence as a criterion reference to determine the qualities of classroom interaction. The proposed criteria are used to reconstruct language use in the classroom and therefore, interactional details recede into the background in deference to the theories of target competence. Communicative competence then becomes an analytic resource for L2 research, rather than an analytic topic that shows how language use organizes the interactional realities of L2 instruction or how the parties to L2 instruction make their way through their interaction (see Lynch 1993: 147–52; Zimmerman and Pollner 1970 for the distinction of topic and resource in the study of practical actions).

One of the primary tasks in this regard is to preserve and retrieve the ways in which the parties understand what goes on across the emergence of their contingent interactions. Prior literature has tended to treat understanding as a matter of the propositional contents of the speakers' intentions by invoking inferences based on 'mutually shared background information' (Searle 1975: 60–1). Analysts make out the substantive contents by referring to speakers' intentions, social and situational contexts and the relevant communicative conventions. They then determine whether and how the contents are recognized or problematized by the parties to the talk as a case of competence or incompetence.

The alternative rendering of communicative competence, in contrast, considers understanding to be a local-interactional matter (Garfinkel 1967; Macbeth 2003; Schegloff 1988). Interaction itself brings out a contingent task of common understanding: in the projectable course of interaction, the parties attend to what has been said, what it entails, what it calls for next, and figure out when and how to say it. Meaning making is a members' task, first, and their work is made available to each other and to us in the production of appropriate next turns on time (Moerman and Sacks 1971/1988). Understanding in this regard is a procedural operation (Garfinkel 1967; Schegloff 1992) rather than the matching of corresponding sets of shared content knowledge.6

This does not mean that we disregard the substantive contents of language interaction. Rather, we insist on finding those contents in the ways the members locate, characterize, and act on them in their talk-in-interaction. CA's analytic strength is in helping us access and describe the ways in which competence is made available and used in interaction. Mehan's comment is illustrative:

Interactional competence is not purely a cognitive or subjectivist consideration. It is not to be confused with underlying abilities. The conception of competence being developed here is interactional in the sense that it is a competence that is available in the interaction (Mehan 1979: 129).7

Note in the following exchange how this difference becomes visible in the analysis of its sequential production. This brief exchange was used to

The focus on structural and functional regularities of given language production might be important in identifying language errors and generating instructional remedies to address target competence. A close analysis of sequential organizations shows, however, that it is the members' interactive production of their discourse that makes the interactional sequence what it is, even when there appear to be communicative problems and incorrect language use.

L2 classroom interaction is built on similar types of competent language use and it is in this sense that we see communicative competence as the condition to L2 instruction. This competence is to be found in the members' operational methods by which they construct the orderly, evident, and practical understandings of classroom interaction. CA's resources are informative, not just because they bring out recognizable regularities, but also because they pull into view the members' reflexive undertaking of their discourse; this essentially constitutes their work-practices of classroom interactions. That is to say, our understanding of L2 classroom interaction, its pedagogy and accomplishment, and even problems, relies on the participants' undertaking, their activities, and therefore, their communicative competence that carries them.

EVIDENCE OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN L2 INSTRUCTION

The present section offers a sequential analysis of two excerpts that are lifted from a data corpus that includes three ESL undergraduate composition courses and one speaking class across 46 class sessions that were audio/video taped. These excerpts are selected because they are particularly telling cases (Mitchell 1984) in demonstrating the communicative competence embedded in the details of classroom interaction.

The students in these classes are either immigrant or international students who are learning English to pursue their academic degrees at North American universities. The speaking class is part of an ESL program that offers comprehensive and intensive language courses in the area of speaking, writing, reading, listening, grammar, and pronunciation. The students in these classes are largely from Arabic or East-Asian countries. The composition program has three levels; two composition classes in the data corpus are from an intermediate level and the third one is from an advanced level. The students are generally active in both teacher-led discussions and in other small group activities. The teachers in these data sets are female native speakers of English who have taught nonnative students for several years in each program.

The communicative competence of repair

In the first excerpt, the teacher and her students are brainstorming ideas about various types of inventions. This is a preliminary to a group activity in which the students are to devise inventions that would be useful in their everyday lives. The exercise is supposed to be fun and imaginative and the students understand it as such. Note that this excerpt is full of incomplete utterances, uncertain hearings, and subsequent repairs that may be indicative of nonnative discourse. The study of errors in L2 discourse is an important area of L2 research that id entities' types of errors and proposes ways to correct them (Corder 1981; James 1998).

The teacher begins this exchange by characterizing the type of inventions she is looking for, 'something that would be useful in your everyday life?' (913–914). After some considerable silence by the cohort (915), one student (E) ventured an answer 'A machine to wake me' (916).

The teacher's next turn to E's answer is a repair initiation (917) pointing to her problem in hearing E's response: 'A machine to what?' (On reparative organizations, see Schegloff 1989; Schegloff et al. 1977). This is followed by E's follow-up in line 918, 'OK (h) awake me.' As a repair, this turn displays her (E)

analysis of what may be problematic for the teacher's hearing; her analysis is both competent and correct as she transforms 'wake me' to 'awake me.'

The laughter token embedded here also displays her self-assessment of what her previous answer should have been in offering the alternative.11 The next turn by the teacher then shows her recognition of the interpretive work by E.

Many L2 researchers have considered these kinds of sequences—repairs producing reformulations—the key to successful language development (Gass and Selinker 2001; Pica 1987). Teachers offer feedback that informs L2 speakers of problems in their language production (Day et al. 1984, Schachter 1982) and how to correct them in the form of a recast (Long and Robinson 1998; Lyster 1998; Nicholas et al. 2001). However, the above repair sequence also displays both participants' orientations to the intelligibility of the student's reply to the teacher's first question. Whatever instructional objective was intended in this question, its success relies on the communicative competence of all parties, particularly the students' analytic competence to recognize problems, locate, and analyze their object, and repair them in the course of interaction. Their competence is then to be found not just in the presence of structural features such as 'recast' or 'correction' but in how these repairs carry the course of interaction in producing the relevant next turns. The repair brings into view the members' orientation to the tasks of common understanding and my data corpus is full of such sequences, contrary to Pica's observation that this type of interactional modification is not common in classroom settings (Pica 1987).

It is commonplace to find problems of understanding in natural conversation; ambiguity and/or misunderstanding are routine occurrences in talk-in-interaction. But as analysts of L2 instruction, we tend to look beyond them to get at the source of the problems in things like mispronunciation, a lack of grammatical competence or even an inadequate understanding of social norms and rules of speaking. That would, however, miss the competence of the participants who constantly monitor the intelligibilities of their own discourses and act on them accordingly. Rather than proceeding with the errors, J instead produced a next turn that is appropriate for the construction of the lesson sequence. His competent language use then becomes a condition for instruction to proceed.

The teacher finally recognizes H's invention in 'escalator' in her next turn ('Oh excellent': 948). With this recognition, H goes ahead to say what the consequence of his invention would be (949): that one only sits and does not have to drive.16 In her overlapped next turn (950–951), the teacher not only claims her understanding, but also offers evidence of it by describing what one could do with the machine that H has been trying to describe: 'Yes, you can just sit back and watch movies or read a book.' H recognizes and affirms the teacher's formulation in line 952–953.

In this excerpt, H's inability to articulate what his invention is drives the sequence and may be the most prominent feature of the sequence. This exchange shows, however, that H accomplishes the task of describing his invention without being able to directly name it through collaborative interaction; his next turn relies entirely on the recognition of the teacher and his classmates. That is to say, this exchange shows how the teacher and students rely upon their competent language use to accomplish the task of understanding of those matters being talked about; H builds the preface to his telling by managing his turns and recognizing how his last remarks are interpreted by the teacher and his classmates, offering repairs and The most visible relevance of communicative competence to those who are engaged in natural interaction is that they constantly refer to, invoke and rely on each other's competence to accomplish their interactional tasks of under-standing. Any next utterance may yield misunderstanding, ambiguity or confusion. Those problems, however, are found and addressed within the sequences of actions as each next utterance displays its speaker's analysis of what has gone before, whether it is recognizing problems, acknowledging responses, trying alternative hearings or even finding humor. There is no question that the above excerpts reveal areas of English proficiency that these students need to develop. Nonetheless, sequential analysis

gives us a view of the members' competent undertaking of their discourse and this competence is something that sustains and organizes the practical life of the L2 classroom.

Communicative competence in questioning sequences

The second excerpt shows a questioning sequence in another ESL classroom. Questioning is one of the most familiar forms of teacher talk in language classrooms that offers important language input for second language development (Long 1996; Nunn 1999). Notice, however, that questioning is also a central resource for classroom teachers in carrying out various pedagogical and social actions, such as introducing topics, demonstrating concepts, eliciting forms of reasoning, correcting grammar, and even maintaining order. While many studies have classified questions according to various functional characteristics (Carlsen 1991; Cullen 1998; Long and Sato 1983), the intelligibility of a question often becomes a matter of negotiation and interpretive adjustment by the parties involved in the interaction. This following excerpt shows how one of the teacher's questions becomes an object of close analysis by her students, as they try to establish a sense of what the question is asking.

The teacher is going over the directions for an oral presentation—the final assignment for the course—that her students are required to do in a couple of weeks. The direction under consideration reads 'analyze your audience.'

Repairs routinely identify the source of the trouble—the thing to be repaired— in the alternative they offer. In the above sequence, the repair is produced as the teacher begins to repeat the previous question, but cuts it off twice (610). The repaired question 'what does the word analyze mean?' becomes a vocabulary question about the meaning of the word 'analyze.' We can say then that the silence led the teacher to question her assumption as to what students know and to rework her question: What was problematic for the students is the semantic meaning of the word 'analyze,' not the pragmatic sense of the question as her previous question has projected. The student's

Silence becomes a resource for the teacher in which the identity of L2 students as second language learners becomes situationally invoked in her repair.

This repaired question, however, again receives no answer in the next turn position (612), and the teacher pursues the question by making it into a yes/no question (613). The answer by K (619) is interesting for a couple of reasons. First, he speaks for the cohort by using 'we' rather than 'I.' Second, he addresses the pragmatic sense of the question not the semantics of the vocabulary item.18 In K's reply, then, we can see how he understands the question's implications; he recognizes the teacher's question as a prefacing yes/ no question and replies to it, rather than answering the question it prefaces.19 Just as each next question by the teacher shows how she understands the students' response and its projectable horizons, K's response, too, shows his understanding of the teacher's last turn, the sense it carried. In this way, K's reply displays a keenly competent analysis of the teacher's question, as he speaks up on behalf of the competence of the cohort. Every next turn at talk then becomes a mark of competent analysis of the previous turn and it is this competence that sustains and makes the interaction move forward. The participants' next course of action then is the competence's evidence.

To point out how the teacher reformulates her question this way is not meant to criticize her on grounds that her initial question was ambiguous or incomplete. Rather, it exemplifies the indexical nature of questions whose sense is contingent on and made available by the parties' interpretive work. The sense of the questions, therefore, is managed and made sensible through the on-going exercise of communicative competence in which what students know and understand is made public and addressed in the course of questioning and answering.

From a close analysis of the unfolding interactional sequences, one can try to bring out categorical features of interactions to abstract teachable and learnable constructs. Yet even that undertaking relies on the parties' competence because their logic and knowledge are built into the sequential organization of the discourse, which is made available and managed in the course of interaction. Interaction when seen in its produced detail displays these sequential contingencies and CA's structural resources point to how members accomplish their practical tasks of understanding across them.

The immediate purpose of the transcript and its analyses is to demonstrate how a descriptive analytic program can show the essential sociability of language behavior for which Hymes' proposal of communicative competence is instrumental. Instead of proposing to amend or refine it as a theoretical construct, this treatment of communicative competence seeks ways to describe the competent achievements of common understanding in the interactional details of L2 instruction. This competence is displayed not in post hoc accounts or in the observers' categorical constructs, but in the ways in which the members act on their discourse within the sequential order of their interaction. Through this competent work, instruction falls into place, curricula are brought into view, speakers are nominated and activities develop. This is where we can recover the evidence of their communicative competence as the very thing that organizes the possibilities of L2 instruction.

CONCLUSION

The primary goal of the present paper is to propose a specification of communication competence through a descriptive analysis of L2 classroom interaction. Rather than treating communicative competence as just an outcome of L2 instruction, we see it as an enabling condition. The task of specification begins by asking what occurrences of language behavior could count as a competent case of language use. This question points to a distinctively different analytic direction for understanding what communicative competence is and how to locate it both analytically and naturalistically. There is no question that previous theories of communicative competence have offered L2 literature conceptually useful and analytically powerful resources for understanding L2 instruction and L2 language phenomena. The familiar analytic task has been to locate the systematic theoretical bases for characterizing competence and then fitting the instruction to the characterization in order to facilitate learning.

The alternative analysis of L2 instruction, however, demonstrates that learning begins in the practical fields of understanding and that understanding is the practical undertaking of the parties engaged and embedded in their analysis of their discourse, which is visible in the detail of its production. Communicative competence becomes available in action, rather than something contained in an utterance whose presence or absence is indicative of theoretical objects or constructs such as discourse competence or grammatical competence. The alternative view, therefore, does not separate the practical actions the members accomplish from the communicative means for accomplishing it. The sequential organization of classroom interaction shows this procedural course of action in which L2 instruction is organized in and as the members' competent language use in the room.

This paper takes an elaborate trajectory to untangle the complex and variant history of communicative competence and proposes an alternative way to specify it. While there have been various attempts to re-think and re-characterize communicative competence, the present paper finds the usefulness of communicative competence not in its adequacy as a conceptual tool but in its relevance to the action and activities as the members experience them. We want to keep the analytic interest in language use for the ways in which the parties demonstrably do, and find an understanding of their communicative competence in the actual affairs they competently assemble in concert. This suggests a new possibility of how we might begin a production account of classroom interaction, exploring its contingencies, achievements, and collaborations, which might lead us to reconsider the practical life of teaching and learning.