From a conversation analytic perspective, learning is seen as emerging from participation in interaction. Thus, it is not seen as a cognitive, individual phenomenon, but can be defined as a change in a socially-displayed cognitive state achieved on a turn-by-turn basis (Seedhouse and Walsh 2010), and can be seen as a sociocognitive process embedded in the context of locally accomplished social practices and their sequential deployment (Pekarek Doehler 2010). The microscopic perspective and sequential, context-driven understanding of participant orientations have enabled ‘Conversation Analysis for Second Language Acquisition’ (CA-for-SLA, Markee and Kasper 2004) researchers to bring evidence for language learning-related phenomena in L2 talk-in-interaction. Furthermore, a number of researchers have investigated the development of learners’ L2 Interactional Competence (e.g. Cekaite 2007; Markee 2008) with a longitudinal perspective. L2 Interactional Competence (IC) has recently been investigated in, for example, classroom contexts (Hellermann 2008; Pekarek Doehler and Pochon-Berger 2011), language proficiency interviews (Van Compernolle 2011; Lee, Park and Sohn 2011), and study abroad contexts (Ishida 2011). The development of interactional practices has been tracked by focusing on a variety of phenomena including engagements in storytellings (Ishida 2011), expanded responses (Lee, Park and Sohn 2011), and other-initiated repairs (Hellermann 2011).

In this presentation, the focus will be on the concept of “active listenership” (AL) and how speakers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) demonstrate AL in group discussion tasks. Based on a database of interactions in 174 multi-party L2 discussion tasks recorded at different times throughout two semesters, I will show how L2 users display development of L2 Interactional Competence through demonstration of more active listenership. Instead of displays of listenership and recipiency as studied in different contexts before in the form of, for instance, response tokens (Gardner 2001) and reactive tokens (Xu 2014), I will focus on demonstration of active listenership, through for instance collaborative turn completion (Kim 2002), or through what Lerner (2004) calls collaborative turn sequences. The turn completions investigated in this database are strong versions of listenership, as they bring concrete evidence to how understanding is achieved on a sequential basis; i.e. the listener of the previous turn in each turn completion demonstrates to the co-participant her understanding of the previous turn. The analysis of this data, which has been collected as part of an “Oral Communication Skills” course in a higher education setting in Ankara, revealed that such completions are achieved by participants’ employment of resources like subordinate clause completion, offers of candidate lexical items, and turn initial conjunctions. A significant, longitudinal finding is that the employment of such resources increases over time, as participants become more experienced interlocutors in EFL, potentially as a result of the reflective and process based syllabus of this particular course. The findings have important
implications for teaching conversational skills and the development and testing of L2 interactional competence.

References:


