

Functions and implications of *okay* in classroom interaction

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Classroom interaction and CA-SLA

- CA-(for)-SLA (Markee & Kasper 2004; Kasper & Wagner 2011):
 - “uses conversation analytic techniques to **study language learning**” (Markee & Kunitz 2015: 425)
 - “CA has the capacity to examine in detail how opportunities for L2 learning arise **in interactional activities**” (Kasper 2006: 83)
 - CA “can recover the participants’ contingent **sense-making practices** through which the task of **learning is discovered, acted on, and realized**” (Lee 2010: 403)
 - CA “detail[s] the instructional practices that either **create or inhibit the opportunities for participation** (Lerner, 1995), and by extension, the opportunities for learning” (Waring 2008: 577)

***Okay* in classroom: different functions**

Chapton (2009): EFL in Spain

- *okay*: 21 by teacher, 2 by students
- textual functions (opening frame marker and closing frame marker, turn-taker, topic switcher)
- interpersonal functions (cooperation)

Karlina (2015): ESL in Indonesia

- *okay/oke* by teachers: to mark the opening or closing of a sequence, to signal topic switch, to relinquish the speaking turn

Reichert & Liebscher (to appear): GFL role play preparation

- *okay* by students to transition into and out of the role-play practice and character roles, for “private speech”, as a face-saving device to manage relationships, to create learning opportunities

***Okay* in classroom: feedback position/slot**

IRF/IRE (Initiation-Response-Feedback/Evaluation):

01 T: where is the cup?

02 L: in the box.

-> 03 T: right, very good, the cup is in the box
(From: Seedhouse 2004: 144, simplified)

Waring (2008): teacher *okay*, ESL in US

- *okay* as alternative in place of explicit positive assessment (EPA, e.g. good, very good, excellent)
- *okay* indexing that more is to come rather than closure (allowing for more learning opportunities)

Fagan (2012): teacher *okay*, ESL in US

- positive feedback: e.g. acceptable response (sequence-closing)
- negative feedback: e.g. doubt

Data: German classroom in Japan

- Intensive German in Faculty of Law, Keio University Tokyo
 - 4-year German program for beginners to advanced
 - 14 weeks per semester; 4x 90 min sessions
 - content-based instruction (legal and sociopolitical issues)
- Kind of classroom: dialogic learning
 - task-based
 - collaborative
 - driven through content
 - connecting cognitive activities: interaction and problem solving, analysis, synthesis, evaluation

(Alexander 2008; Haneda & Wells 2010; Llinares et al. 2012, Lyster 2007; Mehisto et al. 2008; Mercer & Howe 2012)

Bigger research project

- Learning processes:
 - learner and teacher perspective
 - Individual process
 - Social process
- Overall questions:
 - What kinds of individual learning processes can we observe?
 - What kinds of interactions do we find?
 - What happens in these interactions between the learners?
 - How do the students perceive their learning processes?

Data used

- 10 hours audio recording
- starting at 6 months in first year German
- two courses (13 and 14 students), plenum and group work

Initial coding: (main) functions of *okay*

	Code	teacher	students
activity			
	permission	0	2
	acceptance	2	0
	activity (agreement)	2	11
checking			
	comprehension check	27	14
responsive			
	claim understanding	16	37
confirm			
a) topic			
	ok	24	3
	ok plus	31	0
	ok offen	17	2
b) language			
	ok	3	0
	ok plus	3	0
	ok offen	0	0
transition marker			
	activity	45	1
	topic change	41	5
	summary	24	0
	announcement	23	0

Research questions

- **How (often)** is okay used by the teacher (and by students) and for which functions? (analysis tentative)
- What functions do certain kinds of **teacher *okays*** serve?
- How does one particular kind of teacher *okay* shape the interaction and offer learning opportunities?
 - Mainly: *Okay* to mark transitions and/or precede summaries/reformulations

Data excerpt 1: Kultur (okay=also)




01 L: gut etwas zur kultur
(0.2)
02 S13: mhm in- im osten (0.5) deutschland viele
03 orches- orchestern orchestern (0.1) haben
04 L: **okay=also** im osten von deutschland
05 gibt es viele orchESTer.
06 S13: =und たっ言に先 mehr clubs
as we said earlier
07 gibt es westen (0.2) deutschland,

Data excerpt 2: Radfahren (okay; also)



01 L: warum- warum passt radfahren zu hamburg?
02 S4: sehr sch- groß stadt
03 L: **okay**, eins, ne, (0.1) sehr große stadt.=noch ein punkt?
04 S6: ah [es gibt (0.2) es gibt nicht (0.1) kein
05 Sy: [AH (sch- (es gibt)
06 S6: kei- berge? (moin?) (0.1) °ber- ber uhm°
07 S4: vi[ele (berge)
08 S6: [viele [berge?
09 L: [es- ja es gibt NIcht viele [berge.
10 Ss: [ah: ni-
11 NIcht [viele berg=ah .hh ha ah ja
12 L: [als- [(0.1) es gibt KEIne berge
13 (3.0) ((Sx/L 2-turn side sequence))
14 L: °**okay**° (0.2) **also** sie sehen diese diese PUNkte (0.2)
15 gehören zusammen, (0.1) **also** viel sport machen und
16 freunde treffen, (0.2) PASst gut zuSAMmen,

Data excerpt 3: Autos 0:45 (quiet okay+also; okay?)

01 S7: so das ist ein: (1.0) faktor von (1.0) wirtschaft, 
02 (2.0) vielleicht;
03 L: ja
04 s?: hm
05 s? °je°
06 ? °hh
07 L: °hm **kay**° (0.3) <<all>**also** die wirtschaftliche
08 situation>, (2.0) im süden, (1.0) ist besser
09 als die wirtschaftliche situation (1.0)
10 im osten [(0.5) oder im Nor[den
11 Ss: [hm [hm
12 L: **okay?**
13 Ss: °gut (s is)°
14 L: gut, =andere themen? wir haben noch sehr viel mehr
15 themen.

Data excerpt 4: Kaffee (okay=gut; also)



01 L: hm also m- ein MITtelamerikan[isches [und ein (.)
02 Sx: [ja [ja::-ha,
03 L: SÜDameri[kani[sches [produkt oder es [gibt dr-
04 Sx: [ah [ha, [hahehe
05 Sy: [da:
06 L: es gibt drei regionen oder? (2.0)
07 S5: hm
08 L: °für [kaffee°
09 S5: [ethiopia
10 L: hm (0.1) afrika
11 S3 アジア南東 mexiko
South East Asia
12 Sx: hm (0.1) °hm°
(0.3)
13 L: **okay=gut**. <<all>wir haben nicht so viel zeit>
14 **also** (0.2) ich denke es sind nicht tassen. ne?=
15 es sind kilogramm.

Data excerpt 5: Gini (okay=also)



01 S7: die unterschiede über (0.1) über geld (0.1)
02 haben [ist sehr weniger
03 S2 [.hh ich- () ich habe das gesagt
04 S7: =ja
05 Ss: .hhehe[hehe
06 Sx: [ju::he, (probl)
07 Sy: °leich- °
08 Ss: hahahahahehehe
09 L: **okay=AL:so** [tab-(0.2)] tabelle zwei ist GIni
10 Ss: [Hahahehe]
11 S1: [gini
12 Sx: [ja
13 L: na, tabelle zwei ist gini,

Summary and implications

- ‘okay’ serves different functions in classroom
- intonation of ‘okay’ important to index particular functions
- ‘okay’ in third position is doing other things than serve as quasi-evaluation
 - implication: teacher can use *okay* to index *non-priority* of knowledge to “discover” knowledge together with students
- ‘okay’ and ‘also’ turns are important from a learning perspective (in the “architecture of the classroom”)
- discuss ‘okay’ use with learners (cf. Walsh’s 2013 “Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC)”)

Danke

**どうもありがとうございます。
Doumo arigatougozaimasu**

Thank you

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