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CHAPTER FOUR

The Organisation of Repair in Language Classrooms

In this chapter I consider the role of repair in language teaching. It is a central issue in that it tends to bear a greater load in the L2 classroom than in other institutional settings and also because of its importance in the concept of negotiation of meaning in work on the interaction hypothesis\(^1\). As Markee observes, “Conversational repair is viewed by SLA researchers as the sociopsychological engine that enables learners to get comprehended input” (Markee, 2000, p. 31). It therefore follows that a clear understanding of how repair is organised in the L2 classroom is vital to this strand of SLA research. Van Lier (1988a) points out that repair is a generic term, with correction or error replacement being one kind of repair and identifies three different goal-orientations for repair in L2 classrooms and four basic kinds of repair. Van Lier concludes his chapter on repair by suggesting that “We must bear in mind that certain types of activity naturally lead to certain types of repair, and that therefore the issue of how to repair is closely related to the context of what is being done.” (Van Lier, 1988a, p. 211). Kasper (1986) contrasts the organisation of repair in language centred and content centred phases of L2 lessons and concludes that:

Talking about repair in FL teaching as such is inconclusive: rather, preferences and dispreferences for specific repair patterns depend on the configuration of relevant factors in the classroom context ... The teaching goal of the two phases turned out to be the decisive factor for the selection of repair patterns. (Kasper, 1986, p. 39)

A “variable” approach to repair in the L2 classroom, in which the organisation of repair varies with the pedagogical focus, has been suggested by Van Lier (1988a), Kasper (1986) and Jung (1999). The present chapter can be seen as an attempt to extend Van Lier’s and Kasper’s variable approach by describing how repair is organised within the different L2 classroom contexts (Seedhouse, 1999a). As with turn-taking and sequence, it is argued that there is no single, monolithic organisation of repair in the L2 classroom. There is a reflexive relationship between the pedagogical focus and the organisation of repair; as the pedagogical focus varies, so does the organisation of repair. Furthermore, what constitutes trouble varies with the pedagogical focus, which means that what is repairable is different in each context.

In this chapter I sketch several L2 classroom contexts and show that each has its own particular organisation of repair which is appropriate to the pedagogical focus (Seedhouse, 1999a). The analyses suggest that it is possible to outline the organisation of repair within a particular L2 classroom context in terms of (a) typical participants in the repair, (b) typical repair trajectories, (c) typical types of repair, and (d) typical focus of repair, that is, what is repairable. This is not a comprehensive investigation of all the L2 classroom contexts which can occur, nor is it a comprehensive examination of repair organisation; it is an illustrative sketch of the organisation of repair within some L2 classroom contexts intended as evidence to support the main argument of this chapter. This is that each L2 classroom context has its own peculiar organisation of repair and this is reflexively related to the pedagogical focus of the context. The L2 classroom contexts which I discuss are form and accuracy contexts, meaning and fluency contexts and task-oriented contexts. In section 1.6 I also show how the interactional organisation
can transform the pedagogical focus by examining a case of preference organisation in relation to repair in form and accuracy contexts.

It is worth considering at the start of the chapter what is meant by the terms repair, trouble and a repairable item. In Chapter 1 I defined repair as the treatment of trouble occurring in interactive language use. Trouble is anything which the participants judge is impeding their communication and a repairable item is one which constitutes trouble for the participants. Any element of talk may in principle be the focus of repair, even an element which is well-formed, propositionally correct and appropriate. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1997, p. 363) point out that “nothing is, in principle, excludable from the class ‘repairable’”. Repair, trouble and repairable items are participants’ constructs, for use how and when participants find appropriate. Their use may be related to institutional constraints, however. In courtroom cross-examination of a witness by an opposing lawyer, for example, a failure by the witness to answer questions with yes or no may constitute trouble within that institutional setting (Drew, 1992). Such a failure is therefore repairable (for example by the lawyer and/or judge insisting on a yes/no answer) and even sanctionable. So within a particular institutional sub-variety, the constitution of trouble and what is repairable may be related to the particular institutional focus. The same perspective applies to L2 classrooms. Within each L2 classroom context, the definition of what is trouble and what is repairable is related to the particular pedagogical focus. Because error analysis is a matter of interest to applied linguists and language teachers, one might assume that the organisation of repair in L2 classrooms would be based primarily on the occurrence of and correction of linguistic errors. However, as we will see in the analysis of extracts below, the organisation of repair is primarily related to the pedagogical focus.

1.1 Repair in Form and Accuracy Contexts

In L2 classroom contexts which focus on linguistic form and accuracy, personal or real-world meanings do not enter into the picture to any great extent. Typically, the teacher’s pedagogical focus will aim at the production of a specific string of linguistic forms by the learners, and the learners produce utterances in order that the teacher can assess whether they have absorbed that information. We noted in section Error! Reference source not found. that turn-taking and sequence are tightly controlled in this context and the same applies to the organisation of repair. The major feature of the organisation of repair in this context is the very tight connection between the linguistic forms and patterns of interaction which the learners produce in the L2 and the pedagogical focus which the teacher introduces. In other words, repair may be initiated by the teacher if the linguistic forms and patterns of interaction produced are not exactly identical to those intended by the teacher’s pedagogical focus. In the following extract the teacher’s pedagogical focus is to get the learner (via L2 prompts) to produce a specific string of linguistic forms.

Extract 4.1

1  T:  right, the cup is on top of the box. (T moves cup)
2       now, where is the cup?
3  L:  in the box.
4  T:  the cup is (.) ?
5  L:  in the box.
6  T:  the cup is in (.) ?
7  L:  the cup is in the box.
Even though the answers which L produces in lines 3 and 5 are linguistically correct and sequentially appropriate, T initiates repair in lines 4 and 6 until L produces exactly the targeted string of linguistic forms in line 7. Since the focus in form and accuracy contexts is on the learners’ production of specific strings of linguistic forms, it follows that when the learners produce utterances which are linguistically correct and appropriate, those utterances may still be subject to repair by the teacher, as in the extract below. From the evidence of the database, repair of linguistically correct and appropriate utterances seems to be peculiar to form and accuracy contexts within the L2 classroom.

Extract 4.2

T:  
L:  
T:  
L:  
T:  

(Westgate et al., 1985, p. 278)

In the above extract we see the teacher conducting repair in a form and accuracy context even when the learner utterance is not only correct and appropriate but also contains precisely the targeted string of linguistic forms: the only problem is that the learner has added information (“by train”) which is extraneous to the target string and therefore deemed superfluous by the teacher. Although we might view this as unnecessarily pedantic teacher behaviour, the point to be emphasised is that such repair is perfectly “rational” within a form and accuracy context, where repair may be initiated by the teacher if the linguistic forms and patterns of interaction produced are not exactly identical to those targeted by the teacher’s pedagogical focus, even if they are linguistically correct and appropriate. This is by no means an isolated instance in the data; see also extracts 5.2 and 5.10.

We noted in chapter 1 the four trajectories or routes by which repair is accomplished: self-initiated self-repair, self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair and other-initiated other-repair. In conversation, according to Schegloff et al., (1977), there is an order of preference with respect to repair trajectories, with self-initiated self-repair being most preferred and most common, and with other-initiated other-repair being most dispreferred and rare. Repair in form and accuracy contexts is overwhelmingly initiated by the teacher (other-initiation). In the data, there are more instances of other-initiated self-repair than of other-initiated other-repair; this corresponds with McHoul’s (1990, p. 353) findings for L1 classrooms. Often the teacher initiates repair several times before the target string of linguistic forms is attained, as in the following extract:

Extract 4.3
The teacher is targeting a particular string of linguistic forms involving the past continuous tense (they were watching television). In lines 1 and 3 the learner starts to produce a string involving a tense which is not the targeted one: the teacher therefore initiates repair in lines 2 and 4. The repair initiation technique used involves repeating the word which the learner used immediately prior to the error, which has the effect of locating the error (see also section 1.7). Other-initiated other-repair trajectories are also common, as in the following extract:

Extract 4.4

1 L: it bug me to have =
2 T: =it bugs me. it (bugzz) me
3 L: it bugs me when my brother takes my bicycle.

(Lightbown and Spada, 1993, p. 76)

In the above extract the other-initiated other-repair is performed by the teacher producing the correct linguistic form in line 2. In effect line 2 is a double repair. The first utterance in line 2 (“It bugs me”) offers the correct linguistic form, while the second utterance (“It bugzz me”) highlights the error (the missing -s ending) by stressing and lengthening the final sound. In both other-initiated self-repair and other-initiated other-repair trajectories in a form and accuracy context the teacher is initiating repair in order to obtain the learner production of a precise string of linguistic forms. As Kasper (1986, p. 27) points out, self-initiated self-repair is relatively rare in this context. This is because it is the teacher who evaluates the accuracy of the learner’s forms, and who therefore predominantly initiates the repair.

Self-initiated other-repair is also fairly common in the data and in fact Van Lier notes (1988a, p. 201) that “It may be a special feature of L2 classrooms that this trajectory occurs there quite regularly.” Van Lier provides three extracts to illustrate this trajectory, and there is an interesting phenomenon in each case; the learner starts off in the second language and then initiates other-repair by using the first language:

Extract 4.5

L1: (where is the way) is dat goed? (( tr: is that correct?))
L2: ja: where is the way to the cinema

(Van Lier, 1988a, p. 201)

We can try to provide a functional explanation as to why this trajectory should occur in form and accuracy contexts. The learner has to produce a precise string of forms which will correspond to those targeted by the teacher. The learner will initiate other-repair if he/she reaches a point at which he/she is no longer able to proceed or
alternatively to verify that the forms produced are in fact those targeted. There is also a very interesting and unusual repair trajectory. When one learner has failed to produce the string of linguistic forms which the teacher is targeting, the teacher invites the other learners to repair the learner’s error; this is other-initiated other-repair, the other repair being conducted by a third party. It could also be termed teacher-initiated peer-repair.

Extract 4.6

L1:  *Erm, sie sind im Schirmgeschäft, weil, erm (.) sie (.) möchten eine (sic) Schirm kaufen.* ((tr: er, they’re in the umbrella shop because, er, they want an umbrella to buy))


L2:  *Erm, weil sie einen Schirm kaufen möchten.* ((tr: er, because they want to buy an umbrella))

(Ellis, 1992, p. 115)

This trajectory is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, there is no evidence that this trajectory ever occurs in ordinary conversation; it is not reported in any of the CA works on repair in conversation. Secondly, this repair trajectory appears to only occur in the database in form and accuracy contexts, which means that it may be a context-specific repair trajectory. This peculiar organisation of the interaction can be explained in terms of rational design in relation to the pedagogical focus to which it is appropriate. The pedagogical focus in this context is on the production of a string of precise linguistic forms by the learners. If one learner fails to produce that string then the teacher may require another learner to produce the answer. The advantage of this technique from an interactional viewpoint is that it allows the learners some measure of interactional space (which is normally very restricted in a form and accuracy context) in that it allows learners to perform interactional actions (evaluation and repair/correction) which are normally reserved for the teacher in this context. The advantages of this technique from a pedagogical point of view are summarised by Edge.

Firstly, when a learner makes a mistake and another learner corrects it, both learners are involved in listening to and thinking about the language. Secondly, when a teacher encourages learners to correct each other’s mistakes, the teacher gets a lot of important information about the student’s ability. Thirdly, the students become used to the idea that they can learn from each other. Fourthly, if students get used to the idea of peer correction without hurting each other’s feelings, they will be able to help each other learn when they work in pairs and groups, when the teacher can’t hear what is said (Edge, 1989, p. 26).

It is only in the form and accuracy context that the teacher requires the production of a precise string of linguistic forms. This is a functional explanation, then, as to why this trajectory appears to be peculiar to this context, and the point reinforces the argument of this chapter that each L2 classroom context has its own peculiar organisation of repair which is reflexively related to the pedagogical focus of the
context. In form and accuracy contexts, any learner contribution which does not correspond exactly to the precise string of linguistic forms required by the teacher may be treated as trouble by the teacher and may be treated as repairable. So, according to the emic logic of this context, even learner utterances which are entirely correct in linguistic terms may still be subject to repair by the teacher, as in extract 4.2.

1.2 Repair in Meaning and Fluency Contexts

The pedagogical aim of this classroom context is to maximise the opportunities for interaction presented by the classroom environment and the classroom speech community itself. The focus is on the expression of personal meaning rather than on linguistic forms, on fluency rather than on accuracy. The focus of repair in this context is on establishing mutual understanding and negotiating meaning; in contrast to form and accuracy contexts, repair of correct and appropriate linguistic forms never occurs in the data. Moreover, it appears that incorrect linguistic forms and interlanguage forms are frequently ignored, unless they lead to a breakdown in communication. Sometimes the type of repair used is embedded correction, as we saw previously in extract 2.2. Exposed and overt correction of incorrect or inappropriate linguistic forms does occur, but it appears only to be used when there is trouble which prevents the interaction from continuing. In other words, repair is being conducted in a way which is more similar to ordinary conversation, and in a completely different way to the form and accuracy context. In van Lier’s (1988a) terms, we see conversational repair in this context, whereas we saw didactic repair in the form and accuracy context.

Extract 4.7

1 T: could you tell me something about marriage in Algeria?
2 L1: who is married here?
3 T: alright, your opinion about that.
4 L2: he will marry.
5 T: oh, he is engaged, engaged. tell me something about the institution of marriage in Algeria. tell me something about it.
6 L3: there are several institutions.
7 T: you don't have marriage in Algeria. what do you have then?
8 L4: only women and men.
9 T: yes, that's what marriage is.
10 L1: the marriage in Algeria isn't like the marriage in England.
11 → T: what do you mean?
12 L2: for get marriage you must pay two thousand.
13 L5: yes more expensive than here.
14 → T: why do you have to pay money?
15 L6: no. It's our religion.
16 L7: not religion but our tradition.
17 L8: no, religion, religion. in religion we must pay women, but not high price, but tradition.
18 L5: between women, women does not like to married to a low money because it is not, it is (.)
In this context the focus is clearly not on linguistic form and accuracy; although linguistic errors occur, the teacher does not attempt to repair them at all. The learners are able to express information which is new to the teacher, as evidenced by the two *ohs* which the teacher utters. So when the teacher initiates repair in this context in lines 16 and 19, it is a clarification of the message or meaning which the teacher is aiming at\(^4\). The teacher is not repairing in order to obtain a linguistically correct string of linguistic forms from the learner. The form of repair initiation is identical to clarification requests found in ordinary conversation. That is, they are wh-questions which initiate repair without implying that an error has occurred. It is not only the teacher who is conducting repair; we can also see the learners repairing each other's statements (other-initiated other-repair) in lines 21 and 22 using overt correction techniques. However, the repair is focussed on establishing the factual accuracy of statements rather than on linguistic form. In the following extract we will see one possible outcome in this context when the teacher adopts an “extreme” meaning and fluency focus.

Extract 4.8

1. T: what about in China? well, Hong Kong. China. do you have a milk van?
2. LL: er, China (.) no, no milk.
3. T: no milk?
4. LL: yeah, shop, er, city, city.
5. T: ah, at the shop, the shop.
6. LL: er, yes, yes.
7. L: Hong Kong. Hong Kong.
8. T: yeah, in Hong Kong, yes.
9. LL: in China, yes er ( ) city.
11. LL: big city (.) city, yeah.
12. T: ah huh!
14. L: yes, er city, very big, big milk car.
15. → T: big milk van. ah! and city, country, in the country, no?
16. LL: no.
17. T: no. shh, shh, shh (gestures)
18. L: that’s right.
19. T: yes (laughs)
20. L: I’m, er, I’m (.) no, is China, er city.
21. T: uh huh!
22. L: er, I’m house, near, near city er, I’m go to city shopping, er, how many?
23. T: buy milk.
26. L: buy milk, go to home, yes.

(Nunan, 1989, p. 142)
In form and accuracy contexts sometimes we saw examples of linguistically correct and appropriate learner utterances being subject to repair because they were not the forms which the teacher was targeting. In form and accuracy contexts, then, the teacher is typically attempting to upgrade the learners’ interlanguage until it corresponds perfectly with the L2. What we sometimes find in meaning and fluency contexts, by contrast, is the teacher downgrading expectations of the linguistic forms which the learner produces, making concessions to accept, understand and praise the learners’ interlanguage. In the above extract we can see the teacher accepting minimal, pidginised interlanguage forms as valid contributions. Sometimes the teacher performs embedded correction (correction done in the context of a conversational action) on errors, as in line 15. Here, the teacher substitutes "milk van" for "milk car" in the context of an action of acknowledging new information with "ah". Mostly, however, the teacher accepts minimalised, reduced contributions reminiscent of a pidgin without comment or any attempt at repair. What happens in lines 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 23 and 25 is interesting; the (native speaker) teacher is actually downgrading his/her own language to a minimalised, reduced interlanguage devoid of verbs in accommodation to the learners’ interlanguage. This is by no means an isolated example - see Nunan (1989, pp. 142-149) for around 30 other examples within the same lesson.

Although Nunan suggests that the lesson in which extract 4.8 occurs is beginning to be "truly communicative", many teachers would have serious reservations about the instructional value of the interaction in the extract. The teacher is producing some minimalised interlanguage him/herself which is functioning as both input and model, and is accepting any interlanguage forms which the learner produces, which could of course result in fossilised errors. It is probably most satisfactory to see extracts 4.8 and 4.2 as being at the two opposite extremes of the continuum from exclusive focus on form to exclusive focus on meaning, moving from upgrading to downgrading of expectations concerning the production of linguistic forms by the learners. Most extracts in the database, whether in form and accuracy or meaning and fluency context, are located somewhere in between the two extremes.

So we have seen that the focus of repair in this context is on establishing mutual understanding and negotiating meaning. In general, overt correction is only undertaken when there is an error which impedes communication. The teacher may adopt a policy of not repairing learner utterances even when they are of a minimalised, reduced nature and full of linguistic errors. According to the emic logic of this L2 classroom context, trouble is anything which impedes communication of meaning or content and any such trouble is repairable. Errors of linguistic form do not necessarily constitute trouble and are not necessarily repairable.

1.3 Repair in Task-Oriented Contexts

In this context, the teacher introduces a pedagogical focus by allocating tasks to the learners and then generally withdraws, allowing the learners to manage the interaction themselves. It appears to be typical in this context, therefore, that the teacher does not play any part in the interaction, although learners do sometimes ask the teacher for help when having difficulty with the task. By contrast with the two previous contexts, there is no focus on personal meanings or on linguistic forms. The learners must communicate with each other in order to accomplish a task, and the focus is on the accomplishment of the task rather than on the language used. Therefore, trouble is defined in this context as anything which hinders the learners’ completion of the task and repair is focussed on removing any such hindrances.
In the following extract, the task is for the learners to sort 20 vocabulary items (written on cards) into groups in any way which makes sense to them. In lines 8 to 12, the learners are trying to decide whether the “Darwin” card fits into the “Science” semantic field.

Extract 4.9

1 L1: statistic and diagram (.) they go together. you know diagram?
2 L2: yeah.
3 L1: diagram and statistic are family (.) but maybe, I think, statistic and diagram (.) you think we can put in science? or maybe (.)
4 L2: science, astronomy, (yeah) and er can be agriculture.
5 L1: agriculture’s not a science.
6 L2: yes, it’s similar (.)
7 L1: no (.) er may be Darwin and science (.)
8 L2: what’s the Darwin?
9 L1: Darwin is a man.
10 L2: no, it’s one of place in Australia.
11 L1: yes, but it’s a man who discover something, yes, I’m sure.
12 L2: OK.

(Nunan, 1993, p. 60)

The repair in this extract is directed towards the accomplishment of the task. The learners needed to understand the semantic connection between the words and to reach agreement on the connections. The repair therefore aims to establish understanding (as in the case of the question in line 9) and to reach consensus on how to group the words through bald expressions of agreement and disagreement; other-initiated other-repair is used by both students in lines 6, 7, 8 and 11. In line 8, L1 suggests grouping "Darwin" and "science". L2 identifies this as possible trouble in relation to the accomplishment of the task (they may not be groupable words) and uses an open type of repair initiator in line 9 in order to elicit L1’s understanding of the meaning of "Darwin". In line 10, L1 displays an understanding of "Darwin" as being a man. In line 11, L2 conducts other-initiated other-repair and displays an alternative understanding of "Darwin" as being a place. In line 12, L1 insists on "Darwin" being a man and this time adds a membership categorisation device (a discoverer). In line 13, L2 confirms that agreement has been achieved on grouping the words. In the details of the talk, then, we can see how the interactants start out with different understandings of the same term. Through mutual displays of understanding and through use of the mechanism of repair, they manage to negotiate intersubjectivity and reach a shared understanding of the term. The mechanism of repair, then, has been employed to further the accomplishment of the task. Although there are errors of linguistic form, the learners do not attempt to repair them. In task-oriented contexts there is never any attempt in the data in learner-learner interaction to correct another learners’ linguistic forms; this only ever occurs in the data in form and accuracy contexts.

Throughout the data in task-oriented contexts, the repair is primarily conducted by the learners. Occasionally the learners call on the teacher as a resource to assist in repairing trouble, in which case a self-initiated other-repair trajectory is common, using the teacher as the “other”. In the following extract the learners are engaged in a computer simulation in which they have to make sense of screen data and reach
decisions about what to do next. The task is to enable a village to survive by deploying villagers to the dyke to prevent floods and to the fields to grow rice.

Extract 4.10

1 LL: Paul what’s this?
2 T: it’s a flood you had a flood
3 L1: what’s a flood?
4 T: inundation ((tr: flood))
5 L1: uh uh
6 T: OK?
7 L2: and why?
8 T: ah well (. ) how many people did you have?
9 L1: in the field?
10 L2: in the dyke?
11 T: in the dyke
12 LL: 100
13 T: 100 not enough
14 LL: ah ha

(Seedhouse, 1994, p. 309)

Here we can see self-initiated other-repair in lines 1, 3 and 7, using the teacher to repair trouble which is hindering the accomplishment of the task. In line 3, L1 initiates repair since the meaning of the English word flood is not clear to him. At this point, then, the trouble for the learners is a linguistic item. In line 4 T repairs the trouble by means of a translation of the word into Spanish and the teacher’s contribution enables the learners to progress with the task. However, we can see in line 7 that it is not only linguistic problems which impede the learners’ accomplishment of the task. L2 asks why they had a flood, and at this point the learners constitute trouble differently. In order to complete the task successfully next time, they need to know which of their decisions caused the flood so that they can use a different strategy. After T has provided the necessary repair in lines 8-13 (that is, that too few villagers were on the dyke) the learners demonstrate with a marker of change of information state in line 14 that the trouble has been resolved for them. So clearly repair in a task may be focussed on a variety of linguistic, procedural or cognitive issues; whatever the learners find to be hindering their accomplishment of the task is defined as trouble and is repairable.

In the above example the teacher’s repair was initiated by the learners, whereas in the following transcript the teacher initiates the repair. The learners are listening to a cassette and trying to identify a location on their map which might correspond to the silk mill mentioned on the tape. There are three possibilities on their map; one item marked “tower” and two marked “factory”.

Extract 4.11

Cassette: the last stop on the tour is the silk mill.
LL: silk mill?
L1: it is the tower or...?
L2: it’s better to - uh - we need more information.
L1: the silk mill in the tower or not?
T: do you know the meaning of mill?
L3: milk?
L4: mill.
L5: mill? it’s the postman.
L2: mail.
T: yes, that’s one kind.
L4: air or wind mill.
T: but this mill is for making silk - do you know silk? - cloth.
L2: it’s cloth.
T: a kind of cloth.
L5: yeah - elegant.
L3: can you write?
T: silk mill (writes on board).
L5: ah, I think he go to the factory.
L2: to factory, but which factory?
L1: you have two factory.
L6: yes, near factory is there.
L2: if we go on maybe we will know.

(Lynch, 1989, p. 123)

Lynch, in his accompanying analysis, points out that the learners are focused on completing the task, and regard it as a listening (and logical) problem; they can solve the problem by listening to the cassette. The teacher, however, regards it as a language problem (vocabulary). Lynch points out that the teacher’s intervention is a digression from the task and is inappropriate. From the perspective of this monograph we could say that her repair strategy would have been more appropriate to interaction in a form and accuracy context than to a task-oriented context. The learners appear to feel that they are able to solve the task on their own (as evidenced by the final line) and are not interested at this point in using the teacher as a resource. It appears that self-initiation of teacher repair is more common and often more appropriate to the pedagogical focus than is teacher-initiation of repair in this context. We noted in section Error! Reference source not found. that the organisation of turn-taking and sequence in this context is related neither to form nor meaning but to the accomplishment of the task, and the same can be said of the organisation of repair. We saw in section Error! Reference source not found. that SLA research on modified interaction has suggested that task-oriented interaction may feature numerous clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks. The three extracts in this section also feature these social actions. However, they are merely the social actions or functions performed by the repair and constitute only one small part of the overall organisation of repair in task-oriented contexts as described in this section. From the perspective of this monograph, then, SLA research on modified interaction has deprived itself of the analytical power of the CA approach to repair by using only one small and isolated component of this complex organisation. This sub-variety of interaction needs to be evaluated as a whole, and from a holistic perspective, rather than selecting superficially isolable features of the interaction for quantification.

1.4 Discussion

We have seen that it is possible to outline the organisation of repair within an L2 classroom context in terms of (a) typical participants in the repair, (b) typical repair trajectories, (c) typical types of repair and (d) typical focus of repair. In form and accuracy contexts, repair appears from the data to be overwhelmingly of the exposed or
overt type, whereas a variety of repair trajectories can be observed. A trajectory which appears to be peculiar to this context is teacher-initiated peer-repair. Repair is generally initiated by the teacher, and the focus of the repair is on the production of specific sequences of linguistic forms. In meaning and fluency contexts we can observe a mixture of repair types and a mixture of repair trajectories. The focus of the repair, however, is on enabling learners to communicate personal meanings and to repair breakdowns in communication. The repair in task-oriented contexts is focused on the accomplishment of the task. Since learners generally work on the tasks in pairs or groups, it is generally the learners who conduct repair. However, self-initiated other-repair involving the teacher seems to be more common in the data in this context than in others.

The analyses of extracts in this chapter suggest, then, that repair is organised differently within the different contexts which occur in L2 classrooms. Each context has its own particular pedagogical focus and its own typical organisation of repair which is reflexively related to that pedagogical focus. Each context has its own emic logic and hence its own definition of what constitutes trouble and hence of what is repairable. The organisation of repair in the L2 classroom can best be understood in relation to the evolving and reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction. An error analysis or contrastive analysis approach, by contrast, cannot explicate why it is that L2 teachers sometimes correct learner utterances which are linguistically correct and at other times praise learner utterances which are riddled with linguistic errors.

1.5 Practical Applications of a Contextual Approach to Repair

Ellis (1994, p. 585) points out that “Probably the main finding of studies of error treatment is that it is an enormously complex process.” Chaudron (1988, pp. 146-148) lists 31 different types of corrective reaction which a teacher can make. Allwright (1988, p.202) writes of the “Fundamental and surprisingly complex problem of defining what is meant by an error in the language classroom context”. The whole area of error analysis and treatment can seem dauntingly difficult, vast and unapproachable if L2 classroom interaction is viewed as a monolithic, undifferentiated whole. I would now like to suggest that a context-based approach to repair might be able to provide an appropriate means of simplifying and focussing issues and creating points of reference for further research. There is now a considerable literature on error analysis in L2 classrooms. However, if we treat the L2 classroom as a single, monolithic ‘context’ it may indeed prove impossible to define what is meant by an error or create a coherent perspective on error treatment. For example, we saw that in form and accuracy contexts we find teachers repairing linguistically correct and appropriate learner utterances.

This monograph would argue that the only way to create a coherent perspective on errors and their treatment is to abandon the idea of error as something etically specifiable by an outside analyst and develop an emic perspective by focusing on what constitutes trouble and hence what is repairable in each L2 classroom context. For example, in form and accuracy contexts the focus of the repair is on the production of specific sequences of linguistic forms. Anything which the learners produce which does not conform exactly to the target string of forms which the teacher requires is repairable, even if it is linguistically correct. By contrast, in meaning and fluency contexts major linguistic errors may be ignored unless they impede communication. From an emic perspective, both of these policies make sense in terms of the rational design of each L2 classroom context. Such an approach would also have the advantage of integrating the study of error analysis and treatment into the organisation of L2
classroom interaction, whereas they have often been analysed in isolation from the interactional environments in which they occur.

A context-based approach to repair may have some practical applications. For example, it would be useful to know which specific repair techniques are helpful and unhelpful in the different contexts in the L2 classroom. One way of initiating repair is for the teacher to use an open kind of next-turn repair initiator (Drew, 1997) such as *pardon?*, *eh?*, *what?*. Discussing the merits of using such a repair initiation technique in the L2 classroom without reference to contexts would be fraught with problems, as it is unclear what basis one could have for evaluation. A context-based approach, however, can provide a basis for evaluation. In the following two extracts we can see examples of this technique being used in two different contexts:

Extract 4.12

18 L: and if er the rules e:r were e:r easier
19 in the sense you can (0.2) hire or .hhh suck off people
20 (1.0) e:rm=
21 T: =what did you say?
22 L: if the rules for hiring people (.) or .hhh e:r lay off or sack
(6 lines omitted)
23 29 T: no I heard (. ) suck *que es chupar*= ((tr: which is suck))
30 L: no=
31 T: =ha ha and suck off eh suck off is a bit like Monica Lewinsky.

(Woolley, 2002)

In the above discussion on employment policy in a meaning and fluency context L is trying to communicate an opinion. T does not understand the propositional content of L’s statement in line 19 and is initiating repair in line 21 on L’s statement using an open kind of next-turn repair initiator in order that the meaning should be clarified.

Extract 4.13

1 T: er, Mr P, er what’s the man doing (.) he’s sitting, but what’s he doing with
2 his hand?
3 L1: she’s pointing their hand.
4 → T: pardon?
5 L1: he is pointing his hand.
6 T: OK, he’s pointing his hand and what
7 L1: and he is showing the seat in front of him.
8 T: OK, he’s pointing his hand and what
9 L2: the menu (. ) the menu (. )
10 T: the menu or (T gestures) look at the picture, look at the picture (. ) he’s pointing at this watch. Why is he pointing at his watch?

(Riley, 1985, p. 54)

By contrast, here we are in a form and accuracy context. Throughout the lengthy extract (only a short section is reproduced) T expects the learners to produce a specific string of linguistic forms and initiates repair until the required string has been attained. In line 4 T uses an open repair initiator. Having briefly demonstrated how this particular repair initiation technique functions in context, we are now in a position to consider its appropriateness in the different contexts. In meaning and fluency contexts an open kind
of next-turn repair initiator may be very appropriate when functioning as a clarification or repetition request in the case of communication breakdown, if the exact nature of the trouble is unclear, as in extract 4.12. This is because open repair initiators have just this function in conversation: “A speaker indicates that he/she has some difficulty with the other’s prior turn, but without locating specifically where or what that difficulty is” (Drew, 1997, p. 71). In form and accuracy contexts the use of non-specific or open repair initiators when the specific trouble has been located (as in extract 4.13 line 3) might be less appropriate. As Tsui (1995, p. 52) points out, “If the teacher decides to get the student to self-correct, then the teacher can point out to the students the presence of an error, the location of an error or the identity of an error.”

Firstly, there are several repair initiation techniques which locate or identify the error and are therefore far more useful to the learner in the process of self-repair when a specific string of linguistic forms is being targeted; see, for example, extracts 4.16 and 4.18 below; Chaudron, 1988; Edge, 1989; Tsui, 1995. Secondly, open repair initiators do not even indicate the presence of a linguistic error: they are frequently used by listeners to initiate repair when the speaker has clearly not made a linguistic error. In situations in which the hearer realises that the speaker has made a linguistic error, the hearer generally uses a different type of repair initiator (Drew, 1997). The use of open repair initiators by the listener may therefore actually imply to the speaker that some form of trouble other than a linguistic error has occurred.

A contextual analysis of a specific type of repair initiation enables us to conclude, then, that it would be appropriate in certain circumstances in one L2 classroom context but unhelpful and potentially confusing in certain circumstances in another L2 classroom context. With a contextual analysis there is a basis for evaluation, namely whether there is a match between the pedagogical focus of the context and the repair technique.

1.6 The Preference Organisation of Repair: The Case of the Missing “No”

The main thesis of this monograph is that there is a reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction. Generally we have expressed this in terms of the organisation of the interaction varying as the pedagogical focus varies. In this section, however, we see the pedagogical focus being transmuted by the organisation of the interaction as we explore the concept of preference organisation in relation to repair in form and accuracy contexts (Seedhouse, 1997a). This section focuses on the structure of repair in form and accuracy contexts in the L2 classroom and on the preference organisation associated with the structure of repair in such contexts; see section 1.1 above for the organisation of repair in this context. When the context in operation is ‘form and accuracy’ and a learner makes an error of oral production which is an error of linguistic form, regardless as to whether it is an error on the level of syntax, lexis, phonology or discourse, then a lay observer might expect the teacher to frequently employ the words no or wrong as a negative evaluation (or at least some form of direct and overt negative evaluation) prior to an attempt to repair the error, in order to mark the presence of an error. It has frequently been suggested (Johnson, 1995) that much L2 classroom interaction follows an IRE pattern (teacher Initiation, learner Reply, teacher Evaluation). The data show, however, that this in general only applies to the data (in a form and accuracy context) when learners supply a linguistically correct reply, as in the example below:

Extract 4.14
When a learner produces a linguistically correct response to a teacher initiation, the teacher sometimes\(^9\) produces an overt and direct positive evaluation. Most frequent terms used are: *good, yes, OK, that’s right, fine.* However, when learners supply a linguistically incorrect reply in response to a teacher initiation, the data show that direct, explicit, overt negative evaluation tends to be avoided, and “IRE” is in no way an accurate description of the interactional sequence in these cases. Although teacher repair of learners’ linguistic errors is a prevalent feature of L2 classroom interaction in the database, I can only find one case of the use of bald, unmitigated, direct, overt negative evaluation involving the words *no* or *wrong* by teachers. In all other cases there is some form of mitigation involved, and the data show teachers using a wide variety of strategies to avoid bald, unmitigated, direct, overt negative evaluation. In other words, teachers appear to be doing interactional work specifically in order to avoid using unmitigated negative evaluation. This is a case of relevant absence which requires explication in terms of rational design. As Schegloff et al. (1977, p. 361) put it: “What speakers avoid doing is as important as what they do.” In order to investigate this phenomenon I detail the strategies which teachers use to repair errors whilst avoiding direct negative evaluation. I exemplify the use of mitigated negative evaluation, explain why there is a dispreference for direct negative evaluation, demonstrate a different preference structure in relation to procedural problems and then place the discussion in a pedagogical perspective.

1.7 Strategies for Conducting Repair without Using Direct Negative Evaluation

First of all I will detail the great variety of strategies which teachers employ to conduct repair (when a learner makes a spoken error of linguistic form in a form and accuracy context) without performing an explicitly expressed unmitigated negative evaluation. I will provide a single example of each strategy together with references to other examples of the strategy.

1) *Use a next-turn-repair-initiator to indicate (indirectly) that there is an error which the learner should repair.* This is a method of non-evaluatory repair initiation\(^{10}\): other-initiated self-repair.

Extract 4.15

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{L: } & \text{ they runs they runs quickly.} \\
\rightarrow & \text{ T: once more.} \\
\text{L: } & \text{ they run quickly.} \\
\text{T: } & \text{ yes, that’s better.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Tsui, 1995, p. 42) (see also Riley, 1985, p. 54; Johnson, 1995, p. 19)
This is an “open” kind of next-turn repair initiator (Drew, 1997) and pardon?, sorry? or what? are also members of this class. One problem with this type of repair initiator in this context is that it does not locate precisely the item to be repaired.

2. Repeat the word or phrase or part of a word which the learner used immediately prior to the error. This is another method of non-evaluatory repair initiation: other-initiated self-repair.

Extract 4.16

\( Er \) (. Qu’est-ce que (. qu’est-ce que vous dési(..)) ((tr: er, what do you, what do you desi..))
\( T: \rightarrow \) Qu’est-ce que vous (.).? ((tr: what do you..?))
\( L: \) Avez comme fruit? ((tr: have in the way of fruit?))
\( T: \) Comme fruit. ((tr: in the way of fruit))

(Westgate et al., 1985, p. 276) (See also Wright, 1987, p. 55; British Council, 1985, Volume 2, p. 67)

In the extract above, T repeats “what do you..?” which then targets the following word (s) as the trouble source. By contrast with the previous technique, this repair technique has the advantage of locating the repairable item fairly precisely.

3. Repeat the original question or initiation. This is another method of non-evaluatory repair initiation: other-initiated self-repair.

Extract 4.17

1  T:  what is a suffix?
2  L:  beautiful?
3  →  T:  this is something we forget all the time. what is a suffix?

(Wong-Fillmore, 1985, p. 47) (See also Prabhu, 1987, p. 123)

In line 3 T repeats the original question. The problem with this technique is that it does not locate or treat the error in any way. It could be that L’s utterance in line 2 is in fact providing an example of a suffix and is in fact a reasonable response. T’s repetition of the question in line 3 does not provide the learners with any feedback as to the problem with L’s response, however.

4. Repeat the learner’s erroneous utterance with a rising intonation. This is another method of non-evaluatory repair initiation: other-initiated self-repair.

Extract 4.18

L1: er and I: I am very good person, and [(laughs) ] and give she another one.
LL: [ (laugh) ]
T:  →  give she?
L1: (.) give her another one.

(British Council, 1985, Volume 2, p. 68)
T repeats the erroneous utterance but changes to a rising intonation. This technique locates the error but has sometimes been criticised for providing the learners with erroneous input. However, as we can see in the above example, the learner is able to self-repair correctly.

5. Supply a correct version of the linguistic forms. This is another method of non-evaluatory repair initiation: other-initiated other-repair.

Extract 4.19

L: because she can’t
T:  →  because she counted (.)
L: because she counted the wrong number of tourists.

(Tsui, 1995, p. 48)(See also Lightbown and Spada, 1993, p. 76)

The teacher substitutes the correct form for the erroneous form. This is possibly the simplest and fastest repair technique but of course it does not allow the learner the opportunity to self-repair.

6. Provide an explanation of why the answer is incorrect without explicitly stating that it is incorrect. This is another method of non-evaluatory repair initiation: other-initiated other-repair.

Extract 4.20

1  T: fine, right. the doctor’s office. what do we call a doctor’s office in
2  English? go on, go on, Louisa fine, say it.
3  L: consult - consultation.
4  →  T: it’s a consultation that they are going to give, it’s a very good try,
5  →  a good try. we call it a surgery, a surgery.

(Malamah-Thomas, 1987, p. 64)(See also Lightbown and Spada, 1993, p. 98)

In line 4, T gives an explanation as to why consultation is not the correct word and in line 5 provides the correct word. However, T never explicitly states that L’s answer is incorrect.

7. Accept the incorrect forms and then supply the correct forms: It is, in effect, acceptance of the incorrect forms followed by repair: other-initiated other-repair.

Extract 4.21

1   L:  is your mother play piano?
2  →  T: ‘is your mother play piano?’ OK. well you can say ‘is your mother
3  →  play piano?’ or ‘is your mother a piano player?’.
4   L: ‘is your mother a piano player?’

(Lightbown and Spada, 1993, p. 93) (See also Long, 1983, p. 12; Willis, 1987, p. 154)
T says that L’s erroneous forms are possible and then supplies a corrected version. These strange cases are in fact more common in my database than examples of unmitigated overt negative evaluation, which indicates how strong the dispreference is against direct negative evaluation.

8. *Invite other learners to repair:* this may or may not include direct negative evaluation. This is other-initiated other-repair, the other repair being by a third party. It could also be termed teacher-initiated peer-repair.

Extract 4.22

L:  don’t losing weight.
T:  OK. (to the others) can you help him? (.) not ‘don’t’. don’t say ‘don’t’. use the gerund. OK. so.

(Banbrook and Skehan, 1989, p. 142)(See also Ellis, 1992, p. 115)

Sometimes teachers appear to be going to great lengths to avoid uttering the words *no* and *wrong*. In line 5 below the teacher has to stop him/herself from uttering the word *no*:

Extract 4.23

1 T:  when Emma was making the suggestions about *peut-être qu’il est dans sa chambre*, ((tr: perhaps he is in his bedroom)) what could you nicely have said?
2 (.) well, whoever said it. what could they have said?
3 L:  *d’accord* ((tr: OK))
4 → T:  nn, nn... something that I mentioned to you earlier on. well, there was
5  *d’accord*, yeah, but there was something else.

(Westgate et al., 1985, p. 274)

So we can see that teachers have developed a wide variety of techniques, in a form and accuracy context, to initiate repair of learner utterances whilst simultaneously avoiding direct and overt negative evaluation.

1.8 *Examples of Use of Mitigated Negative Evaluation*

There are examples in the data of teachers using the words *no* and *wrong* as negative evaluations, but in every case but one the negative evaluation is not bald, overt or direct in that it is mitigated in some way. In the following case *wrong* is prefaced by a positive mitigating comment.

Extract 4.24

L:  I was born in January sixth
T:  ok look. wrong preposition

(Dinsmore, 1985, p. 229)
Occasionally in the data we find examples of the use of direct and overt negative evaluation by the teacher in the evaluation slot after the teacher has, immediately previously, initiated self-repair.

Extract 4.25

1  T:  ok, where is John Martin’s? Phung? John Martin’s?
2  L:  oh, Gawler Place
3  LL:  Gawler Place
4  → T:  John Martin’s? (other-initiation of self-repair)
5  L:  Gawler Place
6  → T:  Gawler Place? no! (direct negative evaluation)

(Nunan, 1988, p. 140) (see also Guthrie, 1984, p. 192; Tsui, 1995, p. 47)

In these cases the force of no as negative evaluation is mitigated by virtue of its sequential location. Since T has already made an attempt in line 4 to prompt self-repair (without negative evaluation), the direct and overt negative evaluation in the second repair slot (line 6) is mitigated and less face-threatening than if it had occurred in the first repair-relevant slot. The teacher is in effect working his/her way down the preference ranking. We saw similar sequences in relation to interactants working their way down the preference organisation of repair in ordinary conversation in extract 1.21. In the following examples we can see the teacher saying no baldly in reply to a learner initiation or question:

Extract 4.26

L:  so can say John’s hou - John’s house (.) er (.) which which its door is broken.
T:  no you can’t.

(Hasan, 1988, p. 271)

Extract 4.27

L:  er do you think, ‘does she mind’, is that er
T:  no, you can say to about anyone.

(Willis, 1987, p. 181)

In extracts 4.26 and 4.27 the interactional sequence is different and the no does not function as a direct negative evaluation of a learner response. The teacher is simply providing an answer to a learner’s question or initiation - we have a question and answer adjacency pair rather than an IRE cycle. With the IRE cycle the teacher initiates or asks a display question in order to test and evaluate the formal accuracy of the learner’s response. The power is in the teacher’s hands and direct negative evaluation of the learner’s response is thought by many teachers and methodologists to involve loss of face and demoralisation on the part of the learner; this belief is questioned later in the section, however. In the above situations, by contrast, the interactional dynamics are different; the teacher is simply providing an answer to a referential question. Here, a direct negative answer does not function as a negative evaluation and involves no loss of face for the learner, so the teacher
can use a bald *no*. The learner’s unsolicited question in fact can create a potentially face-threatening situation for the teacher; if the teacher does not produce a convincing answer, the teacher may lose face, as in the following example:

Extract 4.28

L: three bedroom house.
T: all right.
L: why three bed, er, three bedroom? why we don’t say three bedrooms?
T: ahh, oh (. ) I don’t know, um.
L: is not right.
T: we don’t say it. we don’t say it. there’s no explanation. but we often do that in English. three bedroom house.
L: don’t ask for it.
L: yes.
T: well, do ask why. ask why, and 99 per cent of the time I know the answer. one per cent of the time, nobody knows the answer. if I don’t know, nobody knows.
LL: (laugh)
T: ah, no, I don’t know the answer, sorry.

(Nunan, 1989, p. 137)

There are also examples in which the learner response is negatively evaluated in what appears to be the evaluation slot of an IRE cycle, as in the following extract:

Extract 4.29

T: there was also eh some years ago ah a Greek American who tried to become president do you remember his name?
L: Theodorakis?
T: Theodorakis, no, it wasn’t him

(Seedhouse, 1995, p. 398) (See also Chaudron, 1988, p. 130)

In these cases the learners are intoning their contributions as a question, which in effect enables the teacher to make a direct negative evaluation “camouflaged” as an answer to a question - mitigation is thereby involved. It appears that both teacher and learner are treating the exchange as a question-answer adjacency pair rather than as an IRE cycle. The format being used by the learner is what Schegloff et al. (1977, p. 379) call a guess, candidate, try or a *correction invitation format*; the format supplies the most accommodating environment for other-correction. In all of the database I can only find one occasion when a teacher uses a completely bald, unmitigated, overt negative evaluation, that is *no* in the evaluation slot of an IRF/IRE sequence. Even here, I cannot be certain that the *no* is completely unmitigated since the published extract does not include the interaction prior to this sequence.

Extract 4.30

T: After they have put up their tent, what did the boys do?
L: They cooking food.
T: No, not they cooking food, pay attention.
L: They cook their meal.
T: Right, they cook their meal over an open fire.

(Tsui, 1995, p. 52)

So the evidence from the database is that teachers perform a great deal of interactional work to avoid performing direct and overt negative evaluation of learner linguistic errors. When negative evaluation does occur, it is predominantly mitigated in some way.

1.9 Why is there a dispreference for direct and unmitigated negative evaluation?

Having established the interactional evidence for a strong dispreference for direct and overt negative evaluation of learner errors in form and accuracy contexts, we need to consider why such a dispreference should exist. The preference structure appears to be motivated by and to be derived from pedagogical recommendations, in that explicit negative evaluation of learner responses in a form and accuracy context is strongly disfavoured in current L2 pedagogy:

If the teacher decides to correct the error, he or she can repeat the student's response with correction. This kind of modelling can be very effective because it avoids providing explicit negative evaluation and exposes students to the correct form. (Tsui, 1995, p. 51) (See also Edge, 1989, p. 17; Harmer, 1983, p. 63).

In general, then, there is a close correspondence between pedagogical recommendations and the interactional evidence from the transcripts concerning what teachers actually do. The pedagogical recommendations spring from a humanistic, communicative paradigm in which the learners’ feelings and emotions are taken into account. Negative evaluation, then, is thought to offend and demotivate the learners. So at this stage it appears that pedagogy and interaction are working together in harmony, although I will later argue that this is an illusion.

1.10 A different preference structure in relation to procedural trouble

It sometimes happens that trouble occurs in form and accuracy contexts which has nothing to do with linguistic form - the trouble relates to misunderstanding or misinterpretation by learners of the lesson procedure which the teacher wishes to follow. In these cases the preference organisation in relation to repair in form and accuracy contexts which has been described does not apply at all. When repairing procedural problems, teachers very commonly use bald nos in conjunction with other-initiated other-repair, as we can see in the extracts below:

Extract 4.31

1 T: what are you?
2 L: I am a student.
3 →T: no, not you, what is she? (pointing to the textbook)
4 L: student.
L believes that T is asking a genuine or referential question in line 1, and responds in line 2 with a genuine answer. However, L has got the procedure wrong; T wanted L to reply as if she were a character in the textbook. In line 3 T uses unmitigated negative evaluation.

Extract 4.32

LL: she asks when he came (.)
T: → no, no, look at the text, not not the question, look at the question.
L: have you been waiting long?
T: yeah have you been waiting long?

(Riley, 1985, p. 57) (See also Willis, 1987, p. 169)

In the above cases no does not function as a direct negative evaluation of learner linguistic performance. It indicates that there is trouble which needs repairing in connection with non-linguistic procedures, and hence does not seem to involve loss of face for the student. In all of the above cases the repair is teacher-initiated teacher-repair: nowhere in the data does a teacher initiate self-repair in the case of procedural problems. There is a very revealing section in Willis’ (1987) transcript of one entire lesson. Throughout the 55 pages of transcript, the teacher meticulously avoids direct and overt negative evaluation of learner utterances when operating in form and accuracy contexts. There are several instances of the teacher stating that erroneous forms are acceptable and then supplying the correct forms (as in extract 4.21 above). In one case, (see extract 4.33 below) however, the teacher does say no in an evaluation slot. The learners here are constructing questions and answers based on prompts from a textbook:

Extract 4.33

L1: erm. does Fred (a book character) like being a soldier?
T: yes. that’s right. and what do you think’s the answer to that one? Constantine?
L2: uh! he doesn’t like being a soldier.
T: no. (in agreement) I don’t think he does.
L2: he hates being soldier.
T: well done! he hates being a soldier. Mohavi, ask Virginia er if she likes being a student.
L3: er does
T: do
L3: ah! sorry. do you, do you like er a sol- being a soldier?
T: no, she’s not a soldier
LL: (laughter)

(Willis, 1987, p. 155)

What happened here is that there was a change in procedure - from making questions based on textbook prompts to making questions based on the classroom situation. L3 failed
to notice this procedural shift. The teacher’s *no* is therefore not a negative evaluation of the linguistic forms produced by the learner; the utterance is in fact linguistically correct. It is merely a repair of a procedural problem and is therefore thought not to demotivate the student. Trouble with linguistic form is regarded as problematic and face-threatening, whereas trouble with procedure is not. Both of these tendencies are evident in the preference organisation of repair in classroom interaction.\textsuperscript{13} We can conclude here that the preference structure relating to the repair of trouble with linguistic form marks this trouble as problematic and face-threatening. The preference structure relating to the repair of procedural trouble marks this trouble as non-problematic and non-face-threatening.

\section*{1.11 The paradox: pedagogy and interaction in opposition}

Now as a result of the above analysis we can see that there appears to be a paradox at the heart of recent, broadly ‘communicative’ or approaches to repair. On the one hand teachers tell learners not to worry about making linguistic errors and even encourage them to try out hypotheses and make plenty of linguistic errors (Edge, 1989, p. 17).

On the other hand, by avoiding direct and overt negative evaluation of linguistic errors, teachers are marking repair of linguistic errors as a heavily dispreferred sequence; the interactional message is being transmitted that making errors is an embarrassing, face-threatening matter\textsuperscript{14}. As Levinson (1983, p. 333) points out, the implied underlying rule for speech production is “Try to avoid the dispreferred action - the action that generally occurs in dispreferred or marked format.” In other words, *the pedagogical message (it’s OK to make linguistic errors) is being directly contradicted by the interactional message (linguistic errors are terrible faux pas).* The words *no*, *wrong*, *mistake* and *error* in relation to linguistic form seem to be marked as verging on the unmentionable by their relevant absence or extreme mitigation in form and accuracy contexts. If one wanted to indicate on an interactional level to learners that linguistic errors were of no importance, one would have to use the same preference organisation of repair as is used to treat procedural problems i.e. immediate, unmitigated other-initiated other-repair with use of *no*. Teachers are avoiding direct and overt negative evaluation of learners’ linguistic errors with the best intentions in the world, namely to avoid embarrassing and demotivating them. However, in doing so, they are interactionally marking linguistic errors as embarrassing and problematic.

The section has so far focused rather narrowly on a single perspective and a single interpretation of the data in order to develop an argument, and it may well have occurred to readers that there are alternative explanations for the phenomena observed in the data. For example, it could be argued that the teachers in section 1.7 are merely allowing the learners the opportunity to self-repair as part of the language learning process, and that the repair of linguistic errors is worth devoting interactional time and effort to. My reply would be that this is certainly what teachers are intending to do from a pedagogical point of view. But the point is that the task-as-workplan rarely translates directly into the task-in-process because there is a reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction and because there is an intervening level of organisation, i.e. the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom. So from an interactional point of view, what teachers are actually doing in practice is operating a preference organisation which marks linguistic errors as embarrassing and face-threatening. We have seen in section 1.10 in the case of procedural errors that it is perfectly possible to operate a preference organisation which marks errors (of a different kind) as non-embarrassing and non-face-threatening.
Pedagogical recommendations for the L2 classroom do not take its interactional architecture into account explicitly or methodically. They are normally made on the assumption that they can translate directly into classroom interaction as if no level of interactional structure existed and as if the task-as-workplan can translate directly into a task-in-process. This was referred to in section 2.8 as the pedagogical landing-ground perspective. This section has argued that, in this particular case, pedagogy and interaction work in direct opposition to one another. The pedagogical recommendation that teachers should avoid direct and unmitigated negative evaluation of learners’ linguistic errors, in order that those errors should be treated as unimportant and unembarrassing, directly produces the consequence that errors are treated as important, problematic and embarrassing because of the preference structure of the interaction. In this case, then, pedagogy ignores the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom to its detriment. By contrast, direct and unmitigated other-repair by the teacher would mark linguistic errors as unimportant and unembarrassing on an interactional level; pedagogy and interaction would then be working in tandem. It is not the aim of this section to make the somewhat simplistic pedagogical recommendation that teachers ought to change their habits and always conduct direct, unmitigated other-repair of learners’ linguistic errors in order to mark them as unimportant and unembarrassing. Rather, the discussion should be understood to illustrate the following important points:

Firstly, it is possible, using a CA methodology and a large and varied database of L2 lessons, to trace the interactional consequences of particular pedagogical recommendations. For example, this section provides many examples of different repair techniques employed by teachers, and it will be evident to the reader that the different techniques have different effects on the flow of the interaction. Pedagogical recommendations which are accompanied by transcript evidence of what actually happens in the classroom (i.e., evidence concerning the task-in-process) may well appear more convincing than recommendations presented on a conceptual level and without any recognition of their interactional consequences (i.e. in terms of a task-as-workplan).

Secondly, some pedagogical recommendations appear to be made on the basis of the implicit assumption that L2 classroom interaction has the same interactional structure as conversation. For example, Edge justifies self-correction by stating that “People usually prefer to put their own mistakes right rather than be corrected by someone else” (1989, p. 24). Now in conversation unmitigated other-initiated other-repair is indeed heavily dispreferred, face-threatening and occurs relatively rarely. When it does occur, it often leads to arguments, as in extract 1.22. However, the point is that repair in the L2 classroom is organised in a different fashion to conversation. If pedagogical recommendations concerning repair are motivated by the assumption that L2 learners will be offended by direct, unmitigated other-initiated other-repair, then the evidence presented in this section suggests that the assumption may be mistaken.

Thirdly, there has been strong recent interest in why learners don’t learn what teachers teach (Nunan, 1994) or why it is that the task-in-process (what actually happens) is sometimes different to the task-as-workplan (what is supposed to happen). From the perspective of this monograph, one answer is that pedagogy can never be translated directly into classroom interaction, because there is an intervening level of organisation, i.e. the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom. The pedagogical focus inherent in the task-as-workplan becomes transformed by the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom to become the task-in-process. This section has illustrated the point by showing how the pedagogical intention to persuade learners that it is alright to make linguistic
errors becomes transformed by the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom into the message that errors are embarrassing.

The general implicit assumption in much current pedagogical literature appears to be that the relationship between pedagogy and interaction is a simple, unproblematic and unidirectional one in which pedagogy is translated directly into interaction. In section Error! Reference source not found., we called this the pedagogical landing-ground perspective on the L2 classroom. This section has attempted to show that the relationship between pedagogy and interaction is a complex and reflexive one, and that pedagogical recommendations may have quite unforeseen interactional consequences which may work in opposition to the pedagogical effort. It is essential to understand the interactional organisation of the L2 classroom not only to understand instructed language learning processes, but also so that any resultant pedagogical recommendations may be effectively implemented.

1.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter described how repair is organised within the different L2 classroom context. As with turn-taking and sequence, it was argued that there is no single, monolithic organisation of repair in the L2 classroom. There is a reflexive relationship between the pedagogical focus and the organisation of repair: as the pedagogical focus varies, so does the organisation of repair. Furthermore, what constitutes trouble varies with the pedagogical focus, which means that what is repairable is different in each context. The organisation of repair within particular L2 classroom contexts was specified in terms of (a) typical participants in the repair, (b) typical repair trajectories, (c) typical types of repair, and (d) typical focus of repair, that is, what is repairable. In sections 1.6 to 1.12 I showed how the interactional organisation can transform the pedagogical focus by examining a case of preference organisation in relation to repair in form and accuracy contexts.

1 A discussion of the interaction hypothesis is available in Ellis (2003, pp. 79-83). Briefly, it states that negotiation of meaning and comprehensible input assist acquisition.
2 However, Markee (2000) contains data in a different context in which a teacher asks one learner to help other learners repair trouble.
3 In chapter 6 we explore the similarities between embedded correction and the SLA notion of ‘recast’.
4 I am grateful to an anonymous Language Learning reviewer for pointing out that line 19 might be analysed as not involving repair, but rather a request for further information. I analyse it as repair initiation since it is not evident to T in line 17 what the "two thousand" is payment for: marriage tax, wedding expenses or what? T initiates repair as this lack of understanding constitutes trouble for him. The evidence for this analysis is that in line 26 T finally understands that the money is for a dowry and displays the resolution of this trouble by using a change of information state marker "oh, dowry, oh dear".
5 It should be noted that the construct of fossilised errors is a problematic one.
6 The notion of ‘meaning’ is problematic; see Seedhouse (1997b) for further discussion.
7 An anonymous reviewer has pointed out that, in their data, learners sometimes correct each other’s pronunciation.
8 I am grateful to an anonymous Language Learning reviewer for pointing out that line 7 could be analysed as not repair initiation at all. I agree that this instance is on what Schegloff (2000b, p. 207) calls the “fuzzy boundary” of repair. My point is that, in a task-oriented context, learners can treat as trouble anything which they identify as hindering the accomplishment of their task.
9 However, positive evaluation is often not overtly supplied; see section 3.1.
10 By this I mean that there is no explicit, verbalised use of evaluation in the surface forms of the repair initiation by the teacher. However, it may be that some evaluation is nonetheless implicit in the teacher’s turn, since the institutional role of teachers makes it hard for teachers to avoid being seen as evaluators.
See extract 1.21 for an example of ‘sequential mitigation’ in ordinary conversation. Once repair
initiation has been attempted, subsequent repair strategies can be more direct and ‘bald’ without risking
disaffiliation as the person repairing is ‘moving down’ the preference structure of repair.

I am grateful to Richard Young for pointing out that politeness theory provides a very good explanation
of the phenomena in these extracts.

I am grateful to an anonymous *Language Learning* reviewer for pointing out that it would be interesting
to consider whether ‘content’ activities and procedural activities constitute learner-teacher power and
distance relations differently. I feel that the question is beyond the scope of the present study.

Heritage (1984b, p. 268), in a discussion of preference, observes that "Plainly issues of 'face' (Brown
and Levinson, 1978) are closely associated with our maintenance of the relevant forms and observances.”
Brown and Levinson (1978, pp. 38-42) suggest that face issues motivate the organisation of preference
and pre-sequences. So ethnomethodological conceptions of affiliation and disaffiliation are broadly
compatible with Brown and Levinson’s conceptions of face and politeness. Since the explanatory system
of ethnomethodology underpins CA, analyses do not tend to make massive use of face and politeness, but
neither is it necessary to shy away from mention of these concepts.