Advising in Language Learning: What can conversation analysis tell us?

Yukari Rutson-Griffiths (Hiroshima Bunkyo Women’s University) 
rgyukari@gmail.com

Mathew Porter (Fukuoka Jo Gakuin Nursing College) 
portermathew@hotmail.com
Learning Advisors at Hiroshima Bunkyo

Support Learner Autonomy

- Create materials to support self-access
- Manage learning resources in the center
- Train learners to use the center
- Advise learners
Advising Skills

Macro-skills of language counselling
- Initiating
- Goal setting
- Guiding
- Modelling
- Supporting
- Giving feedback
- Evaluating
- Linking
- Concluding

Micro-skills of language counselling
- Attending
- Restating
- Paraphrasing
- Summarising
- Questioning
- Interpreting
- Reflecting feelings
- Empathising
- Confronting

(Kelly, 1996, pp.95-96)
# Advising Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpreting</td>
<td>Offering explanations for learner experiences</td>
<td>To provide new perspectives;</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to help self-understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathizing</td>
<td>Identifying with the learner’s experience and perception</td>
<td>To create a bond of shared understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflecting feelings</td>
<td>Surfacing the emotional content of learner statements</td>
<td>To show that the whole person has been understood</td>
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(Kelly, 1996, p.96)
Conversation Analysis (CA)

Object: Spoken interaction

Aims: How do participants contribute to the interaction?  
How do participants interpret each other’s contributions?  
How do participants develop a shared understanding of the interaction?

Process: Detailed transcription (paralinguistic features, silence, nonverbal actions)  
Exam for recurring patterns in the transcript  
Create a rule/model to explain the pattern based on examples of the patterns
Conversation Analysis in Advising

Advice giving practised in other settings

- Health visitor-new mother interactions (Heritage and Sefi, 1992)
- Mundane talk and institutional talk (Jefferson and Lee, 1981)

Advice-giving requires cautious preparation

→ ‘Stepwise entry’ (Vehviläinen, 2001)
‘Stepwise entry’ (Vehviläinen, 2001, p.375)

Step 1: Counsellor: Ask questions/Topicalize issues

Step 2: Student: Confirm/Display opinions

Step 3: Counsellor: Advice
Data

Experienced advisor and non-English major

70 minutes long

Language learning center at a private university in Japan

Japanese

Video-recorded

CA transcription
Session Overview

Advice 1

Learning about the learner
- Necessity of learning English
- Learning goals
- Motivation
- Learner’s interests
- Affective issues

Advice 2

Learning about the learner
- Text materials for teaching children
- Asking teachers about their experiences
- Getting ideas from SALC materials

Learning plan

Advice 1

- Affective issues
- Language ability

Advice 2

- Studying English for yourself
- Building confidence
- Talking to teachers
Excerpt 1: Context

Learner is avoiding English

English is going to be a requirement

It already is a requirement

It is the same in Ehime

“Necessity of learning English”
Learner is avoiding English

English is going to be a requirement

It already is a requirement

It is the same in Ehime
Learner is avoiding English

English is going to be a requirement

It already is a requirement

It is the same in Ehime
Learner is avoiding English

English is going to be a requirement

It already is a requirement

It is the same in Ehime
Interpretation
Excerpt 2: Context

Advice

Leanner: “Is English going to be important?”

Advisor provides advantageous points

Interpretation: learner is uncertain

Confirmation -> Advice
A: 1-> >yappa fuanna n da yone=kitto ne;<
   after all uncertain N CP FP perhaps FP
   "After all, you're uncertain, right? Perhaps?"

(0.5)

3 A: fehehhh [heh hehʃ]

4 L: 2-> [sou desu ne hh
   so CP-POL FP
   "That's right."

5 A: [feheh heh heh heh .hhhhʃ un: (0.6) sou da ne:
   so CP FP
   "Right."

6 L: [feheh heh hehʃ

7 (0.8)

8 A: >demo yappari< sono: (0.3) fuan: o (1.0)
   but after all that uncertainty ACC

9 A: nuquisaru tameni wa:, (2.2) sukoshizutsu
   clear away for TP little by little

10 A: yappari: (1.0) benkyou:
   after all study
   "But, after all, in order to clear away that uncertainty, after all, study little by little;"
Excerpt 3: Context

Learner: “I don’t have confidence”

Lack of opportunity to speak English is the source

Learner: “I could come here but…”

Interpretation: learner is a bashful person

Repair

Learner reveals her feelings towards English learning and being in the center
Excerpt 3: Transcript

Interpretation:
learner is a bashful person

Repair

Learner reveals her feelings towards English learning and being in the center

1 A: u::n sou ne::
   right FP
   “Right.”

2 (0.6)

3 A: 1-> kekkou hazukashigariyasan?
   quite   bashful.person
   “Are you quite a bashful person?”

4 (1.6)

5 (L slowly starts tilting her head.)

6 A: R-> tsou demo nai=:
   so      NEG
   “That’s not the case.”

7 L: 2-> =f undo(mho) a if
   so      NEG
   “That’s not the case.”

8 A: =fuhuh huh .hhh tada chotto eigo ni tai suru
   just a.little      English in.regard.to
   “Just a little, in regard to English”
Preliminary Findings

Information seeking
Understanding the learner

Advice

Confirmation steps

Progress the talk towards the conversational goal

Maintain shared understanding (interpretation and repair)
Conclusion

Relevance to Kelly’s skills

Kelly (1996) provides descriptions of skills and their purpose but does not account for how.

CA may allow us to see how these skills are employed and how they function in the subsequent turns.
Conclusion

Calls for CA’s contribution to PD programmes in other fields

Authentic interactions used for training medical students (Maynard & Heritage, 2005)

Need for actual observations and dialogues in handbooks for child counselors (Hutchby, 2005)
Limitations and need for future research

Analysis of more sessions with the same participant

More sessions with other participants or conducted by different advisors

Sessions where one participant is using their weak language

Comparison between experienced advisors and novice advisors
References