

BOOK REVIEW



Review of *Conversation analytic language teacher education in digital spaces*

Hannah Fedder Williams, Georgetown University

Nadja Tadic, Georgetown University

Conversation Analytic Language Teacher Education in Digital Spaces

Balaman, U.

2022

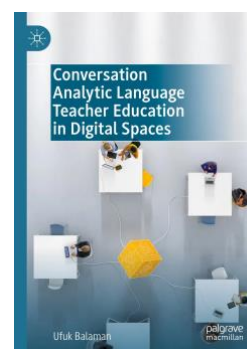
ISBN: 978-3-031-19126-8

US \$ 129.99

284 pp.

Palgrave MacMillan

Cham, Switzerland



Overview

Conversation Analysis (CA) has become increasingly influential in language teacher training and second language (L2) classroom research (e.g., Waring, 2016, and Huth, 2021). Building on this line of work, Balaman’s monograph introduces Conversation Analytic Language Teacher Education (CALTE), an evidence-based, micro-analytic approach to language teacher learning in digital spaces. Upon situating CALTE in the field of language teacher education (LTE) and outlining the structure of the book in Chapter 1, the author offers a comprehensive overview of prior LTE approaches that have incorporated CA in Chapter 2. Chapters 3 through 5 present multimodal CA studies of language teacher education practices in and for video-mediated interactional settings. Lastly, Chapter 6 revisits the CALTE approach and proposes two concrete models for implementing this approach in digital and international spaces. By bringing together a rich body of CA and LTE research and offering accessible analyses of language teacher education as it unfolds in interaction, the book is a valuable resource for teacher education professionals, practitioners, and researchers.

In Chapter 1, Balaman first introduces CALTE in relation to other LTE approaches. The author points out that the field has shifted more recently toward knowledge and praxis based on empirical (multimodal) observation and reflective practice, which is where Balaman aims to situate CALTE. Drawing on multimodal CA, CALTE offers a way to examine teacher trainers’ and trainees’ actual behaviors and emic perspectives without relying on *a priori* understandings of teacher development. With its focus on the moment-by-moment unfolding of interaction, CALTE can unpack participants’ reflective talk, that is, their collaborative and critical analyses of teaching and learning micro-moments for the purpose of improving future practice (Farrell, 2015, 2018). Balaman explains that the two main contributions of the book are to provide a knowledge base that reflects how language teacher education unfolds in social interaction (as well as a methodological approach to examining teacher learning) and a novel praxis base for LTE that is independent of location (i.e., by showing how CALTE can be applied in fully online and hybrid settings—that is, ‘translocated’ LTE). Next, an overview of the structure of the book is offered, ending with a proposed reading guide for researchers and practitioners in the field of teacher education (and professional development more broadly) who are not trained in multimodal

CA.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of prior LTE approaches that draw on CA methods and findings. Along the way, Balaman identifies gaps in those approaches—primarily the lack of research drawing on multimodal CA and video-recorded data from non-classroom contexts—and argues that these gaps could be addressed by a more comprehensive approach, such as CALTE. Balaman begins the chapter by conceptualizing CALTE in terms of seven defining features: (a) an evidence-based and data-led approach; (b) a knowledge base grounded in multimodal CA research findings on second language classroom interaction; (c) an opportunity for pre-service teachers to operationalize the knowledge base and raise their interactional awareness; (d) a strategic attention to reflection for-, in-, and on-action; (e) an increased space for interaction and generation of natural data; (f) a record of LTE practices and their implications through multimodal CA; and (g) an application of dedicated CALTE models. Upon dividing LTE into a *knowledge base* of actionable disciplinary knowledge and a *praxis base* that operationalizes that knowledge, the author reviews prior literature informing CALTE. Overall, Balaman sees existing CA-based LTE work as solidifying the need for a comprehensive and unified approach that can be implemented by practitioners. In particular, he argues for the need to focus more explicitly on reflective talk in LTE and to enrich the knowledge and praxis bases with research findings on video-mediated settings. Further, he argues for a focus on preparing, implementing, and revising learning activities in digital spaces—objectives pursued in the book.

Chapter 3 examines how pre-service teachers (PSTs) co-construct the CALTE knowledge base through reflective video-mediated interactions. The data come from a fully online course dedicated to multimodal CA work on L2 classroom interaction. The course required PSTs to view lectures and sample analyses of video-recorded classrooms, to write reflective summaries on classroom interaction research, and to analyze classroom videos during video-mediated small-group discussions. Focusing on one group's discussions on a specific teacher practice—reformulation of learner utterances—the chapter shows how group members engage in collaborative sequential analysis, as they visually and verbally display (dis)agreement and orient to data on their shared screens. The author then tracks a single group member's process of identifying the sequential position, instructional purpose, and effectiveness of teacher reformulations. Drawing on Markee's (2008) learning behavior tracking, Balaman examines preceding and subsequent references to *reformulation* in course materials and in the focal student's reflective reading summaries. The author found that the course materials and activities facilitated the student's (and her group members') reflection on the target teacher practice. Specifically, by illustrating and inviting close examinations of teacher reformulation across contexts, Balaman reported that the course helped PSTs develop a more nuanced understanding of reformulations, thus potentially informing their future teaching.

Chapter 4 focuses on a video-mediated post-observation meeting between a teacher trainer and a trainee. The post-observation was part of an undergraduate practicum course that was not directly based on CA research. The author nevertheless draws on data from this course, arguing that analyses of non-CA-informed teacher education practices could help clarify the role of the CALTE knowledge base in LTE. During the video-mediated post-observation meeting, the two participants discussed the trainee's preceding online teaching session using Video Enhanced Observation (VEO), a tool for tagging select moments in a video recording for review and critical reflection. The author considers how the trainer and trainee discussed the interventions in the trainee's teaching that had been made by their co-teachers and the trainer at times of instructional trouble. As the analysis shows, although the trainer effectively used the tagging features of VEO to offer feedback, assessment, and advice, she limited space for the trainee's contributions. Specifically, the trainer tightly structured the meeting around teaching moments that she alone pre-selected for discussion. Furthermore, she dominated the conversation by offering (rather than eliciting) summaries, accounts, and explanations of the trainee's teaching practice, and she disregarded the trainee's incipient reflective assessments and displays of (changed) understanding. While noting that the trainee's limited interactional space may have been tied to the participants' orientations to post-observations as *feedback meetings*, the author underscores the importance of promoting trainees' voices in and for reflection. Balaman thus proposes two practices for maximizing trainees' interactional space in post-observation sessions: (a) inviting trainees to first reflect on their teaching and (b) asking trainees to select teaching moments for reflection. The author also highlights

the important role that moments of intervention (or *reflection-in-action*) can play in post-observations, as they “inherently include the emergent problems in situ that can be critically analyzed for improved future practices” (p. 153).

Chapter 5 presents a complete CALTE model, drawing on data from an undergraduate course in which pre-service teachers (PSTs) are trained to design technology-rich materials for digital language learning spaces. Along with reviewing CA research on task design, on video-mediated interaction, and on computer-assisted language learning, the course required PSTs to develop, implement, and revise Virtual Exchange tasks for dyads of L2 English learners. Throughout the chapter, Balaman considers one PST group’s task-design process and their reflection on task implementation. The author first examines the ways in which the focal PST group members brainstorm and align their task ideas with design criteria during whole-class and small-group discussions. As the close analysis of these audio-recorded discussions shows, the lecturer (i.e., the author) managed to guide the PSTs’ initial development of their tasks by offering feedback, advice, and assessments while maximizing interactional space for their reflective contributions. In turn, the PSTs actively engaged in reflective talk by connecting their task to established design criteria, referencing relevant research knowledge, and building on one another’s ideas through (dis)agreements, extensions, and enactments. Balaman also examines the focal PST group’s reflection on screen-recorded implementations of their task by learner dyads. Although lacking access to the group’s reflective talk-in-interaction, the author analyzes the PSTs’ jointly written reflection on the affordances and constraints of their task design. Through these reflections, he uncovers evidence of their thoughtful analysis of learner interaction, their orientation to task-design criteria, and their displays of relevant disciplinary knowledge. Overall, the chapter illustrates how a dedicated CALTE model can foster teacher learning opportunities as PSTs are guided in designing and reviewing opportunities for (digital) language learning.

The final chapter outlines how the presented research findings align with the seven defining features of CALTE (see Chapter 2) and proposes two CALTE models for translocating language teacher education (i.e., for conducting language teacher education in global and virtual contexts). Balaman demonstrates that Chapters 3 through 5 fulfill and align with the seven features of CALTE, for instance by effectively using multimodal CA research on (L2) classroom interaction to create teacher learning opportunities (which fulfills Defining Feature 2). Next, in proposing two translocated CALTE models, Balaman argues for wider access to videos that are relevant to different elements of the knowledge base, which could support CALTE’s operationalization in digital spaces as well as transnational collaboration in and through video-mediated interaction. The author thus proposes two CALTE models to address these needs. The first model draws on LTE activities from the book’s analytic chapters with added suggestions for centralizing transnational collaborations in practicum teaching. Based on the CALTE model presented in Chapter 5, the second model proposes how to translocate LTE in and for virtual exchange via, for example, partnerships between teacher education institutions. In outlining each model, Balaman includes timeframes and specific steps that can guide practitioners and institutions in implementing CALTE in digital and transnational environments.

Balaman’s (2022) overview and guide for using CALTE offers many valuable insights for the field of language teacher education. The monograph effectively synthesizes a rich corpus of CA-based LTE research and illustrates CA’s potential for examining teacher learning opportunities—contributions that LTE scholars may find particularly informative. Although the book might be most relevant for researchers and practitioners with prior knowledge of CA, the author makes it accessible to a wider audience by including a reading guide for non-CA-trained practitioners and nuanced yet easy-to-follow transcriptions. By foregrounding the subtle, multimodal features of interactions across teacher development settings, the book can further be helpful in raising trainers’ awareness of practices that might promote or limit trainee participation.

Given (multimodal) CA’s growing presence in the field of language teacher education, it will be interesting to see the implications of this book as more practitioners become aware of and trained in CA. It is noteworthy that the participants in Chapters 4 and 5 were not required to draw on CA as they reflected on teaching practice and task implementation. This gap leaves room for future research to explore and to compare the affordances of using CA specifically or discourse analytic methods generally in researching and implementing LTE. Given that CA requires substantive training, it would

also be interesting to consider to what extent different CA practices, such as detailed multimodal transcription and line-by-line analysis, yield insights of value for LTE practitioners. Overall, the monograph contributes substantially to LTE research and practice with its comprehensive synthesis of CA-based LTE literature, illustrative applications of CALTE across video-mediated teacher education settings, and concrete suggestions for the digital and translocal implementation of CALTE. Finally, although Balaman's analysis focuses on the specific context of undergraduate L2 teacher education in Turkey, it serves as an accessible and unified resource for researchers and practitioners to implement the approach across diverse digital and transnational spaces.

References

- Farrell, T. S. C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals*. Routledge
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2018). Operationalizing reflective practice in second language teacher education. *Journal of Second Language Teacher Education*, 1(1), 1–20.
- Huth, T. (2021). *Interaction, language use, and second language teaching*. Routledge.
- Markee, N. (2008). Toward a learning behavior tracking methodology for CA-for-SLA. *Applied Linguistics*, 29(3), 404–427. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amm052>
- Waring, H. Z. (2016). *Theorizing pedagogical interaction: Insights from Conversation Analysis*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315751351>

About the Authors

Hannah Fedder Williams is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University. Her research interests include institutional discourse, specifically examining police-civilian discourse through the lens of conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis.

E-mail: hfw8@georgetown.edu

Nadja Tadic is Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Georgetown University. Her research examines issues of diversity, inclusion, and (in)equity in adult second language classroom interaction through the lens of conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis.

E-mail: nadja.tadic@georgetown.edu