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# Noting as revealed by “checking” in second language interactions

## A simple (yet organized) management strategy\*

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This paper uses Language Management Theory (LMT) to explore situations in which non-native speakers of a language explicitly reveal that they have noted a potential linguistic deviation. This can be paraphrased as the concept of “checking”, identifiable through the use of question intonation for the trouble source item, phrases such as “is that right?”, or the offering of alternative words or forms. This process is explored in Czech conversations between native speakers and American missionaries. In the analysis, two major points are made: 1) There is a limit to the types of deviations which are noted in this way, as checking is mainly done in cases of potential lexical and morphological deviations, and 2) In order for this strategy to be realized, there must be an appropriate categorial context for its execution, particularly in regard to the categories that speakers assign (or do not assign) to one another situationally, such as “non-native speaker” or “language expert”. In this way, simple management can be directly connected to organized management in that missionaries learning a foreign language are instructed to utilize their interlocutors as “language experts”. The paper also considers methodological tools for LMT analysts to uncover the fact that noting has occurred.

**Key words:** language management, noting, second language interactions, Czech, missionaries.

## Introduction

Explicit noting in processes of simple language management has been typically understood as analyzable on the micro level, through the act of repair or repair initiation in interaction. Yet this type of noting has not been extensively researched in relation to the speakers’ more organized aims in and through the

given conversation. This paper explores situations in which non-native speakers of a language (hereafter NNSs) note a potential linguistic deviation in conversations with native speakers of that language (hereafter NSs). More specifically, emphasis is placed on what is referred to as “checking”, or the explicit self-initiation of other-repair of a linguistic item. The most commonly identifiable forms of checking include the use of question intonation for the trouble source item, phrases such as “is that right?”, accounts of the speaker’s NNS status, or the offering of more than one alternative word or form as a candidate for repair.

The concept of checking serves as observable evidence to researchers that the speaker has noted a *potential* deviation from a norm, in some cases is offering an adjustment design, and is seeking adjustment from his or her interlocutor. As this paper will demonstrate, it can also highlight the relevance of speakers’ membership categorization in determining who is able to, or is supposed to be an agent of language management in various types of interactions, and thus points to the broader, more organized nature of noting in conversation.

The more organized nature of noting in interaction is relevant from the perspective of Language Management Theory (LMT), which differentiates between simple (discourse-based) and organized management. Simple management occurs on the micro level, in individual interactions, a prototypical example being self-correction in the course of a single utterance. Organized management extends beyond the individual interactions, involves the participation of multiple individuals or even institutions (including schools, clubs, families, language consulting centers and the like). In it, the design of adjustments is connected to particular ideological positions, and the implementation of adjustments is heavily intertwined with issues of power. As concerns the role of noting in organized management, a relevant question is that of what people are instructed to note, where, how and why.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First I will review the phenomenon of repair as an element of language management against the background of Conversation Analysis (hereafter CA). Then I will describe some instances of noting as revealed by checking in second language conversation data. Finally, I will discuss some of the implications of this data for Language Management Theory in regard to questions such as “Which language problems can be solved?” and “Who is expected/entitled to solve specific language problems?”. I will then briefly address the methodological questions of how analysts can recognize the process of noting in naturally-occurring data (a question first posed by J.V. Neustupný in 1985) and to what end identifying noting serves in the entire scheme of language management research. I will point to the fact that in many cases, the presence and form of explicitly reflected noting in interactions can help researchers identify the ways in which organized management influences and determines simple management.

## Data

The data for this paper consists of excerpts from recorded and transcribed conversations in Czech between NNSs and NSs, subsequently translated into English. The NNSs are American missionaries in the Czech Republic. The examples have been taken from a collection of nearly three hours of recorded interaction occurring in public places. The speakers labeled M1 and M3 in the transcripts are missionaries; M1 is near the end of his mission period, having served for nearly two years, and M3 has served for three months. The Czech speakers are labeled with the letter C and a number. The Czech native speakers and the missionaries do not know each other, as these are situations of first contact. In all cases, the missionaries have approached their interlocutors and engaged them in conversation, making relevant some aspects of their identity, e.g. as Americans, as NSs of English, or as NNSs of Czech. The interaction participants are thus not part of a stable common speech community and thus must negotiate the norms for every conversation. The collection of examples was part of the research presented in Sherman (2007), which also included extensive ethnographic observation, interviews, and the collection of printed materials.

## Repair as a potential tool in the management of language acquisition

In order to better understand the general context for the interactions analyzed, it is necessary to provide some background on the speakers. The missionaries in this study are spending a two-year mission period in the Czech Republic. To prepare for this period linguistically, prior to this they have spent 10 weeks intensively learning Czech in the United States. The completion of their linguistic education occurs in the mission field, in a non-traditional setting outside of the classroom, consisting primarily of self-study. Much of the time in the mission field is spent talking: engaging people in conversation on the street, in their homes, and in other locations. They use the individual interactions with NSs in Czech, above all, for the purpose of proselyting/proselytizing, or the spreading of religious gospel. Furthermore, in and through these encounters, the missionaries aim (and are taught to aim) toward the improvement of their Czech language skills for use in subsequent encounters. During the interviews and ethnographic research, the missionaries reported that Czech language problems were one of their most commonly used conversation-starting topics when engaging people in conversation on a daily basis, serving as an indirect route to the discussion of faith, as an aspect of strategic interaction. One conversational action the missionaries initiate for this purpose is repair.

We can define repair as an adjustment made by a speaker to his/her own utterance or to that of an interlocutor. Conversation Analysis, which has thus far dealt with repair in the greatest detail, classifies it on the basis of a) which speaker's utterance is repaired, b) which speaker repairs the utterance (self-repair vs. other-repair), and c) which speaker initiates the repair (self-initiated vs. other-initiated repair) (Schegloff, Sacks and Jefferson, 1977). It is also possible to differentiate between production errors and interactional errors (Jefferson, 1974), in that production errors are “a range of troubles one encounters in the attempt to produce coherent, grammatically correct speech” (p. 181) and interactional errors are “mistakes one might make in the attempt to speak appropriately to some co-participant(s) and/or within some situation” (Jefferson, 1974: 181). I will focus here primarily on the missionaries' initiation of other-repair of production errors. There are two elements to this: the fact that the repair is initiated and the question of whether or not the repair is actually done after it is initiated.

Sequentially, there are two ways in which repair can occur. The first is in “side sequences” (as described by Jefferson, 1972) in which “the interaction is ‘put on hold’ while the interlocutors take care of some other business, which has to do with the participants' orientation to matters of language competence” (Brouwer, 2004: 93). Jefferson (1987: 97) has also referred to this type of repair, in which the correction is made the “interactional business of its own right” as an “exposed correction”. She terms the second type of repair “embedded correction” (1987: 95). In such instances, correction occurs unexposed, and the topic of the interaction continues uninterrupted. Research on repair in second language conversations has been done by Brouwer (2004), who posits that correction sequences in such conversations tend to be side sequences.

Research on repair in conversation as an instance of language management has thus far been limited to instances of simple (discourse-based) management. One summarizing theoretical article is that of Miyazaki (2001), who uses slightly different terminology and maps out a framework for what he calls “communicative adjustment in language acquisition” in detail. He refers to “adjustment markers”, or “the stimulus which invites adjustment from the interlocutor” (p. 46). These are further divided into requests for clarification (the initiation of other-initiated other-repair in CA terms) and requests for adjustment (the initiation of self-initiated other-repair). When a request for adjustment is direct, this is referred to as a “flag” (Miyazaki, 2001: 47). For our purposes, we can understand the adjustment request marker as a form of explicit, verbal noting. The directness and indirectness of the adjustment request marker is relevant in our data as well.

Another relevant investigation of this phenomenon is that of Ho and Jernudd (2000). Among other things, they describe ways of initiating other-repair: posing questions and expression of uncertainty. Self-initiated other-repair emerges in the

turn subsequent to the repairable item's turn. It appears as a question, and the repair is the adjacency-paired answer. The difference between the work of Ho and Jernudd and the present paper is that these authors deal with talk between NSs of a given language (Hong Kong Cantonese) and the present paper deals with what has been termed contact situations (Fan, 1994) or "second language conversations" (Wagner, 1996; Gardner & Wagner, 2004). In this paper, I will focus on the latter term, and utilize Membership Categorization Analysis in doing so.

Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA, see e.g. Hester & Eglin, 1997, Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002) posits that members of society demonstrate their membership through the categorization of people and things in and through their interactions. Schegloff (2007:463) has also described categorization as a way of "doing description", "word selection", "how speakers come to use the words they do, and how that informs the hearing that the talk gets from the recipients". Individual participants in interactions negotiate and make sense of the activities that they presume the various categories will do. For example, NNSs of a language make errors, and, accordingly, NSs serve as "language experts" and correct them.

Gardner and Wagner (2004:16) point out that "foreign language speaker" is not a permanent identity or category permanently assigned to an individual. That is, it is possible to either make one's own or another's non-nativeness relevant at any point in an interaction. The ways in which it is possible to do so include repairs and corrections (Kurahila, 2004; Brouwer, Rasmussen and Wagner, 2004), accent (Brouwer, 2004), delays (Wong, 2004) and reformulations (Gardner, 2004; Gardner & Wagner 2004:16). As has been demonstrated by Kurahila (2004), it cannot be assumed that when NNSs initiate repair, their interlocutors will take on the role of "language experts" and correct them. It is necessary to determine which of these ways of making non-nativeness relevant are phenomena involving reflection by the interaction participants.

There is one final, highly important aspect of the situations described in this paper. The interactions analyzed below take place in public, and the NNSs have initiated them with an ulterior motive (to spread religious gospel), and the NSs enter the situation with almost no knowledge of why the encounter has been initiated. The NNSs have been instructed to utilize the NSs as much as possible in order to learn Czech, while the NSs may not be accustomed to being categorized as language experts and may not categorize themselves as such. These situations thus differ from many of the classroom learning situations often studied using CA (e.g. Seedhouse, 2004; Markee, 2000).

*Noting as revealed by checking in second language conversation data*

In this section, I will examine some instances of explicit noting as displayed by checking in second language conversation data. More specifically, I will investigate two types of aforementioned “checking” in which a missionary, unsure about some linguistic phenomenon in an utterance, initiates repair from his interlocutor. The initiation of such repair can be done in several ways, and can involve the invoking of categorial identities as well as the situational establishment of norms for what we can call “foreigner Czech”. I will divide this further into two types, which I will paraphrase as “Is that correct?” and “Czech is difficult”. While the former points more to the categorization of native-Czech-speaking interlocutors as “linguistic experts” the latter is more closely associated with the missionaries’ self-categorization as “language learners”.

*“Is that correct?”*

In the cases in this section, speaker categorization is done explicitly. There is a focus on the category of “language expert”, and the initiation of repair is more direct (recalling Miyazaki’s descriptions of “flags” above). In all of these cases, the missionary notes a potential deviation and explicitly checks it with his interlocutor, either by asking if a given phenomenon is correct or by asking how to say something. In these cases, the NS of Czech, the supposed “linguistic expert”, is expected to come up with an adjustment design.

Here we can find simple cases in which the initiated correction is actually done by the interlocutor, such as the following situation, which is the case of a word search.

**Case 1:** “Is that correct?”<sup>1</sup> “How do you say that?” (22)

106. M1: yeah (.) I think that we’re not here by chance (.) that evo-  
 107. evolution **how do you say in Czech evolūt-**  
 108. C27: vývoj. evolve.  
 109. M1: yeah: like that ((laughs))

The lexical item sought here, the Czech word for “evolution”, was an easy fix on the one hand because it is a lexical feature as opposed to a grammatical (or other) one and on the other hand because it is a word that has two forms in Czech, an international form and a Czech form, so we can postulate that it was easy for the Czech interlocutor to implement the adjustment.

Another such instance concerns the issue of making oneself understood in the context of a more complex discussion, as in the following case of a longer, summarizing check.

**Case 2: “Is that understandable?” (22)**

182. M1: and and in he same way every one of us here in this world has free  
183. will (.) and God do- God doesn't force us to like be obedient to  
184. hear to be believers we can like do whatever we can kill someone  
185. else (.) even though like it isn't good  
186. C28:(yeah)  
187. M1: **I don't know if that makes sense for you it is hard to expr- exrep-**  
188. **express in Czech**  
189. C28:well: alright. alright I understand  
190. M1: yeah (.) but it's a good question

More typically, however, we find cases in which it is less clear what is expected of the Czech interlocutor, as in the following.

**Case 3: Is that correct? “How do you say that?” (14)**

112. M1: how old is he?  
113. C16:ten  
114. M1: ten? yeah? and how long do like horses ((incorrect form)) live? **I**  
115. **don't know if that's correct**  
116. C16:well, no ((laughter))  
117. M1: ((laughs)) how long like what's normal? ten years? fifteen years?  
118. like for horses ((incorrect form)) (.) **I don't know how it declines**  
119. **((Eng.))how do you say that?**  
120. C16:how long we- like we've been riding horses or the ((masc.))horse?  
121. M1: well like the ((masc.)) horse how l- how long does it live?  
122. C16:well I don't know thirty years  
123. M1: thirty years?  
124. C16:the ((masc.)) yeah  
125. M1: (that's) he's young young  
126. C16:mm  
127. M1: ten years  
128. C16:yeah quite

In this case, M1 is talking to two teenage girls at a bus stop. They have told him that they cannot come to the free English class he has offered them because they will be busy riding horses. In the subsequent discussion of the age of the one girl's horse, M1's question intonation in his initiation of repair suggests that he does not know how to decline the Czech word for “horse”, *kůň*, and notes a potential deviation by checking the use of the nominative plural in lines 114–115, thus initiating a side sequence. C16 responds that it is not correct in line 116, but does not offer repair. In line 118, M1 tries to use the word again, this time in accusative plural, followed by an account in line 118 (that he does not know how to decline the word). In line



120, C16 reveals that it is not clear what M1 is asking, and offers a potential repair, the word in nominative singular. M1 is then able to adjust his original question by using the nominative singular form in line 121. The use of the demonstrative pronoun with question intonation in line 121 indicates that M1 did not know the gender of the word and is guessing that it is masculine. C16 confirms this in line 124. It should be observed that the original deviation was not corrected (as M1 never actually uttered the correct nominative plural of the word for “horse”), but rather, the problem was managed by talking around it (it was enough to use the singular to get the original meaning of M1’s question across).

In the following two cases, the same word and grammatical phenomenon is repeatedly checked by the missionary through asking for confirmation of a potentially correct variant.

**Case 4: “Is that correct?” Služba I (34)**

3. M3: well, we am here from America
4. C39:uh huh
5. M3: as volunteers
6. C39:mm
7. M3: uh like we do I do a few **services ((incorrect form))?** **services**
8. **((incorrect form))?** **correct?**
9. C39:mm hmm
10. M3: like we teach a fr- free English course

**Case 5: “Is that correct?” Služba II (36)**

1. M3: well excuse me can I speak with you for a little while?
2. C41:[yeah]
3. C42:[yeah but we’re in a hurry]
4. M3: well: maybe I am too ((laughter)) well like I’m here (.) uh as
5. volunteers (.) uhm from America (.) uh I do a **few (service)**
6. **correct? Czech is**
7. C41/C42: (yeah yeah)
8. M3: **a few service ((incorrect form)) correct?**
9. C41:(something is a few)
10. M3: well so (.) um yeah one ((masc.)) thing ((fem.)) is I teach a free
11. ((masc.)) free ((fem., incorrect form)) English course
12. C42:yeah yeah right yeah

The grammatical phenomenon that M3 checks in both cases is the genitive plural of the Czech word *služba* (“service”), which takes the genitive case following the word *pár* (“a few”). It appears in both cases that M3 has noted his own deviation in terms of the use of case endings — he is continually seeking the appropriate form of the word, which would be *služeb*. However, the reactions of M3’s interlocutors

(line 8 in Case 4 and line 7 in Case 5) suggest that they interpret his checking as an issue of word choice and not of case endings. This may indicate that it is enough for M3's interlocutors to understand him in his word choice and that their set of norms for his "foreigner Czech" does not include perfect grammar. In line 8 of Case 5, however, M3 retries his "checking", likely having understood that C41 and C42 did not understand his initial checking to be related to grammar. Again, his interlocutors do not do the repair.

Finally, there is a case of checking done rather through intonation than through explicit questions.

**Case 6: "Is that correct?" (17)**

115. C20:well: I (.) don't even read many books at all I'm not really about  
 116. that  
 117. M1: yeah? and do you like history? or  
 118. C20:ah not much either ((laughs)) it doesn't interest me ((accusative))  
 119. M1: ((laughs)) it doesn't interest you ((dative, incorrect))?  
 120. C20:no it doesn't interest me ((accusative)), not history  
 121. M1: and what what interests you ((dative))? **what interests you**  
 122. **((accusative)) or what interests you ((dative))?**  
 123. C20:what interests me ((accusative))?  
 124. M1: **what interests you ((dative))?**  
 125. C20:(.) well a lot of things but nothing to do with like school (or like)  
 126. studying

This case differs from the previous ones in that the checking is done solely through intonation and the offering of alternative variants, and there is no explicit verbal component such as "Is that correct?" or "how do you say that?". In line 118, C20 states that he is not interested in history. M1 repeats this sentence after him with question intonation ("to vám nebaví", line 119) with the pronoun "me" incorrectly, in dative case as opposed to accusative. C20 repeats the pronoun *mě* in line 120. However, the pronoun for "me" in Czech differs from the pronoun for "you" in that the pronoun for "me" in the accusative case sounds the same as the variant in the dative case (*mně*), so C20 is unable to help M1 adjust his utterance. In lines 121–122, M1 does the check in an initiated side sequence offering two possible variants of the pronoun, dative and accusative. In line 123, C20 repeats the accusative construction from line 120, with the same problem occurring. He is perhaps testing what M1 means. He demonstrates no awareness that he has been asked to explicitly repair M1's utterance. M1 hence repeats the construction erroneously in line 124, and C20 continues with the conversation in line 123. The correction is embedded into the conversation, but it does not help M1 to make the proper adjustment.

*“Czech is difficult”*

In some instances, the missionaries provide an explanation, an account of why they have trouble expressing themselves. In this section, I will analyze two such cases. The accounting for the deviation is the statement “Czech is difficult” (or some form thereof) uttered in a side sequence. In these cases, it will be shown that this utterance revealing noting establishes the category of “non-native speaker”, focusing on the American missionary and his language problems. This account explicitly establishes a set of norms for which the missionary believes he should be held accountable, and it also helps in topic continuation for the interaction overall.

## Case 7: “Czech is difficult” I: Believing in God (19)

18. M3: one for you for you
19. ( )
20. M1: and for you too ((laughs))
21. M3: and for you too (.) uh also main we are here because **we believe in**
22. **God ((nominative)) (.) in God ((accusative)) excuse me (my Cze-)**
23. C22: in God ((accusative)) yeah
24. C23: mm
25. M3: **Czech is no- is not good ((laughter)) but I don't know if you are a**
26. **believer or (.) (in God ((locative)))**
27. C22: well I believe a little a little,
28. M3: mmhmm
29. C22: but like sometimes I have doubts to but like I believe
30. M3: mm hmm (.) well like which ((masc.)) form ((fem.)) something like
31. energy or (.) G- God like
32. C22: mm
33. M3: um like we believe in God ((nominative)) (.) also in Je- in Jesus
34. Christ um (.) like (.) and also **((laughs)) Czech is**
35. M1: but he speaks well
36. M3: noo
37. M1: he can already make himself understood yeah
38. M3: no: it isn't good
39. M1: he's been here three months here in the Czech Republic
40. C22: so for being here three months you speak quite well really
41. C23: yeah quite well
42. M1: yeah three months
43. M3: I think it isn't good
44. C22: like abroad they say mainly in Italy that Czech is (gradually) the
45. hardest language like
46. M3: yeah
47. C22: so you speak perf- you speak quite nicely for being here that long

In this extract, the identity of M3 is established as “not good Czech speaker”, in part through his explicit noting. C22, C23, and C24 are teenagers who M1 and M3 have approached in public. M3 has been able thus far in this interaction, with his self-described poor command of Czech (lines 22, 25, 37, 39, 44), to maintain topic flow in the conversation. When asking the teenagers about their religious faith, he explicitly notes his own deviation from the norm for Czech speakers — not being able to express himself sufficiently. This occurs in lines 21–22, in which he does a self-repair of the case ending in the expression “to believe in God”, eliciting confirmation of this repair from his interlocutors (which C22 repairs in line 23). In line 25, M3 utters explicit self-deprecation, another account for his difficulties. In lines 30 and 33, M3 attempts to respond to C22’s answers in line 29. This is where M3 again provides an account of his communication difficulties, which leads, conversationally, to the elicitation of compliments which ultimately occur later in the interaction.

What then follows is interesting from the perspective of how M3’s interlocutors view him in relation to Czech language acquisition norms. In line 36, M1 compliments M3 on his Czech. M3 rejects the compliment, and then M1 tones it down in line 38 (“he can make himself understood”). M3 rejects this further, and then in line 40, M1 provides what I will call a “norm-establishing account”. M3 has only been in the country for three months, hence his speaking ability should not be evaluated according to either the norm for Czechs or the norm for M1 himself, who has been in the country for nearly two years. On the basis of this norm, C22 evaluates M3’s abilities positively in line 41, and C23 adds to this in line 42. After M3 continues to reject the compliments in line 44, C22 adds to the elaboration of the norm of Czech as spoken by NNSs in lines 45–46. However, we should note that C22 corrects himself in line 48 — M3 does not speak “perfectly”, but “rather nicely for that amount of time”. In this case, norm deviations occur and the deviations are evaluated negatively before new, more appropriate norms are actually established. This results in a positive evaluation — that M3 speaks very well given the short amount of time he has spent in the country.

There is one final case in which missionary M3 establishes his identity as a foreign language speaker through his explicit noting.

#### Case 8: “Czech is difficult” II: Why I’m here (36)

18. C41:=we’re in the same class
19. M3: mm hmm (.) yeah (..) u:m I don’t know if you’d like to like (.)
20. **impr-** ah I don’t know perfect uh or improve ((pf.)) improve ((impf.))
21. **mm** Czech is very difficult for for me
22. C41:right yeah
23. M3: yeah((handing out flyers)) and one for you too

24. C42:thanks  
 25. M3: um like (.) it's free for everyone  
 26. C42:mm hmm  
 27. M3: and (.) uh like also we teach like (.) uh a course on how to stop  
 28. smoking  
 29. C42:yeah yeah  
 30. M3: um uh (.) and also mainly I'm here to speak  
 31. C42:Czech? yeah ((laughs))  
 32. M3: Czech ((laughs)) that too. u:h with people with people like about  
 33. (.) the church or about religious thing

M3's interlocutors C41 and C42 have informed him that they are classmates in school, where they learn English. M3 expands on this in lines 19–20 and conducts a word search for the appropriate verb for “to improve” or “to perfect” one's language skills. He provides an accounting of the word search in line 21. Interlocutor C41 displays some sort of understanding (either of the difficulty of the situation or of what M3 was trying to say) in line 22, and the conversation continues on throughout lines 30. The point at which M3's interlocutors acknowledge his self-categorization as a foreign language speaker is in line 31.

This case demonstrates that M3 is able to make himself understood with some small adjustments made in his speech. His interlocutors react to the sufficiency of his Czech skills by displaying their understanding, but do not correct him. This is a case in which M3's deviation from norms and subsequent negative evaluation is noted explicitly only by himself in line 21. It appears that, exceptionally in this case, M3 is trying to get through the various points in the conversation as opposed to trying to make his Czech learning an extra topic within it, with the exception of line 21, in which his interlocutor does not accept this topic nomination. In line 32, he emphasizes that speaking Czech is just one of the things (not necessarily the most important thing) he does (“that too”).

### *Which language problems can be solved?: Checking and various language features*

To summarize, the deviations discussed and “checked” above concern the following language features:

Case	Type of Deviation	Example
1	lexical choice	“evolution” in Czech
2	overall semantic coherence of utterance	Explanation of concept of “svobodné jednání” (free will)

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3	<b>noun</b> pluralization, gender	<b>gender</b> and pluralization of “kůň” (horse)
4	<b>noun</b> declination, pluralization, case government	<b>genitive</b> plural of “služba” (service) and its use following the word “pár” (a few)
5	<b>noun</b> declination, pluralization, case government (twice)	<b>genitive</b> plural of “služba” (service) and its use following the word “pár” (a few)
6	<b>pronoun</b> declination, case government	<b>Selection</b> of accusative case (“co vás baví”) for the verb “bavit” (to interest) as opposed to the dative case
7	<b>noun</b> declination, case government	<b>Accusative</b> case form for “Bůh” (God) and the selection of this case in the phrase “to believe in God”
8	<b>lexical</b> choice, verbal aspect	<b>Czech</b> word for “improve” or “perfect” and the choice of its imperfective or perfective aspect

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The question above should be phrased, rather, as what language problems speakers *believe* can be solved. The answer lies in another important connection between simple management and organized management: speakers most likely note what they have been taught to note, and they thus initiate repair which they believe is repairable. This is related to the way they are initially taught and evaluated, in classrooms, through the use of textbooks, or otherwise. What constitutes a notable, relevant deviation for a NNS may not be the same for a NS. And often in fact, it is not. The NSs often do not correct the NNSs where the NNS request that they be corrected. Native Czech speakers did not learn how to decline Czech nouns by memorizing noun declination paradigms, but rather, from speaking the language, and while their understanding of what deviations occur may correspond some extent with that of the NNS, they do not overlap entirely. In other words, the missionaries are “doing being language learners” in contexts in which “doing *not* being language learners” (as discussed in Firth, 2009) is expected.

Overall, it appears that when the missionaries explicitly note deviations in their own speech and initiate adjustments in the form of repair from their interlocutors, it is not common for the interlocutors to repair grammatical errors, even though it is precisely this type of repair which is initiated, particularly by less experienced missionaries. Word searches, on the other hand, are more “adjustable” than grammatical deviations. Though the Czech interlocutors can, in a highly theoretical sense, function as “linguistic experts” and offer adjustment designs, there are no examples from this data to suggest that they make extra efforts do so. Rather, they focus on understanding the content of the missionaries’ talk.

The specific language phenomena presented here are, of course, at least in part specific to English speakers learning Czech. The data contain no examples of explicitly noted deviations in areas such as, for example, phonology, even though we

as researchers have no reason to believe that such deviations do not occur. More research is thus needed for other language combinations.

*Who is expected to solve specific language problems?*

As the previous sections reveal for the NS Czech speakers in the interaction, the main goal appears to be the maintenance of conversational flow and the achievement of intersubjective understanding. In other words, deviations may be noted implicitly, not evaluated, or evaluated and not adjusted. In this vein, it should be pointed out that there is an important difference between deviations which are noted explicitly and those which are noted implicitly, i.e. not displayed verbally (in the case of the data in this paper). This fact should be integrated into the models of LM which display all of its possible courses (e.g. Miyazaki, 2001:41), as these models tend to differentiate merely between whether a deviation is noted or not noted, evaluated or not evaluated, and the like.

In posing the question of who is expected to solve specific language problems, it is possible to make two main observations. One is that different norms for linguistic competence are clearly applied to the missionaries as NNSs of Czech, and there are thus different sets of deviations which are noted in various ways. The other is that continuous interactions with Czech speakers may help the missionaries to manage their acquisition of Czech, but only to the degree that it helps them to make themselves understood, not such that they can speak grammatically correct Czech. This confirms the results reached by Kurhila (2004, 2005), who speaks of “different orientations to grammatical correctness” between NSs and NNSs of Finnish, offering several possible explanations for this:

1. While NNSs orient to the role of “second language learner”, NS tend not to orient to the role of “second language teacher” if they are not in a classroom setting, but rather, to other institutional roles such as “secretary”.
2. Grammatical correctness is a more important factor for understanding for NNS than for NS.
3. NNSs use the interaction for the purpose of learning.

(Kurhila 2005: 155–157)

Taking Kurhila’s first point a step further, let us return for a moment to the broader context of the missionaries “doing being language learners”. Some aspects of their behavior have been observed (as well as reflected by the missionaries in interviews) to generate questions such as: “You’re American, why are you here learning Czech?”, which can be easily answered through an explanation of the church and its activities (which is the missionaries’ overall communicative goal). Over the course of the two-year period, the missionaries develop an awareness of local

norms, of the degree to which their Czech interlocutors are accustomed to communicating with NNSs of Czech. In most cases, as the missionaries often revealed in interviews, the experience of most of their interlocutors with NNS Czech speakers was minimal.

Thus, in addition to utilizing the status as a language learner, the missionary can utilize the expectations of his interlocutors, prompting them to note deviations verbally. We could call this “prompted noting” (which is not necessarily successful). The same applies to cases in which the missionaries approach their interlocutors in public and ask a question regarding the meaning of a word in Czech or the difference between two seemingly synonymous words in Czech (those often found by looking up a single English word in an English-Czech dictionary). From the perspective of organized management, they have been taught to do this by their church, through instructional materials and from older, more experienced missionaries. As the following example, taken from a missionary handbook, shows, language is an appropriate topic on which to base a conversation.

37. A good way to begin talking to someone while contacting is to ask them what a certain Czech word means. You can use some of these questions:

Jaký je rozdíl mezi slovy \_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_? ((What is the difference between the words \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_?)) Don't forget adding (sic) the word slovy ((words)), it helps clear up that you are asking about those specific words. Also, don't use Co je rozdíl... Co znamená slovo \_\_\_\_? ((What is the difference (incorrect form)... What does the word \_\_\_\_ mean?)) Use it when you want to know what a specific word means (for example, on a bus, you can use it to ask someone what a word on an advertisement flyer means).

(From missionary instructional materials collected in the field)

This set of instructions, which has been taken from a handbook written for missionaries serving in the Czech Republic, serves both as an element of organized language acquisition management and the management of the larger goal of the church — to make contact with as many people as possible in an attempt to spread religious gospel. In actual interactions, missionaries initiate conversations in this way, and they also seek corrections of presumed mistakes from their interlocutors. If the interlocutors oblige in correcting them or sufficiently explaining the differences between words, the missionaries continue in the organized management of their language acquisition by writing the information down in their small appointment books, which they carry around at all times, either during or immediately after the interaction. In short, the missionaries use (and are taught to use) their status as NNSs and their interlocutors' status as NSs to continue the conversation, and this in itself is a form of organized management.



## Concluding remarks

The concept of noting as revealed by checking has been analyzed as a simple management strategy in the light of the Conversation Analysis concept of self-initiated other-repair. Through this analysis, two major points have been made. The first of these is that there is a limit to the types of deviations, the noting of which is revealed in this way. For example, in the case of an NNS Czech speaker, checking is mainly done in cases of potential lexical, morphological and syntactic deviations, and is most commonly executed in the first of these. The second point is that in order for adjustment to be realized, there must be an appropriate categorical context for its execution. This applies particularly to the categorical roles that speakers assign (or do not assign) to one another situationally, such as “non-native speaker” or “language expert”. This second point supports the hypothesis by Ho and Jernudd (2000: 205) that “personal and contextual factors are crucial variables which determine which type of repair will be socially acceptable (and therefore prominent) in a particular setting”, and also the findings by Kurhila (2004, 2005), which state that NSs do not tend to take on the “language expert role” outside of the classroom, and it also conforms to the general organization of repair in conversation, in which self-repair is preferred to other-repair (Schegloff, Sacks & Jefferson, 1977).

This paper has hence further exemplified the LMT-CA connection, which thus far has focused on native situations (Ho & Jernudd, 2000) and a more general framework for adjustment (Miyazaki, 2001), expanding the analysis into MCA as well. The use of MCA analysis of LM situations presents us with insight into who is allowed or expected to overtly and explicitly note deviations, what type of deviations they are allowed or expected to note, how (and sequentially, when) they are allowed or expected to do so, and how (and sequentially, when) they are allowed or expected to design and implement adjustments.

The categorization of participants in discourse by the American missionaries is an instructed action. The missionaries have been taught on various levels (for example, the church, the mission, and the pair of two missionaries working together) to do and utilize these categorizations in order to manage their varying goals — learning language, so that they might do their job (spreading the gospel), and at the same time doing their job while learning language. Organized management thus takes place on each level, as well as through the interaction of levels.

In terms of methodology, it is necessary to look back to Neustupny (1985), who points to the variety of potential methods which can be used to identify noting (both aware and unaware), speculating that “a more extensive repertoire of research techniques will be available in the future” (1985: 169). It should be observed here that the data reveal only explicit noting of norm deviations. It is possible to

speculate that implicit noting did occur, as well as unaware noting. The CA perspective emphasized here however, based in Ethnomethodology with its indexical aspect, encourages the focus on that which is made relevant by the participants in discourse themselves. In this sense, even in the absence of “a more extensive repertoire of research techniques” for uncovering noting, naturally-occurring data can significantly contribute to the mapping of management.

## Transcription Conventions

[ ]	the onset and ending of simultaneous talk of two speakers (overlap)
?	rising intonation
.	falling intonation
,	continuing intonation
:	lengthening of the preceding syllable
=	sudden insertion of the following expression or turn, without pause (latching on)
(.)	short pause
(..)	longer pause
(...)	long pause
( )	unintelligible point
(but)	presumed, but not completely intelligible expression
((laughs))	comment by the transcriber
-	sudden interruption of the word or construction
<u>never</u>	strong emphasis on a syllable or word
...	omitted portion of the transcript

## Note

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1. The original wordings of all the cases which are rendered here in English can be found in the Appendix.

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## Appendix: Original Czech language transcript excerpts

### Case 1: “Is that correct?” “How do you say that?” (22)

106. M1: jo? (.) já si myslím že nejsme tady náhodou (.) že evo- evoluce **jak**  
 107. **se řekne česky evoluc-**  
 108. C27: vývoj. evoluce.  
 109. M1: jo: takhle ((laughs))

### Case 2: “Is that understandable?” (22)

182. M1: a a stejným způsobem každý z nás tady v tomto světě má svobodné  
 183. jednání (.) a bůh ne- bůh nás nevnučuje abychom jako byli poslušný  
 184. abychom slyšeli abychom byli věřící můžeme jako dělat cokoliv můžeme  
 185. zabít někoho jiného (.) i když jako to není dobrý  
 186. C28: (no jo)  
 187. M1: **nevím jestli to dává smysl pro vás to je těžký vyjad- vydař-**  
 188. **vyjádřit v češtině**  
 189. C28: no: dobrý. dobrý rozumím  
 190. M1: no (.) ale to je dobrá otázka

### Case 3: Is that correct? “How do you say that?” (14)

112. M1: kolik je mu?  
 113. C16: deset  
 114. M1: deset? jo? a jak dlouho jako kony žijí? **nevím jestli je to správný**  
 115. C16: no, ne ((laughter))  
 116. M1: ((laughs)) jak dlouho jako co je normální? deset roků? patnáct roků?  
 117. pro jako kony (.) **nevím jak se skloňuje how do you say that?**  
 118. C16: jak dlouho jezdi- jako my jezdíme na koni nebo ten kůň?  
 119. M1: no jako ten kůň jak dl- jak dlouho žije?  
 120. C16: no nevím třicet roků  
 121. M1: třicet roku?  
 122. C16: no ten jo  
 123. M1: (to je to) je mladý mladý  
 124. C16: mm  
 125. M1: deset roků  
 126. C16: docela jo

### Case 4: “Is that correct?” Služba I (34)

3. M3: no, my jsem zde z ameriky  
 4. C39: uh huh  
 5. M3: jako dobrovolníci  
 6. C39: mm  
 7. M3: uh jako děláme dělám par **služb? služby? správně?**  
 8. C39: mm hmm  
 9. M3: jako učíme bezplatn- bezplatný anglický kurs

## Case 5: “Is that correct?” Služba II (36)

1. M3: no prosím vás můžu mluvit s vámi na chvílku?
2. C41: [no]
3. C42: [spěcháme ale no]
4. M3: no: možná já taky ((laughter)) no jako jsem tady (.) uh jako
5. dobrovolníci (.) uhm z ameriky (.) uh dělám pár **(služba) správně?**
6. **čeština je**
7. C41/C42: (no no)
8. M3: **par služba správně?**
9. C41: (něco je pár)
10. M3: no tak (.) um jo jeden věc je učím bezplatný bezplatnu anglický
11. kurz
12. C42: jo jo jasně no

## Case 6: “Is that correct?” (17)

115. C20: no: já spíš (.) ani knížky celkově moc nečtu já na tohle moc ne to
116. nejsem
117. M1: yeah? a máte rád dějiny? nebo
118. C20: ah taky moc ne ((laughs)) mě to nebaví
119. M1: ((laughs)) to vám nebaví?
120. C20: ne nebaví mě dějiny ne
121. M1: a co co vám baví? **co vás baví nebo co vám baví?**
122. C20: co mě baví?
123. M1: **co vám baví?**
124. C20: (.) no: tak je toho dost ale nic kolem jako školy (nebo jako to)
125. učení

## Case 7: “Czech is difficult” I: Believing in God (19)

18. M3: jeden pro vás pro vás
19. ( )
20. M1: a i pro vás ((laughs))
21. M3: a i pro vás (.) uh taky hlavní my jsme zde je protože **věříme v bůh**
22. **(.) v boha promiňte (můj češt-)**
23. C22: v boha no
24. C23: mm
25. M3: **čeština je ne- není dobré ((laughter))** ale nevím jestli jste věřící
26. nebo (.) **(v bohu)**
27. C22: no já trochu trochu věřím,
28. M3: mmhmm
29. C22: ale jako občas mám i pochybnosti ale jako věřím
30. M3: mm hmm (.) no jako jaký forma něco jako energie nebo (.) b- bůh
31. jako
32. C22: mm
33. M3: um jako věříme v bůh uh (.) taky v je- v ježiši kristu um (.) jako
34. (.) a taky((laughs)) **čeština je**
35. M1: ale dobré mluví
36. M3: nee

37. M1: domluví se už jo  
38. M3: ne: není dobré  
39. M1: je tady tři měsíce tady v českách  
40. C22: tak na to že jste tady tři měsíce tak mluvíte docela dobře to jo  
41. C23: jo docela dobrý  
42. M1: no tři měsíce  
43. M3: myslím že to není dobrý  
44. C22: jako v zahraničí říkají hlavně v itálii že čeština je  
45. (pomalu)nejtěžší jazyk jako  
46. M3: jo  
47. C22: tak to umíte perf- to umíte docela pěkně už na tu dobu

**Case 8: “Czech is difficult” II: Why I’m here (36)**

18. C41: =chodíme spolu do třídy  
19. M3: mm hmm (.) jo (..) u:m nevím jestli chtěl byste jako (.) **lepš- ah**  
20. **nevím dokonale uh nebo lepšíit lepšovat mm český je velmi těžký pro**  
21. **pro mě**  
22. C41: jasně no  
23. M3: jo ((handing out flyers)) a jeden pro vás taky  
24. C42: díky  
25. M3: um jako (.) je to zdarma pro všechny  
26. C42: mm hmm  
27. M3: a (.) uh jako taky my učíme uh jak (.) uh kurz o jak přestat  
28. kouřit  
29. C42: jojo  
30. M3: um uh (.) a taky hlavní jsem zde je abych mluvil  
31. C42: česky? jo ((laughs))  
32. M3: česky ((laughs)) to taky. u:h s lidmi s lidmi jako o (.) církvi  
33. nebo o náboženský věci

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