



Making the visual turn – The photographic interview as introspection in SLA research?

SLA acquisition is not limited to classroom learning anymore – and probably never has been in the first place. In fact, language learning beyond class is an emerging topic in SLA research (Benson/Reinders 2011). Within an environment that is highly structured by the target language, the opportunities for language learning are numerous. Taking up on the idea of the individual learner embedded in an ocean of potential learning opportunities, Leo van Lier (2000) sketched a paradigmatic shift *from input to affordance*, thus suggesting an ecological approach to language learning. However, which of those opportunities are perceived and acted upon, depends on the individual learners' relationship to their environment, which renders second language learning an intensely individual endeavor. As one opportunity to make those individual endeavors visible to research, Kalaja and Pitkähnen-Huhta (2018) suggest the use of visual methods and even call for a *visual turn* in SLA research methodology.

I want to discuss the photographic interview (Wuggenig 1988) as one opportunity to engage in that visual turn and to tackle the challenges of researching SLA beyond class: Given the facts that language learning may be realized constantly in everyday life and that researchers cannot be around learners 24/7, the photographic interview offers an opportunity for learners to document their learning whenever they realize it. As introspection, the photographic interview allows for insights into how and why particular moments were perceived as learning opportunities, while others were not. However, there are certain practical challenges as well, for example how to acquire participants, as the photographic interview is a method that requires a certain level of trust between researchers and participants (Wuggenig 1988), and the classroom as a location of relationship building plays only a marginal role when researching learning beyond class.

Literature

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