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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS IN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS:

"THIRD TONGUE" COMMUNICATIONS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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By Jung-huel Becky Yeh

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INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS IN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS: "THIRD TONGUE" COMMUNICATIONS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

BY

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Abstract

This project reviews and integrates inferencing theory (Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b) and research findings dealing with interactive features of both NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions, and then raises the question of what may be different about NNS/NNS interactions. The purpose of generalizing interactive features from previous NS/NNS and NNS/NNS investigations is threefold: 1) to describe features of intercultural interactions regardless of the native language of the interlocutors; 2) from these generalized features, to observe features specific to NNS/NNS interactions; 3) and to project the path of future NNS/NNS investigations.

This dissertation focuses on a speech community composed mostly of non-native speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in an English as a Second Language (ESL) institution. Through observing community members' gatherings and interactions in various speech events, the present study seeks to describe and examine the adjustments they make in communicative patterns and styles. Specifically, the goal of this project is to explore three issues in the "third tongue" speech community: ways of talking and gathering among non-native speakers, interaction order, and participation styles in the classroom.

The investigation of this speech community begins with an extensive description of the community and then analyzes the patterns of communication and interactions of the community through assessing various speech events and issues. Chapter IV provides an overview of the community, describing how members gather and talk in different venues. This chapter also portrays how members interact and communicate in the community by examining their ways of talking and gathering under the influence of both

compulsory (institutional) and spontaneous (social) forces. Chapter V then examines

how non-native speakers construct interactions in the presence of a native English

instructor in the classroom. This chapter further demonstrates how instructor/student

interactions initiate interactions among students and analyzes how non-native speakers

develop turn-taking sensibilities and co-construct interactions. Finally, Chapter VI

explains why participants become involved in seminar-type discussions in varying

degrees, and analyzes and demonstrates the participation styles of less involved

participants.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

As the growth of intercultural contacts around the world increases, the medium of communication used in various intercultural and international encounters to achieve political, diplomatic, business, or technological goals is often different from the native tongues of either party involved. The phenomenon of non-native speakers from different language backgrounds communicating in a common foreign language is described by Meeuwis (1994) as "third-tongue" communication. Little research has been done on such non-native/non-native (NNS/NNS) phenomena, but "third-tongue" communication deserves study because of the world's increasing reliance on a common language — mostly English — for exchanging information on various institutional and social occasions, along with the increasing emphasis on teaching and learning English as a second language.

According to Truchot (1994), about 2 billion people make up the English-speaking world. In addition to people who speak English as their native language, at least 350 million people speak English as a second language, and many more have some knowledge of or contact with English. English is very often the lingua franca of business, science, and technology, as well as of cultural, sports, and leisure activities. The growing importance of English in Europe and throughout the world can be seen by examining the languages used in international organizations, on academic occasions and in academic publications, and in educational curricula in the countries of the Europe and of Asia (Truchot, 1994, p. 145; Meeuwis, 1994). In Europe, 85% of the scientific research is published in English; at scholarly conferences taking place in countries other

than their own, 95% of European scholars delivered their papers in English, even when such conferences were taking place in Europe; and at international conferences, 76% of scholars converse in English. English is commonly used in international organizations to maintain the flow of communication between the branches of a company or in the presence of executive members of different linguistic origins. English has become an obligatory subject in most of the educational curricula in Europe and other areas of the world. English lessons occupy from four to six hours a week in these curricula; and the starting age for learning English as a second language has dropped to the age of 8, 9, or even younger (Truchot, 1994).

In Asia today, English has become the preferred second tongue. In a recent survey of senior Asian executives by Dow Jones Asia Dialogues (a joint venture of The Far Eastern Economic Review, The Asian Wall Street Journal, and Asian Business News), fully 93% agreed that English will retain its place as the language of Asian business. English is not only the language of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, of customs declarations and arrival cards, of air-traffic controllers and maritime agreements, of international contracts and technical journals, but of the future, of opportunity, of money (McGurn, March 21 1996). Unlike Europe, where French still holds an official status, in Asia English has no serious rival because the many dialects in China and Southeastern Asia make the unification of Asian language impossible. Nowadays, McGurn writes, "Asians who learn English today are learning it not to speak with Americans or Britain but to talk to one another" (p. 41). Within Asia, however, many quite distinctive forms of English have been flourishing for

years, such as Japlish, Chinglish, and Singlish. All these mix the normal form and grammatical structure of English with their own accents, dialects, and local jargons.

NNS/NNS Interactions as Intercultural Communication

"Third-tongue" (NNS/NNS) communication, though often treated as an intercultural interaction like native speaker/non-native speaker (NS/NNS) interactions, is a phenomenon still largely unexplored. While NNS/NNS communication shares many common features with NS/NNS interactions, the two kinds of interactions should not be treated as one phenomenon. In NNS/NNS interactions, all participants attempt to establish new communication strategies and speech conventions through linguistic symbols that are native to none of them; when their communicative performance and participation will not be evaluated or determined by native speakers, the intercultural interactions are almost certain to be different from those involving native speakers. When economic or political needs force people to communicate with those who speak a different language and live by different rules and norms, they must become capable of managing or adapting to diverse communicative situations, as well as interacting with people with whom they have no personal acquaintance, to acquire some small measure of personal and social control (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 1982a). They must set aside their old identities and establish new communication strategies and speech conventions to gain attention or power in the majority society. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982a) claim that new communication strategies and speech conventions usually symbolize group membership and a set of values mixing new ties with old. When one party in an interaction is native to the language being used, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982a) find that the right to speak and the obligation to answer are either predetermined or at

least strictly constrained, even though an illusion of equality, mutuality, and cordiality may prevail. Communicative performance in such NS/NNS occasions is subjectively evaluated and interpreted by the native speakers.

<center>Current Research Status on NNS/NNS Interactions</center>

While the importance of English as a communication medium in intercultural contexts grows, research exploring the linguistic problems in such intercultural encounters comes mostly from second language (L2) acquisition and socio-linguistic studies. Issues commonly discussed in such research, such as foreigner talk, miscommunication, and meaning negotiations, are mostly formulated from the viewpoint of native speakers. Many studies of intercultural interactions concentrate on structural and grammatical deficiencies from the perspective of second language acquisition (SLA) — that is, from the perspective of native speakers or theorists judging the acceptability of non-native speakers' utterances (Tarone, Cohen, & Guy, 1983; Pica, 1988; Pica, 1994; Young, 1995). Current SLA literature focuses extensively on the issues of metalinguistic awareness (e.g., the "correct" or "improved" utterances made by non-native speakers) and grammaticality judgments (Gass, Cohen, &Taron, 1994; Foster-Cohen, 1993; Birdsong, 1989; Chaudron, 1983).

However, the theoretical framework of intercultural interactions, especially those between non-native speakers communicating in a "third tongue," is still unclear, though investigations into second language acquisition and research from socio-linguistic perspectives have contributed much to the understanding of one kind of intercultural interactions, NS/NNS interactions. Reviewing and generalizing from literature and research in socio-linguistics and second language acquisition may provide a baseline for

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NNS/NNS interactions. Research on "third tongue" communication can expand on previous findings about NS/NNS interactions to explore phenomena occurring between non-native speakers.

Chapter II reviews theories, literature, and investigations related to intercultural encounters, including NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions, in order to generalize features of "third tongue" communication. Gumperz' inferencing theory (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz, 1992) identifies problematic factors in intercultural/interethnic interactions and explains from the socio-linguistic and pragmatic-discursive perspective why communication problems occur. Gumperz' inferencing theory facilitates the understanding of the on-going process of intercultural/interethnic interactions and elucidates interactive phenomena occurring during intercultural encounters. Chapter II also reviews and integrates research findings, assumptions, and suggestions on issues dealing with "foreigner talk" and misunderstandings and meaning negotiation in both NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions. Chapter II then generalizes research findings about NS/NNS interactions and extends those findings to develop research questions concerning NNS/NNS interactions. Chapter III introduces the two research methods used in this study to explore communicative patterns and behaviors in a "third tongue" speech community — ethnography and conversation analysis — and explains why these methods were chosen to analyze this type of speech community.

Objectives

This project studies a speech community composed mostly of non-native speakers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in an English as a Second Language (ESL) institution. In this speech community, most of the community members have

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varying degrees of difficulty with English and struggle to compensate for their own and others' language barriers and cultural differences. Through observing community members' gatherings and interactions in various speech events, the present study seeks to describe and examine the adjustments they make in communicative patterns and styles. Specifically, the goal of this project is to explore three issues in the "third tongue" speech community: ways of talking and gathering among non-native speakers, interaction order, and participation styles in the classroom.

The investigation of this speech community begins with an extensive description of the community and then analyzes the patterns of communication and interactions of the community through assessing various speech events and issues. Chapter IV provides an overview of the community, describing how members gather and talk in different venues. This chapter also portrays how members interact and communicate in the community by examining their ways of talking and gathering under the influence of both compulsory (institutional) and spontaneous (social) forces. Chapter V then examines how non-native speakers construct interactions in the presence of a native English instructor in the classroom. This chapter further demonstrates how instructor/student interactions initiate interactions among students and analyzes how non-native speakers develop turn-taking sensibilities and co-construct interactions. Finally, Chapter VI explains why participants become involved in seminar-type discussions in varying degrees, and analyzes and demonstrates the participation styles of less involved participants.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

WITHIN THE SOCIO-LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews and integrates inferencing theory (Gumperz, 1982, Gumperz

& Cook-Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b) and research findings dealing with interactive features

of both NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions, and then raises the question of what may be

different about NNS/NNS interactions. The purpose of generalizing interactive features

from previous NS/NNS and NNS/NNS investigations is threefold: 1) to describe features

of intercultural interactions regardless of the native language of the interlocutors; 2) from

these generalized features, to observe features specific to NNS/NNS interactions; 3) and

to project the path of future NNS/NNS investigations.

Inferencing Theory

Gumperz (1992) proposed that communication is a situated interpretation

constrained by what is said and how it is interpreted within the context. Inferences drawn

from communication can be validated only in relation to other background assumptions.

Inferencing, thus, is a presupposition-based and suggestive assessment of communicative

intent. The "background assumptions" are socially and interactively constructed in the

process of interaction by considering such elements as conversational sequences,

conversational management, and negotiation of meaning. The interpretive process,

Gumperz (1992) argues, treats verbal exchanges as "contextualization-based, on-line,

discourse-level inferencing rather than just concentrating on regularities of sequential

organization across speech exchanges" (p. 231). Gumperz demonstrates how knowledge

of grammar, language use, and rhetorical conventions enter into conversations and how

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the perception of communicative signs affect understanding in everyday conversations. In the inferencing process, identifying of socio-culturally familiar activities of conversational exchanges — a process called *contextualization* — helps interlocutors to evaluate messages and sequencing patterns in relation to contextualization cues. It is the matching between contextualization cues, previous interactive experience, and/or habitual or instinctive linguistic patterns of interlocutors that creates "co-occurrence expectations" in the interaction (Gumperz, 1982). When discussing conversational inference, Gumperz (1982) notes that signals in a given context need to be explicitly or implicitly recognized and conformed to others' expectations as a culturally identifiable activity in order for interlocutors to fit individual contributions into an overall theme. As Gumperz sees it, contextualization cues rely largely on speech products — for example, prosody (intonation, stress or accentuation, and pitch register shifts); paralinguistic signs (tempo, pausing and hesitation, and conversational synchrony); code choices within a linguistic repertoire; and choice of lexical forms or formulaic expressions (Gumperz, 1992a, p. 231).

Contextualization cues work communicatively because interactional participants are constantly making several degrees of generality in the inferential process. Gumperz (1992) introduces three levels of generality in the inferencing process: the perceptual level, the speech act (or sequential) level, and the activity level. Gumperz explains that in daily interactions these different levels always merge and that he proposes these three levels simply for the convenience of analysis, so that he can more easily elaborate how contextualization cues enter into the inferencing process. The different levels of generality identified by Gumperz and his associates are reviewed below to show how

these different levels work in inferencing processes and how these levels are employed in analyzing intercultural interactions.

The Perceptual Level

The perceptual level of inferencing separates shared or known items of information from new information and distinguishes between main points and side sequences of information. Inferencing processes on the perceptual level mainly aim at how auditory or visual signals function in a certain context: auditory or visual signals must be divided into information units (e.g., tone stressing) and phrases before these signals can be interpreted. Gumperz, Aulakh, and Kaltman (1982) find that perception of the relevant signs and of their signaling value varies from cultures to cultures, even among speakers of the same language. After examining recordings of natural conversations of an Indian social worker born in Malaysia, they conclude that Indian English sometimes sounds odd to English ears because different conventions govern the use of lexicons, syntax, and prosody. Though such variant signal systems sometimes cause misunderstanding, audiences of this Indian speaker could perceive and adapt to such differences by providing prompt responses or supporting comments (e.g., "yes," or repetitions of her words) because the interaction was rhythmically coordinated between speaker and audience.

The Speech Act Level

The speech act, or sequential, level of the inferencing process yields situated interpretations of communicative intent arising from direct inferences or from indirect or metaphoric inferences. Inferences that "go beyond what is overtly expressed through lexical content are included" in this level (Gumperz, 1992, p. 233). Examinations of the

inferencing process at the speech act level focus on the "communicative intent" rather than on the grammatical or logical oddities of the speaker. Gumperz, Aulakh, and Kaltman (1982) use the term "communicative intent" to describe how speakers express themselves by using different syntactical orders or linguistic devices. In analyzing this level, not only words uttered, but also contexts, prosody, and syntactic and lexical choices signaled in the interactions are assessed. For instance, Gumperz et al. (1982) find that the previously mentioned Indian speaker sometimes uses a string of noun phrases or conjunctions which make the discourse sound odd and difficult to understand for the native English speaker, but that "*she speaks the way she does in order to be understood and to elicit appropriate responses*" (p. 27, emphasis in original). Instead of judging Indian English discourse as loose, illogical, and lacking adequate structural clarity, Gumperz et al. suggest that one should attend to the direct and indirect contextualization cues as resources in the inferencing process.

Similarly, in another study Gumperz (1992) examines an argument between a native English speaker and an ESL (English as a Second Language) student and discovers that communication problems occur in this argument mainly because each interlocutor uses different contextualization strategies, strategies which each draws from his own language backgrounds and interpretive conventions. The NS, for instance, uses contouring, pausing, and tempo shifts to give rhetorical force to his argument, whereas the NNS uses interruptions as a kind of pleading. When the NNS fails to understand how such speech features (e.g., contouring, pausing, tempo shifts) function, and the NS is unable to interpret the intent of the NNS's constant interruptions, misunderstanding and

conflicts arise. Gumperz concludes that misunderstanding usually occurs when interlocutors recognize, or employ, different contextualization conventions.

<div align="center">The Global Level</div>

The global, or activity, level of inferencing deals with the signal expectation in the interaction based on contexts and the quality of the relationship between interlocutors. This level of inferencing process involves assuming or expecting certain behaviors to resolve ambiguities apparent at the perceptual or sequential levels. In other words, the inferencing process on the global level not only examines perceptions, speech acts, and sequencing in the consideration of contexts and different signal systems — what Goffman (1974) refers to as "framing" — but also generalizes inferences from a broader point of view.

As an example of analysis on the global level, Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982b) describe a committee meeting involving two native English speakers and three non-native English speakers (East Indians). Though all of these NNSs speak with strong accents and with frequent hesitation, pauses, and incomplete sentences, the two NNSs who are efficient communicators adapt to the rhetorical structure of native English speakers by referring to a previous speaker's remarks or to the basic issues defined by the first speaker and by using meta-comments (e.g., "you can't say"; "and this is precisely"; "the fact is"; "what I'm saying is"; "I mean") to replace the accent placement and prosody of native English speech. The third NNS, who is evaluated as inefficient, abrupt, impulsive, and rude, seems to assume that other participants recognize and have followed his logic and rhetorical structures in their own minds. East Indians understand this type of argumentative style of making clear how one feels without "beating around the bush."

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From the perspective of native English speakers, however, those NNSs who rely heavily on indirect contextualization cues (e.g., tone stressing and using personal emotional feeling to assess their audiences) and their listeners' knowledge of the issue to carry their arguments are seen as rude and inefficient.

<div align="center">Issues Raised by Inferencing Theory</div>

As mentioned above, ambiguities at either the perceptual or the sequential level can only be resolved by using a global level of generality. Without knowing what is expected and how to be flexible to listen and understand, communicators will encounter difficulties in making inferences effectively. Several investigations of intercultural/interethnic communication (Gumperz, 1982; Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982b; Tyler & Davies, 1990; Meeuwis, 1994) find that the inferencing process is always triggered by intercultural communication. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982b) discuss two problematic issues frequently occur in intercultural interactions: co-occurrence expectation and interference — issues that influence the communicator's ability to assess different levels of inferences.

In various institutional settings involving different ethnic groups, communication problems should not simply be blamed on linguistic fluency. Sometimes, bilingual or bidialectual minorities are stereotyped and stigmatized according to inferences of the majority culture. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz point out that in interethnic/intercultural interactions, the greatest difficulty is usually caused by inability to establish *co-occurrence expectation* due to different perceptions of contextualization conventions. The key issue in interethnic/intercultural interactions, thus, becomes how efficiently participants from different linguistic backgrounds can adapt to their partners' rhetorical

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conventions and prosodic cues to achieve mutual understanding — a process that Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982a) call *communicative flexibility*.

Gumperz (1992) examines four job interviews conducted by native English speakers and observes that the problems in these interviews lie in the failure of conversational negotiation processes. Both interviewers and interviewees are dealing with, not simply a lack of linguistic knowledge or prejudice, but different rhetorical strategies. As a result, both interviewers and interviewees seem unable to negotiate shared understandings about matters that are crucial to the interviews' success. The three NNS applicants who failed the interviews are native speakers of various East Indian languages. Gumperz examines the interview processes based on turn-taking organization, sequential organization, conversational negotiation, conversational inference, and contextualization cues. He finds that interpretive difficulties between native interviewers and non-native interviewees usually involve different rhetorical strategies. Native English interviewers usually feel their communicative expectations were violated and find it difficult to follow NNSs' arguments. Interviewees who cannot catch contextualization cues, such as the interviewer's placement of accent or stress, are less likely to provide the information the interviewer is asking for.

Another problem in the inferencing process that is specific to intercultural/interethnic communication is that of *interference* (what Meeuwis calls "language transfer"); this refers to the carrying over of grammatical features or rhetorical or prosodic conventions from the speaker's native language into the second language. Such interference often decreases native speakers' efficiency in evaluating communication. Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982b) find that interference not only

affects how interlocutors perceive the performance of their partners, it also hinders

interlocutors from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds in making inferences.

A good example of how interference can influence the credibility of non-native

speakers and how it causes difficulty for native speakers to understand is seen in the case

of a Philippine physician accused of negligence in reporting child abuse. When

examining courtroom testimony, Gumperz (1982) found that the defendant (a NNS),

though competent and fluent in written and spoken English, sometimes provided

confusing answers during his testimony; these were largely the result of interference from

his native language (Tagalog) in such areas as present-past tense usage, yes/no

interjections, pronoun usage, and prosodic systems. When the defendant testified in a

Navy hearing,[1] his uses of tenses and pronouns created difficulties. On many occasions,

a past tense question received a present tense reply and the questioner had to repeat the

questions with a past tense verb to confirm whether the defendant had said what he

meant. For instance, when the attorney asked him whether he was aware of a list of rules,

called Navy Instruction, for conducting the day-to-day operation of the hospital, the

defendant answered, "I'm not aware." The attorney then had to confirm with him

whether he meant he was not aware of these instructions during that time or whether he

did not know this rule at all. Again, when the attorney asked whether he felt the cause of

the child's injuries was sunburn or thermofluid burn, the doctor answered, "I still feel it

was due to sunburn" (p. 174), when he meant "[At the time,] I still *felt* it was due to

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1 The Philippine physician was charged with negligence in the emergency room because he did not report suspected child abuse to the hospital and the police when the child, who later died in hospital, was brought in with second-degree sun burn. The child was later found to have been abused by his step-father. Much time and testimony was expended during the hearing to determine whether symptoms for which the physician treated the child indicated unusual signs of burning or abuse.

sunburn." Usage of yes/no interjections transferred from the defendant's native language also created uncertainties and inconsistencies in his testimony. The questioner, on many occasions, had to clear up uncertainties by rephrasing questions in the positive. For example, after asking, "It's the testimony by Lt. . . . that you did not attend the briefing," questioners were confused by the answer, "*Yes*." The questioner thus needed to rephrase, "You did attend it?" The defendant finally answered, "No." By cross-culturally analyzing Taglog communication and linguistic systems, Gumperz (1982) found that the defendant's problems with English verb tense, pronunciation, yes/no interjections, and tone of making statements were transferred from his native language. When such signs violate either the expected rules of native English speakers or the inferencing systems of the NNS's first language, communication problems will result.

Issues in Intercultural Interactions

Increasingly, research on second-language acquisition (SLA) has shifted away from studying aspects of learners' second language behavior to studying second language learners as they interact with others. Long (1983a; 1983b) and Varonis and Gass (1985a; 1985b) have suggested that linguistic activities and modified interactions between native speakers and non-native speakers are an important baseline for second language acquisition. Zuengler (1991) asserts the importance of further study of NS/NNS interactions because much research on NS/NNS interactions has been either a-theoretical or confined to linguistic descriptions of the NNSs' or NSs' speech. By reviewing issues which are commonly discussed and well explored in intercultural interactions (NS/NNS interactions) — issues such as "foreigner talk" (linguistic adjustments made by NSs to accommodate NNSs' comprehension and performance), misunderstanding (or

miscommunication), and negotiation of meanings during the communication process —

the present study expects to generalize features and characteristics from NS/NNS

conversations and interactions to employ in observing interactional phenomena in

NNS/NNS interactions.

Foreigner Talk

Lattey (1989) has summarized definitions of foreigner talk (FT) established in

earlier literature; FT is described as " 'the variety of language that is regarded by a speech

community as primarily appropriate for addressing foreigners' (Ferguson & DeBose,

1977, p. 103) and used 'by speakers of a language to outsiders who are felt to have very

limited command of a language or no knowledge of it at all' (Ferguson, 1971, p. 43)."

According to this definition, FT primarily focuses on aspects of content and speech

features. The content aspect of FT includes concerns about what one might say in

particular imagined contexts, whereas the speech features aspect of FT examines actual

use of language in a communication situation.

Lattey (1989) identifies three processes commonly involved FT as used by

speakers of English and German: simplifying, clarifying, and expressive identifying. A

simplifying process of English FT according to Ellis (1985), Hatch (1983), and Larsen-

Freeman (1985), includes the use of short, simple sentences, the readjustment of word

order, and the reduced use of contractions. While sharing similar characteristics with

English FT, German FT also has its own simplifying characteristics, such as "use of

nouns instead of pronouns as an attempt at concretizing, simplification of the lexicon, and

adjustment of word order to subject + object(s) + infinitive" (Lattey, 1989, p. 95).

Clarifying processes in interactions refer to the negotiation of meanings between

interlocutors. In English FT, a clarifying process is described as repetition, restatement, simple and analytical paraphrase, confirmation checking, and/or slower, more distinct articulation. While almost all clarifying features in English FT are found in German FT, Lattey finds that Germans more frequently use repetitions and restatements when conversing with NNSs to clarify their own and others' meanings. The expressive-identifying process is the least well-defined process of FT. Though it is described as a type of empathetic communication, which employs lexical items (e.g., "sweetie" or "honey" in English, or "*du*" in German) to reduce the perceived hierarchy of foreigners, very few empirical investigations can verify and explain the operation of this process.

Long (1981) searched for differences of discourse structures and relative frequency of syntactical and morphological features between NS/NS interactions and NS/NNS interactions (foreigner talk discourse, FTD) in informal conversations. Based on previous findings that NSs modify their discourse to produce comprehensible input for NNSs, Long investigated how NSs modify their conversational structures when they interact with NNS, as opposed to other NSs, and how these structural differences affect syntactical and morphological speech features. Long found that structural differences exist in topic-continuing and topic-initiating moves — specifically, that talk about any one topic in FTD was briefer. Interactions involving NNSs change topics more often than interactions involving only NSs. Significantly more questions than statements were used to open talk on new topics in FTD. FTD also employed significantly more yes/no and "or-choice" questions for three reasons. First, NSs perceive the use of questions as topic initiation as helping them to signal, and NNSs to recognize, that a new speech turn is approaching. Second, in English conversation, the question-answer sequence is a

distinguishing feature showing that the first utterance has been spoken and the second must be immediately provided. Third, an "or-choice" question lightens the burden of the NNS because the second speaker may formulate his or her utterance according to the previous propositional content, a tool which ensures the NNS's participation.

Beebe and Giles' (1984) ethnolinguistic model theorizes that NSs usually are more active and dominant in most NS/NNS interactions because NSs have a higher linguistic or ethnolinguistic status compared to that of the NNS. A study of interactional participation and content expertise involving face-to-face interactions between NSs and NNSs suggested that different levels of content expertise lead to some differences in dominance patterns (Zuengler, 1989). Zuengler and Bent (1991) confirmed that content knowledge, when perceived as unequal, is an important factor influencing how actively NSs and NNSs participate in an interaction with each other. However, they point out that when pairs of equal expertise discuss a content domain outside the major field, the usual complementary roles of NSs and NNSs may be reversed (i.e., the NNS may become a speaker and the NS a listener). They further point out that identical participation of NSs and NNSs is a difficult construct to operationalize; for example, in the context of equal domain knowledge, back-channels and pause fillers might exhibit NNSs' inability to verbalize while they still retain the dominant role in conversations. Zuengler and Bent identify amounts of talk, fillers, back-channels, interruptions, resisting interruptions, and topic moves as controlling and participating features in NS/NNS interactions. Results of their investigation show that NSs participate more when both interlocutors have relatively equal knowledge of conversational topics. The relative content "experts," whether NSs or NNSs, show more conversational participation.

Miscommunication

Miscommunication has been identified as the most common communication problem (Gass & Varonis, 1991; Gumperz, 1978; Gumperz, 1982). Gass and Varonis (1991) attempt to clarify terminology confusions about miscommunication in order to avoid using the same term for different phenomena or different terms for the same phenomenon. They categorize problematic communication into two broad types: non-engagement and miscommunication. Non-engagement refers to instances when conversational partners avoid interacting with one another by turning around or changing in other ways to prevent difficult and stressful conversations, or when a conversational interaction is suddenly terminated by one of interlocutors "because he or she realizes that continuing the conversation is not in his or her best interest"(p. 124). The other type of problematic communication, miscommunication, refers to a mismatch between the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation. Such a mismatch will result in either misunderstanding, which involves "simple disparity between the speaker's and hearer's semantic analysis of a given utterance" (Milroy, 1984, p. 15) without the participants' recognition of communication problems, or incomplete understanding, which refers to a situation where one or more participants has perceived that something has gone wrong in the communication (Milroy, 1984).

Bank, Ge, and Banker (1991) identify four major causes of miscommunication in intercultural encounters: culture difference, linguistic failures, failed pragmatics, and problems of identity. The following section reviews the literature relating to miscommunication in intercultural interactions under these four headings.

Culture Difference

Because message interpretations for conversational participants are culturally bounded, participants who are short of relevant background knowledge or unfamiliar with others' interpretation process will have difficulty in assessing others' communicative intentions. As mentioned above, "interference" — a NNS making a grammatical and prosodic transfer from his or her native language to the second language — results in various kinds of miscommunication in intercultural interactions. To analyze and solve these difficulties, Gumperz (1975) proposed that one should try variant interpretations from participants' linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Tyler and Davies (1990), investigating miscommunication between a Korean teaching assistant and an American undergraduate student, found that the Korean interlocutor organized his conversational structure based on socio-pragmatic norms from his first language (e.g., inductive and collaborative organization of argument), which further influenced his interpretation of responses from his American undergraduate; accordingly, the American undergraduate student in this study interpreted the responses from the teaching assistant as cold, authoritarian, and defensive. Communication breakdown and miscommunication frequently occur when listeners experience difficulty constructing a consistent interpretation of the text (the content of conversation itself), or when speakers use different signal conventions (e.g., sorting out the main idea from detail) to express their ideas (Gumperz, 1982; Tyler & Bro, 1993). Tyler and Bro (1993) report that American speakers perceive non-native discourse-structuring cues (e.g., topic-comment, inductively organized patterns) as more difficult to follow and interpret than a more deductive-organized version.

Failed Linguistics

The second area causing miscommunication is the lack of shared linguistic systems. A great deal of research in linguistics focuses on how non-native speakers produce comprehensible inputs (e.g., morphemes, words, utterances) when interacting with native speakers. In an analysis of interactions between speakers from different linguistic backgrounds both communicating in their second language ("third tongue" communication), Meeuwis (1994) discovers several communicative problems resulting from socio-linguistic and socio-pragmatic interference: yes/no confusion, topic prominence, and response behavior.

In Meeuwis' investigations, preference in answering systems usually results in yes/no confusion in communication processes, which further results in interpretation and understanding problems in intercultural encounters. Many miscommunication situations occur when speakers with different language systems transfer their answering systems from their first languages. In the agreement-disagreement system of East Asian languages (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) and African Bantu languages, "answers are based on the respondent's agreement or disagreement with the statement form (negative or positive) of the question" (Meeuwis, 1994, p. 64), whereas the positive-negative answering system of Western European languages (e.g., English and Dutch) provides positive or negative answers based on whether the speaker intends to affirm or negate the statement. If the statement form of the answer's sentence is positive, then a positive response is used, and vice versa.

Another problem in intercultural interactions, according to Meeuwis' analysis, is the topic-prominent and topic-comment structure of the sentence. In Meeuwis' study,

communication breakdowns occur in several conversations when Korean speakers transfer their first language features or structures — putting the subject in front and raising the tone at the end of the sentence in a "why-question" sentence (in terms of Western European languages) — because the recipients (Dutch listeners) can rarely distinguish whether it is a comment or a question. On some occasions, repetitiously and prosaically stressing the topic is interpreted on the basis of colloquial Dutch standards as signaling disbelief and sarcasm.

Long (1983) proposes that input from non-native speakers becomes more comprehensible when native speakers modify the interactional structures of their conversations. For native speakers, relinquishing topic-control, selecting salient topics, treating topics briefly, managing new topics, and checking non-native speakers' comprehension are strategies that will alleviate interactional troubles in intercultural encounters. However, once difficulties occur during foreigner talk, tactics like accepting unintentional topic-switch, requesting clarification, confirming one's own (the native speaker's) comprehension, and tolerating ambiguity can repair the difficulty.

Failed Pragmatics

A third reason for miscommunication is failed pragmatics, such as inappropriate language usage and prosodic features (e.g., dialect pronunciation, rising intonation, stress) in specific contexts, which are called "contextualization cues" (Gumperz, 1978), may easily result in miscommunication. When analyzing interactions between British teachers and Indian and Pakistani immigrant trainees, Gumperz (1978) finds that miscommunication is not simply based on misreading of sentence content, but on the familiarity and judgments of prosodic cues, deictic pronouns, and the use of interjections

("yes" and "no"). Another example of failed pragmatics is the statement, "Exact change, please," from a West Indian bus driver (Gumperz, 1982). The statement, though commonly used by all London bus drivers, is interpreted as rude and threatening because the driver applied Indian prosodic conventions and stressed the last syllable, "please." Tyler and Davies (1990) also find potentially damaging mismatches of discourse strategies on linguistic and pragmatic levels. While most Americans typically perceive "sorry" as an expression of sympathy, an international teaching assistant uses "sorry" quickly followed by the conjunction "but," which makes the student perceive the assistant as being cold.

Misattribution of Group Identities

Finally, miscommunication may be caused by the misattribution of group identities. Though many researchers (Giles, 1977; Giles & Johnson, 1987) have devoted their efforts to explaining communication behaviors (e.g., choices of linguistic codes) and group identity maintenance from the perspectives of social and psychological bases (e.g., ethnolinguistic identities and stereotypes), very little research focuses on discourse features of miscommunication and identity issues in intercultural settings.

Meaning Negotiation

The term "meaning negotiation" is used to refer to modifications and re-constructions of interactions when interlocutors "anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility" (Pica, 1994, p. 494). Some researchers (Gass & Varonis, 1985; Varonis & Gass, 1985a, 1985b) call the process of encountering and repairing comprehension troubles *negotiation*. Negotiated communication provides conversation participants with hopes of social-linguistic reconciliation, especially in

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problematic communication situations (Gass & Varonis, 1991). The process of

negotiation, according to Gass and Varonis (1991), can provide conversation participants

space to clarify and elaborate the insufficient information of previous utterances.

Various labels are used to identify negotiation processes. These labels, though

indicating the same component features, refer to distinct functions in the discourse

process. To describe and categorize how interlocutors sustain interactions and avoid

communication breakdown, Long (1983) uses the broad categories of *strategies and*

tactics. "Strategies" refers to speakers' utterance planning — such as clarification

requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks — whereas "tactics" refers to

utterance and interactional repairs. Varonis and Gass (1985a, 1985b) propose another set

of labels to analyze the process and structure of negotiations: *indicators* and *triggers.*

Clarification requests and confirmation checks, which may both serve as *indicators,*

signal that an utterance has initiated a non-understanding. The term *trigger* refers to an

"utterance or portion of an utterance on the part of the speaker which results in some

indication of non-understanding on the part of the hearer" (Varonis & Gass, 1985a, p.

74).

For NS/NNS interactions, negotiation, as a process, not only provides

opportunities for both interactional participants to focus on message meanings and forms,

but also helps non-native speakers to comprehend better and recall the words and

sentences in the original version of discourse (Pica, 1994). Negotiations are usually

initiated in one of the following six forms (Varonis & Gass, 1985a, p. 77): explicit

indication of non-understanding (e.g., *pardon?, what?, I don't understand*); echoing a

word or phrase from previous utterance; non-verbal response (e.g., silence or *mmmm*);

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summary (e.g., *Do you mean*); expression of surprise (e.g., *Really? did she?*);

inappropriate response; or overt correction (e.g., *you say you don't have . . . , I don't have*

. . .). In addition, negotiation may be evident in forms of speech-turn repairs in syntax or

pronunciations (Norrick, 1991; McHoul, 1990; Schegloff, 1991), of rephrasing others'

meanings, of repeating a message verbatim, of segmenting a message (Pica, 1994, p.

507), and of interrupting speech turns (Yeh, Ash & Lee, 1996).

Varonis and Gass (1985a) find that negotiation routines are much more common

in intercultural interactions (NNS/NNS and NS/NNS) than in intracultural interactions

(NS/NS) because there are more utterances that are uninterpretable in conversations

involving NNSs. They also point out that the most "dangerous" situation arises when

both participants lack shared backgrounds, linguistic systems, and specific beliefs, yet do

not seek to negotiate meanings. This finding implies that familiarity with conversational

topics, with participants in interactions, and with interpreting the other's utterance will

increase the opportunities for and effectiveness of negotiations.

Norrick (1991) finds that participants with more language ability or background

information feel they are more responsible to effect repairs; in addition, the negotiation of

who is able to initiate repairs depends on whose language ability enables them to

recognize and correct errors. The greater nativeness, fluency, and control of NSs (or

advanced NNSs) will affect the conversational participation of NNSs (Beebe & Giles,

1984). Zuengler and Bent (1991) find that NNSs produce more fillers (e.g., *oh, yeah*) and

more back-channels (e.g., *mhmm, I see, yeah, sure*) than their native interlocutors do

when conversation content involves an area in which both NNSs and NSs have expertise.

Only when NNSs posses greater expertise do they participate actively and talk more than

their NS partners. Norrick (1991) finds that threats to a speaker's face lessened or disappeared in the on-going interactions when the corrected speakers viewed the repair as friendly help.

"Third Tongue" Communication: NNS/NNS Interactions

Among the very limited investigations of non-native speakers using a common second language to communicate, Varonis and Gass (1985a) compare differences of non-native speakers interacting in dyads with native and non-native speakers interacting in dyads. Four dyads of NS/NS and four NNS/NS dyads were compared with 14 NNS/NNS dyads. The results show that NNS/NNS conversational dyads spent more time in negotiation than the other pairs (NS/NS and NS/NNS) in order to understand one another. The results also indicate that the greater the difference in language background and proficiency, the greater the amount of negotiation in the conversation between non-native speakers.

Varonis and Gass suggest several reasons for the NNS/NNS negotiation model. First, they note that the negotiation process provides conversational participants with a great amount of comprehensible input. Second, in the NNS/NNS dyads, participants usually recognized their "shared incompetence." Therefore, indicating non-understanding to their conversational partners does not threaten the other's "face." Third, the greater frequency of negotiating meaning in NNS/NNS dyads than in NNS/NS dyads makes apparent the unequal status among interactional participants in terms of language as a medium. NNSs will manifest their weakness in linguistic competence and give higher status to their NS interlocutors during the negotiation. Under these conditions, NNSs tend to reduce or avoid opportunities to negotiate with their NS interlocutors.

Meeuwis (1994) investigated NNS/NNS interactions by observing interactions during training sessions conducted in English for South Korean and Tanzanian junior engineers by Belgian (Flemish) instructors. By examining video and audio recording from a pragmatic-discursive perspective, Meeuwis found that communication difficulties in NNS/NNS interactions result from interlocutors' relying on pragmatic knowledge drawn from their native tongues. On the interactional level of communication difficulties, Meeuwis points out that yes/no confusion and topic prominence are two major sources of communication frustrations. As mentioned above, non-native speakers usually transfer first language linguistic features to the second language — the phenomenon called "interference" — such as using the "agreement-disagreement system" rather than the positive-negative answering system. Just as in NS/NNS interactions, communication breakdown or conflicts occur in NNS/NNS when speakers transfer linguistic structures from their native tongues and the intent of this transferring process is not understood or is misperceived by other non-native speakers.

Though yes/no confusion and misconstrued speech acts cause difficulties between non-native speakers, Meeuwis (1994) points out that the distinctive character of NNS/NNS interactions is that non-native speakers mutually recognize and allow for repairs and meaning negotiation to clarify their real intent. In addition, because both parties have rather restricted familiarity with the illocutionary signals of the common language (English), the pragmatic sense of their linguistic utterances has no influence on the success of the interaction.

Research Questions

As reviewed above, inferencing theory and socio-linguistic features such as foreigner talk, meaning negotiations, and miscommunication in NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions provide the present researcher with research assumptions to explain and describe interactions within the non-native speech community. To begin exploring communicative features and patterns in NNS/NNS interactions, the researcher needs a descriptive analysis of speech community and contexts to help understand and explain interactive behaviors. Thus, the first research question is as follows:

RQ1: How do community members gather and talk in different situations?

A macro-level description and analysis of communication patterns and styles in the community can provide an understanding of ESL community members, rules of gathering, and manners of talking in different situations, and can characterize how members recognize and become oriented to communicative behaviors in this community. The rules, manners, and patterns of gathering and talking in the community simultaneously reflect the social and communicative roles of participants in different speech events. Each community member speaks differently according to how he or she is situated in different speech events.

The event of classroom discussions is a community activity where all members are involved. The ways that members take speech turns during the discussions may best explain the overall relation of members' social roles and communicative styles in the community. Therefore, the next question concerns the turn-taking systems and speaking characteristics community members use in the classroom.

RQ2: How do members develop turn-taking sensibilities as they co-construct interactions in classroom discussions?

Along with Gumperz (1982a, 1982b), researchers who are interested in "third tongue" interactions agree that speakers of each language develop a set of language-specific conventions to become involved in interactions. According to the literature (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b; Gumperz & Gumperz-Cook, 1982; Meeuwis, 1994; Tyler & Davies, 1990), different logics and linguistic habits can result in message misinterpretation. Being flexible and open to communication patterns and expectations can increase opportunities to understand foreign partners' intents and purposes in communication performance. During "third tongue" interactions, participants not only construct a comprehensible output in their second language, but they also struggle with the linguistic structures and socio-cultural norms of both their first and second languages. To answer this research question, the researcher analyzes and describes how non-native speakers transform their native language conventions of taking speech turns and develop a sense of knowing "who should speak next" to maintain their information exchanges.

In addition to demonstrating how non-native speakers take speaking turns in classroom discussions, another important issue commonly discussed in intercultural interactions — motives and styles of participating in classroom interactions — is a concern of this study. In Gumperz' various investigations of NS/NNS institutional discourses (e.g., Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982b, Gumperz, 1982a, Gumperz, 1992), native speakers are usually less accommodative than their non-native interlocutors. Consequently, non-native speakers force themselves to follow the interaction structure with which the native speakers are familiar, because native speakers have the advantage

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of operating in the majority language and being empowered to decide the consequence of conversations for non-native speakers. Similarly, in "third tongue" interactions the participant who possesses greater language competency in the common language in use may dominate the interaction by clarifying and initiating repairs. When relative language competency becomes difficult to distinguish, for example, in daily conversations, Meeuwis (1994) suggests that factors such as perceived social hierarchy (e.g., teacher-student roles; seniority) may determine who takes the dominant role in interactions.

In a general sense, interactional participants with relatively greater knowledge of content domain will participate more than those who have less knowledge of the content domain (Zuengler & Bent, 1991). In the NNS community, some members in the community rarely speak up in public or participate in classroom discussions. Since the advantage of linguistic competency and fluency is no longer the greatest factor of power distribution (as it is in NS/NNS interaction), other factors must exist in various NNS/NNS social contexts that influence members' motives and styles of participation; these are still unexplored topics in intercultural communication. The next research question addresses the issue of knowing more about participation styles and motives in "third tongue" interactions.

RQ3: How do some community members participate less than others during class discussions?

Transcriptions of the classroom interactions may demonstrate the patterns of taking speaking turns among community members. To answer this research question, the investigator focuses on three participants whose ethnic cultures are identified as "visible minorities" in multicultural task groups (Kirchmeyer, 1992). In Kirchmeyer and Cohen's

(1992) study of multicultural groups, visible minorities who were mostly Asian in origin contributed markedly less to decision making than did other group members who were of European descent, and were slightly less committed to the group itself. In the ESL community observed in the present study, members coming from Asian backgrounds were quieter and less involved in group discussions during compulsory gatherings, when compared with Latin American, Middle Eastern, and European members. Taking their ethnic communication patterns and participation styles of these participants into consideration, the investigator examines how these three Asian members participate differently and are involved to a lesser degree in classroom discussions than members from other ethnic backgrounds.

Summary

Inferencing theory proposes a notion of "contextualization," in which verbal or non-verbal communication is not simply a matter of putting one's ideas into words, but involves a context that is cooperatively and temporally organized by message producers and recipients. The creation and maintenance of conversation involvement depends on participants' production and interpretation of a variety of "contextualization cues," such as the allocation of speech turns or nonverbal signaling mechanisms, to guide and channel the necessary inferences (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1990; Gumperz, 1997). Similarly, participants in intercultural conversations and interactions co-construct their contexts, based on inferences that are contextually produced and interpreted, to understand, advance, and follow the progression of interactions.

Previous investigations into both NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions have provided basic knowledge of factors or issues that might influence on NNS/NNS

understanding, participation, and communication patterns. To investigate a communication environment created largely by non-native speakers, the following chapters will examine, describe, and attempt to understand "third tongue" interactions by focusing on speech events and issues which are generalized and discussed in the context of inferencing theory and intercultural interactions.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will introduce the two research methods used to explore communicative patterns and behaviors in a non-native speech community: ethnography and conversation analysis. To explain why these methods were chosen to analyze this particular kind of speech community, this chapter then discusses the investigator's cultural biases and membership knowledge and the legitimacy of the investigator's role in the speech community. Finally, the procedures of data collection, selection, and analysis employed in this study are described.

The present study examines three aspects of this non-native speech community: 1) ways of talking and gathering among non-native speakers, 2) turn-taking order in classroom discussions, and 3) participation styles in the classroom. The researcher begins with an ethnographic approach to provide an extensive understanding of the ESL community members, rules of gathering, and manners of talking in different situations. An ethnographic approach analyzes what conditions and forces have shaped the community, and accounts for members' social and communicative behaviors in different speech events. Then, having an understanding of community members' communicative and social behaviors in different situations, the researcher examines natural on-going conversations taking place in classroom discussions. In addition to employing an ethnographic approach to describe this community, the researcher also uses conversation analysis to analyze the turn-taking order of the community in classroom discussions. The researcher then suggests how turn-taking order among community members may reflect social and communicative roles of members in the community. Finally, by focusing on

the issue of participation styles during classroom interactions, the researcher utilizes both

ethnography and conversation analysis to discuss and analyze participative behaviors of

less active community members and compare them to the behaviors of the more active

members.

Investigators' Cultural Biases and Membership Knowledge

Contemporary investigations of interethnic data mostly focus on non-native

speakers being "misunderstood" by native hearers without accounting for the non-native

participants' interpretations of the data. Thus data is analyzed and interpreted under the

framework of the native speaker culture. A methodological problem appearing in

investigations of both NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions is that native researchers

usually have powerful prejudices toward the settings they analyze (Singh, Lele, &

Martohardjono, 1988; Wagner, 1996). Whether their methodology is that of laboratory

surveys or of ethnographic interpretations, most researchers (e.g., Gass & Varonis, 1985;

Pica, 1994a, 1994b; Varonis & Gass, 1985a, 1985b) utilize their linguistic and cultural

knowledge as native and competent speakers to interpret and examine foreign language

interactions in which they are not even involved. Consequently, researchers impose their

cultural interpretation systems on interactions when conducting analyses. Non-native

participants in the interactions, as a result, are not "subjects," but "objects" who deliver

"linguistic evidence" for researchers to analyze (Wagner, 1998).

In order to consider foreign language data from a less biased viewpoint,

researchers' membership knowledge should be considered in investigations of

intercultural interactions (Moerman, 1988; Seedhouse, 1998; Wagner, 1996, 1998).

Elaborating Garfinkel's and Sack's (1970) definition of a member, Coulon (1995)

observes, "To become a member is to become affiliated to a group, to an institution, which requests the progressive mastery of the common institutional language" (p. 26). Community membership is composed by shared presuppositions, contextualization strategies, and interpretive practices, and by similar communicative experiences within institutional networks (Gumperz, 1997). While analysts may perceive a problem in a given foreign language interaction, the participants in the interaction may not be oriented toward such a communicative problem (Seedhouse, 1998; Wagner, 1998). Seedhouse (1998) explains why analyzing foreign language interactions demands a membership knowledge of the interactions: in such interactions,

> the participants jointly create an interlanguage and 'interculture' through the
>
> details of their talk. There is a *reflexive* relationship between interaction and
>
> culture here. It is the use of those particular linguistic forms, topics and types of
>
> interactional moves which talk the 'interculture' into being. (p. 92)

To ensure that potentially relevant information and membership knowledge of talk-in-interaction is included, an analysis linking talking and culture should demonstrate substantial characteristics which are "*actually* procedurally relevant to those participants at that moment" (Seedhouse, 1998, p. 93). Descriptions of how non-native talk in interaction is organized and of how speakers create order may help the analyst to reconstruct the perspective and knowledge of the participants in talk (Wagner, 1996). Moerman (1988) calls for a "culturally contexted conversation analysis," which combines ethnographic data about contexts and conversation-analytic data. He uses ethnographic data as transcript-extrinsic information to describe the personal, historical, linguistic,

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cultural, and other contexts. Moerman articulates the necessity of using ethnographic data to explain talks within cultures:

> We never merely exchange turns of talk. In all conversation, people are living their lives, performing their roles, enacting their culture. The motives and meaning of all talk are thick with culture. To understand what the moves mean requires (or recalls) cultural knowledge. (p. 22)

Moerman also explains why ethnography and conversation analysis should be jointly employed to analyze and describe human events:

> Conversation analysis has some promise of precisely locating and describing . . . how the experienced moments of social life are constructed, how the ongoing operation of the social order is organized. . . . But our events are human events, events of meaning. Their description, explication, and analysis requires a synthesis of ethnography — with its concern for context, meaning, history, and intention — with the sometimes arid and always exacting techniques that conversation analysis offers for locating culture *in situ*. (p. xi)

Combining ethnography and conversation analysis to analyze foreign language interactions provide the analyst of foreign language data with membership knowledge of the speech community and substantive conversation and interaction evidence (transcriptions). Whereas the prototypical conversationalists are monolingual speakers using their first languages, those who analyze foreign language interactions need the necessary membership knowledge to understand on-going interaction (Wagner, 1996). Ethnography can provide descriptions of cultures and contexts of on-going foreign language interactions to compensate for conversation analysis' socio-cultural bias.

Likewise, conversation analysis presents transcripts to compensate for concerns among mainstream social scientists — including ethnographers — about using only recollection as ethnographic data. Spencer (1994) situates conversation analysis and ethnography along a continuum of field-based analytic foci: at one end he places ethnographic studies, "which attempt to describe social and organizational contexts from the participants' perspective"; at the other, "studies of naturally occurring discourse" that focus on "the structure and content of naturally occurring conversations" (pp. 267-268). The best sociological field-based research, Spencer contends, should draw on the mutual relevance of ethnography and conversation analysis.

To minimize cultural biases when describing and analyzing foreign language data, then, one should take into account the investigator's membership knowledge of the foreign language interactions. According to Gumperz (1997), community membership relies on "shared presuppositions and a set of shared contextualization conventions" (p. 194). Applying Gumperz' definition of community membership to the investigator's role in the foreign language interactions, investigators who engage in analyzing and handling foreign language data need first to claim their membership in the foreign language community. The next section will address the legitimacy of this investigator's role in a speech community involving mostly non-native English speakers.

Legitimacy of the Investigator's Role in the Community

In a community made up largely non-native English speakers, it is an advantage for this investigator that she is an international student and a non-native English speaker. This enables the investigator to be both a community member — part of the non-native speech community — and an expert informant — an ethnographer who maintains

frequent contact with the native and non-native speech communities. The investigator's being a native, expert informant of the community, thus, creates methodological benefits rather than problems. The frequent participation in and presence of the investigator at different community activities and speech events in a major university's ESL program allowed her to talk with community members freely, to establish interpersonal networks as the other members do, and to act as though she were a community member. In addition, the experiences and social encounters of this non-native English speaker can more accurately represent the feelings and reactions of the other non-native speakers than those of native English investigators would.

It should be noted, however, that the investigator cannot claim to be a full community member, though she has almost been recognized as such by other community members. The investigator's longer experience in the United States, her greater fluency in English, and her position as a graduate student in the university create a gap between her and other members in the community who are new to the social styles and communicative patterns of U.S. culture. Though the investigator understands and has experienced some of the concerns of community members — e.g., passing the TOEFL, receiving admission to the university, and experiencing social rejection or culture shock — she cannot claim herself to be a full participant-observer due to this gap.

Having knowledge and experience in both intercultural speech communities — the community involving only non-native speakers and the community involving both native and non-native speakers — can help the investigator to describe and analyze the non-native speech community. An investigator who has social knowledge of U.S. culture as well as of the ESL community culture has a basis for comparison of NS/NNS and

NNS/NNS interactions and can approach the analysis from the perspective of a non-native speaker. The investigator is more credible in the non-native speech community than native speakers who enter a non-native speech community but who are never affiliated with or familiar with the community.

Data Analysis

The speech community examined in the present study is found in a language institution involving mostly members who speak English as their second language. In addition to non-native speakers, there are a few native English speakers — instructors and staff members who manage the social activities of the institution. This study first describes various speech activities taking place in and out of the institutional context, and focuses on interactional structures and communication styles occurring in seminar discussions. The investigator began analyzing interactional structures in seminar discussions, where all students present are potential participants. Because the focus of this study is on describing and analyzing the sharing of knowledge and conversational rules among non-native speakers, speech community members are referred to as "students," "participants," or "classmates" in the analysis.

Linguistic data are transcribed by adopting Jefferson's transcription conventions (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). The transcriptions detail the content of conversations and the timing with which speakers take turns (e.g., whether they interrupt or overlap with one another). Since no transcripts can be regarded as final, this study endeavors to fulfill two suggestions proposed by Hopper, Koch, and Mandelbaum (1986) during the transcribing process: transcribe until things come into clear focus; and, transcribe until you see things begin to recur over and over (p. 177).

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Research Procedure

The research took place at the CESL (Center for English as a Second Language) at a major university during the spring of 1994 and the summer of 1997. The researcher explored students' adjustment and adaptation processes, as well as their ways of interacting and communicating in their second language, through observing their classroom interactions and casual conversations in various settings, for example, in lounges, smoking areas, and at international students' activities (i.e., activities of the international students association), and through personal conversations with instructors and the director of CESL. The researcher regularly attended at least one CESL class every day and recorded the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of international students in field notes. The researcher's personal contact with CESL students still continues through casual conversations with members who still belong to the community. With informants' consent, the investigator occasionally tape-recorded their conversations in order to analyze their speech features. Members were aware of the purposes and the task of the participant-observer in this community, as she carried a tape recorder and took notes; however, the researcher did not do so when turning on the tape recorder might have impeded the progress of interactions, especially when she was also involved as one of the participants of the interaction. Audio data intermittently recorded in the CESL classroom (including classroom discussions and private conversations between non-native speakers during the break) amount to about 5 hours.

One of the CESL courses in which the investigator participated during two observation periods was a communication class designed to provide speaking opportunities for non-native students to participate in discussions in English. A textbook

about American idioms is used by instructors to explain American culture and to suggest class activities. The investigator closely observed and compared students' in-class and out-of-class behaviors. Academic Skills, the other class the investigator attended, is mainly designed to teach the vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills which students need in the TOEFL test and in regular university term papers. Because there was less peer interaction in this class as compared with the communication class, the investigator recorded group discussions and students' reactions to issues discussed in class. In addition to regularly attending in these two classes, the investigator also participated in weekly CESL field trips to visit different institutions such as the local county jail, a shopping mall, the university main campus, and private parties hosted by the community members.

The informants in this study include CESL students and other international students currently studying at the university who have sojourned in the United States for periods of time ranging from one month to six years. Research procedure and proposal have been approved under the regulations of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Policies and Procedures for the protection of human subjects in research activities. Names of informants have been changed and recorded by their initials so that no one can identify them in any formal report (e.g., conference paper, published article, or dissertation). Only researchers (e.g., intercultural consultants, CESL instructors, and conversational analysts) were or will be allowed access to the audio-tapes and field notes, and only for research and academic use.

The following three chapters portray the CESL community from the perspective of different speech events: gathering, interaction structure, and participation. By

describing and analyzing distinct speech events, the investigator hopes to provide readers with an understanding of how non-native speakers maintain their social lives (Chapter IV), create order in the community (Chapter V), and survive linguistically and communicatively in classroom discussion (Chapter VI). To depict how community members gather and talk in the community (RQ1), Chapter IV focuses on a macro-level description and analysis of communication patterns, styles, rules, manners of different social gatherings in the community. Chapter V analyzes and describes how non-native speakers transform their native language conventions of taking speaking turns and develop a sense of knowing "who should speak next" to understand how members co-construct interactions and develop turn-taking sensibilities in classroom discussions (RQ2). To understand how some members participate less than others during classroom discussion (RQ3), Chapter VI focuses on three participants whose communication patterns and participation styles are identified as less assertive than other members in multicultural task groups.

CHAPTER IV

TALKING AND GATHERING IN A "THIRD TONGUE" COMMUNITY:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

To initiate understanding of a community, a description of participants, speech events, and ways of communicating is needed to help readers comprehend the interactive rules of the community. This chapter utilizes an ethnographic approach to depict how members of the ESL community interact in various speech events and situations to answer the first research question proposed in Chapter II. Through describing the background of the community members, the rules of gathering, and their ways of talking in different situations, this chapter provides readers with an understanding of how members recognize and become oriented to communicative behaviors in this community. This chapter also serves as an introduction to later analyses that focus on specific issues that arise in this community.

The Nature and Location of the Community

The ESL community is located in the south corner of a mid-western state university with about 20,000 students. The north part of the campus is mainly comprised of classrooms, faculty offices, and school or departmental administrative offices, and also contains the main library and the student union. The south corner of the campus houses gyms, student dorms, and campus apartments. In other words, the north part of campus is the heart of the university, where activities and interactions take place. The south corner, in contrast, is a quieter and more isolated area during the weekdays. The Center for English as Second Language (CESL) is on the second floor of a four-story building. In

appearance, the building is like the nearby student dorms. The other floors of the building contain offices for an agricultural institution.

Members of this community are mostly international students for whom English is a second language and who have been unable to fulfill the following university admission requirements:

1. To present the university with at least a 500 (for undergraduate students) or 550 (for graduate students) TOEFL score, or

2. To have completed successfully at least 24 semester hours or to possess a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited college or university in the United States or from a country in which English is the native language and the language of instruction, or

3. To present a TOEFL score between 500 and 549, having successfully completed, subsequently and immediately prior to admission, a minimum of twelve weeks of study at an approved English center or program operated by an institution of higher learning or a private school approved by the local State Regents for Higher Education.

To summarize, for all ESL students, a score of 500 on the TOEFL is the basic requirement for enrolling in the university. Those who are applying for graduate school stay in the ESL program either to strive for 550 on the TOEFL or to get a recommendation from CESL showing that they have been regularly present in the ESL classrooms and have completed the assigned homework and quizzes for 12 weeks. Some students remain in the ESL program for an additional year because they are unable to score 500 on the TOEFL. Some students who can speak fluent English or who have

made 500 or above 500 on the TOEFL are required to stay in the ESL program for two sessions (12 weeks) because of their sponsorship contracts.[2]

Full-time ESL students have access to all facilities and services available to regularly enrolled university students. These include the health center, the main library, the gyms, the student union, all sports and cultural events, and the services of the International Student Services Office. The CESL offers classes five hours a day, five days a week. Students learn English grammar and academic skills in the morning and participate in communication and group seminars in the afternoon. Students are categorized into different grammar and academic skill classes according to their scores on the Michigan Test, which evaluates the language ability of international students. The purpose of the communication class is to teach students about American culture and current social issues in the United States. Students are sent to different levels of classes based on their oral communication ability in English. The ESL program offers seminars on leisure and sports, movie appreciation, drama, pronunciation, business communication, and other useful information. Based on their needs or interests, students may choose to participate in different types of seminars.

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2 In my field observation during the summer of 1997, there were two groups of students with sponsorship contracts: one was sponsored by the Guatemalan government and one by a Vietnamese business group. Sponsors will support tuition for a four-year undergraduate program plus a 12-week-ESL program to prepare the students for regular university classes. The scholarship also includes monthly living expenses, and one round-trip ticket for four years. These students were excellent high school graduates or first-year college students in their countries of origin and were selected by a competitive examination. Some of them have even passed the TOEFL before coming to the United States. For those who passed their national examination but were unable to score 500 on the TOEFL, the 12-week CESL class is their only chance to work on their qualification. If they cannot pass the TOEFL during these 12 weeks, they lose their scholarship.

Gathering in Different Places and Occasions

Gatherings in the ESL community can be differentiated into compulsory gatherings and spontaneous gatherings. Compulsory gatherings usually occur in the public spaces provided by the institution such as seminars or small group discussions in the classroom — spaces that can be freely accessed by other members of the community. Participants in compulsory gatherings are either allocated to certain classrooms by the institution, or are assigned to interact with a small group of unfamiliar members in order to fulfill certain educational or task purposes. The formation of spontaneous gatherings, on the other hand, reflects a voluntary gathering and mingling of participants. Interactions during class, lunch breaks, or after class hours — times when members are free to choose their interaction partners — all fall under the category of spontaneous gatherings.

Compulsory Gatherings

Compulsory gatherings usually take place during the learning hours of the institution, when the presence of participants in the institution and gatherings is imperative to their admission to the university, or to their scholarship requirement and language learning. In order to prevent community members from conversing in their native languages and to create opportunities to practice English, instructors usually take two actions to reinforce students communicate in English. First, they forbid students to converse in their native languages in the classrooms. Second, instructors divide up students into groups where group members have no common language but English and ask them to complete a task. This is necessary because, even when they do not come

from the same country, students who share similar linguistic and cultural origins can often communicate with each other in their native languages more easily than in English.

Talking in compulsory gatherings is usually carried out during the specific tasks assigned by the instructors, or under the supervision of the instructor. The subjects under discussion in compulsory gatherings are mostly determined by the instructor, though participants are allowed to develop other topics under the assigned subject and to disclose their personal experiences during the gatherings. Unless participants have publicly made known their professions or previous experiences, it is almost impossible to know another person's demographic background in his or her own country if participants do not engage in spontaneous gatherings on other occasions.

In the compulsory gatherings such as classroom discussions, where instructors are present to coordinate interactions, distinctive differences in the degree to which students are comfortable speaking about their opinions and participating in discussion in public places become apparent. Those who are active in participating in discussions are obviously more confident about their oral English, regardless of whether instructors or their peers understand their accents or grammar, or are more comfortable with speaking in public in their native cultures, or both. Latin American or European participants, for example, tend to be more outgoing and talkative and voluntarily express their opinions more than do students from Asian cultures. In the presence of the instructor, Western participants address their responses or reactions not only to the instructor, but frequently to their peers, who are usually also from Western cultures. In contrast, Asian members of the community are more quiet and timid among Western students. Asian participants often speak only when they are forced to. Occasionally, Asian participants display signs

of wanting to speak; by raising their hands or saying words in a lower tone than their Western peers, like, "I think . . . ," "But . . . ," or "Uh . . . ," or changing eye levels from staring at the desk to looking at the instructor. These signs, however, are easily ignored by Westerners when the discussion heats up and other participants aggressively contend for speech turns. Unless the instructor specifically creates chances for silent participants and prohibits Western participants from talking, Asians rarely take the chance to say something in a multi-ethnic gathering.

Another type of compulsory gathering in the classroom is the small, in-class group discussion. The instructor usually provides an issue or a question for the students to discuss in small groups. Members of these small groups usually do not speak the same language, so English is the only language they can use to communicate. Sometimes, however, due to the unbalanced proportion of ethnic groups, it is impossible to break up ethnic or linguistic groups, and some small group members come from the same ethnic or linguistic background. In small groups, if no participants share similar linguistic or cultural backgrounds, outgoing and talkative Western participants concentrate on answering the assigned questions or solving the assigned projects and occasionally consult with other group members. If Western participants find other similar members — usually those who are culturally and linguistically similar — in the small group, the interactions of such small groups can easily fall into a spontaneous gathering; for example, such members are likely to form a sub-ethnic group in a small group to engage in their own conversations about their lives or personal events in English, if no one in the small group controls the content and the floor of the discussion.

Asian participants form sub-ethnic groups in small group discussions as well, but the content of their discussions usually relates to the assigned project. Chatting or disclosure of personal problems will rarely occur among Asian students in this type of gathering. Whether group members are Asian or of other ethnicities, Asian participants commonly address questions or answers to their partners in order to find a solution for the project. For Asians, a common reaction to irrelevant subject matter, when another sub-group is engaged in its own interaction, is to keep quiet and read the project explanation sheet (or textbook) silently. If the sub-group members rely too heavily on information irrelevant to the project, Asian members will interrupt to ask questions about the project to move the focus to the project again. Occasionally, the sub-group's talking is maintained for the duration of the discussion period. Western participants may spend their time talking about subjects other than the project while the Asian group member spends this period finding a solution and writing it up by him- or herself. If a small group has both more than one Asian and one Western participant, at least two sub-groups can form. The Asian sub-group will discuss the project among themselves and record their answers on paper. However, when the instructor asks groups to report their solutions, Western participants tend speak up for the group and generate their own spontaneous solutions during the interaction with the instructor, without collating their ideas with those of the Asian members. The Asian group member or members tend to remain silent as usual.

Linguistic and ethnic boundaries can be broken down among participants in compulsory, small group gatherings if there is a participant who can create a comfortable speaking environment to solicit opinions and responses from members of different ethnic groups. Individuals who are able to break down ethnic boundaries and facilitate multi-

ethnic small group discussion are usually Western or the Middle-Eastern participants. Participants who demonstrate such leadership abilities usually possess the characteristics of being linguistically confident and verbally expressive. Linguistic confidence means that they believe their oral English is understandable and communicable to native English speakers. They speak fluently but not rapidly. Being verbally expressive signifies that they do not mind expressing their opinions in public, even though those opinions might be controversial. Instead of constantly taking speech turns, they usually first express their opinions and then listen to others' opinions. Occasionally, they address questions to Asian or other ethnic participants responding to what the other student has said, even when the meanings or pronunciations of the Asian members' responses are not quite clear. On many occasions, the researcher did not quite understand what Asian participants meant, but these leader-type participants would still maintain interaction with Asian participants and never ask for clarification of meaning or pronunciation. If Asian participants do not speak up in the small group, "leader participants" first express their own ideas, then direct their eye contact to silent members such as Asian participants, and address questions or statements, like "Does your culture think the same way?" and "I don't know whether Eastern cultures do the same thing?" — even though other aggressive participants are trying to take speech turns.

Less distinctive differences in linguistic and communication competence among the participants decrease the opportunities for forming sub-groups, or for participants to be unequally motivated to interact. Linguistic competence is manifested in English fluency, accent and pronunciation, and knowledge of vocabulary, all of which indicate the ability to use English as a linguistic tool to communicate. "Communicative

competence" does not only refer to the ability to operate language or languages; rather, it is a collective term that sums up an individual's ability to function in different social situations, to facilitate interactions with different interactants, and to utilize alternative styles or methods to communicate (Kim, 1991). Distinctive linguistic and communication competencies hinder participants from building up an environment where every participant feels free to express opinions or exchange information during gatherings. Investigations into NS/NNS interactions and NNS/NNS interactions have shown that NNSs feel more at ease and comfortable communicating with other NNSs because both non-native interlocutors have a mutually shared perception of linguistic incompetence.

The mere fact that students are part of a compulsory gathering in the same classroom indicates that their command of English grammar and written or oral communication is as measured by scores on TOEFL examination at approximately the same level. However, the results of standardized language tests are not always commensurate with students' actual performance of communicable English and their previous experiences and knowledge of the host culture (in this case, the United States). Some participants exhibit good skills in answering grammar questions on different language tests but are unfamiliar with communicating in English or with using effective rhetorical strategies to deliver their opinions. For them, English is a familiar language on tests, but not in real life. Other participants have either followed American pop culture through mass media and Hollywood movies before coming to the U.S., or have had previous experiences in the U.S. Thus their actual competence at communicating in English is more satisfactory than the scores they have received in institutionalized tests.

Prominent differences in oral communication and communicative competence can be seen in classes with members who have higher institutionalized scores. In higher level classes, members are less concerned with passing the TOEFL because most of them have met the university requirements already; instead, they perceive their language and communication competence based on their fluency in oral English and their cultural knowledge of the United States. Those who are more fluent in English or have had previous exposure to American culture readily seize most of the speaking turns of the interaction and make their speaking roles in the gathering prominent. When linguistic and communicative competencies are perceived as unequal between the interlocutors, and the prominent participants do not accommodate others' unfamiliarity with the language and culture, the formation of sub-groups becomes inevitable in compulsory gatherings.

Spontaneous Gatherings

A "spontaneous gathering" refers to aggregations that participants naturally form without institutional enforcement. Related to the notion of gathering in "private places" (Goffman, 1963), spontaneous gatherings can be described as casual engagements in which participants choose to interact. In the CESL community, spontaneous gatherings reflect participants' relational preferences in interactions or relationships. On many social occasions, members know with whom to talk, walk, and "hang around" among individuals from different cultures, and then cluster together as a small group that takes part in social activities. These spontaneous gatherings become visible during class, lunch breaks, field trips, and leisure time after classes.

Though the CESL is located on the second floor of a four-floor building with very limited private places, students can still engage in personal interactions and establish

friendships outside the classroom. During the two small breaks between classes (15 minutes each) and an hour lunch break, the CESL hallway, downstairs smoking area, food lounge, and cafeteria are spaces where students converse freely in English, as well as during field trips.

Regional and ethnic boundaries usually influence the development of friendships or relationships in both the CESL and the host culture. Relationships between members of the ESL culture and members of the native English-speaking culture rarely develop. Small interactional groups are usually formed within the ESL community based on linguistic or cultural similarities. The instructors and the director of the CESL are the only Americans with whom ESL students really interact. When asked to recall friends made while at the CESL, former CESL students remember classmates, roommates, and members of their own ethnic groups, but not members of the dominant culture. Current CESL members declare that they have many friends in the U.S.; almost all of these, however, are other non-native English speaking students. Isolated on the south corner of campus, CESL members have very few chances to get to know or even to talk to Americans. Almost all CESL members, whether current or former, do not remember having access to Americans while in the ESL program.

Thus, the only way for members of the CESL community to polish their language skills is to talk with classmates from different linguistic groups. Living in a foreign culture and having no friends from the host culture bothers some members. They fear that if they are not careful, they may spend all their time with people from their own ethnic groups and simply reproduce the life they had at home. Such members experience a great deal of cognitive dissonance: on the one hand, they want to live in the way they

feel the most comfortable, as they do at home; on the other hand, they want to encounter new experiences, though sometimes these experiences frustrate them. Such members often choose a more cautious method to explore this new culture: they prefer to socialize or interact with CESL members from other similar cultures so that they will speak English every day.

In the CESL community, members feel more comfortable interacting with people with whom they are familiar: their classmates. They move around the campus in groups, whether eating lunch, changing classrooms, studying in the library, or even during social activities like festivals or picnics hosted by other ethnic student associations. The formation of their gatherings is based on cultural similarities. For instance, members who speak Spanish, whether from Spain, Mexico, or Latin America, may spontaneously gather together and become a large group. Asian students, on the other hand, form many small sub-groups. Sub-group members do not necessarily come from the same culture or speak the same first language; rather, the common characteristic of these group members is that they all are from "collectivistic cultures." (According to Hofstede's value differentiation of cultures, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia are on the collectivistic end of the collectivistic-individualistic continuum.) Members of each small sub-group still maintain connections with their own ethnic groups; therefore, members, if not familiar with each other, at least know which ethnic group the other members are from.

While most college students sit in the west wing of the cafeteria during lunchtime, CESL members choose tables in the east wing, where it is quieter and less crowded. Members tend to choose their lunch partners based on ethnic groups. Asian students

usually pull two or three tables together to make one group. A few Spanish-speaking students sit at the other end of the cafeteria in twos or threes. These two ethnic groups rarely mingle. Beyond speaking to food service personnel, in fact, ESL students rarely talk to anyone else but their own group members.

In the smoking area of the CESL building, students gather together to smoke one or two cigarettes during the two 15-minute breaks between classes. Such smoking gatherings also have clear ethnic or regional boundaries: Asian members smoke with Asian members, and Spanish-speaking members with Spanish-speaking members. Students recognize fellow smokers and greet each other before entering the classroom building or walking to the smoking area, but unless they are borrowing cigarettes or lighters, different groups rarely engage in personal small talk. Westerners, such as Latin Americans, usually talk more loudly and joke with each other on their cigarette breaks; Asian groups, however, whose members usually come from the same country, normally smoke quietly and ignore the noise made by other smokers.

Similar ethnic gatherings also occur in the hallway or food lounge. Asian members rarely chat with or tease each other in the hallway. They usually move from one classroom to another and settle down quietly before class starts. While groups of smokers joke with one another downstairs in the smoking area, non-smokers have their fun in the hallway. With their bags slung over their shoulders, they tease their partners, chase each other in the hallways, or stop by other classrooms to chat with American instructors or friends who share their native language. In the classrooms during the breaks, some will raise questions to initiate gatherings. It is from these gatherings that they may come to know one another's background and lifestyle. Those who are present

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are free to choose whether to participate. The most common topics for such gatherings include discussions about whether others have submitted their applications to the university, their TOEFL scores, the qualifications needed for the admission to university, or the requirements of a specific department in the university. These topics encompass knowing what others' majors have been or will be, where to seek medical advice, what their occupations were in their home countries, and how scholarship differs from country to country.

Compared with spontaneous gatherings in other places in the institution, gatherings and conversations in the food lounge are the most leisurely and regular activities in the community. Members who normally have their lunch together or chat together in the food lounge come to recognize each other in the first week. Except when the occasional "new face"[3] appears and occupies seats at one of the two dining tables in the lounge (which usually causes some confusion and re-arranging of seats and territory between different group gathering), members have established seating arrangements and dining partners. In-group and out-group differentiation in spontaneous gatherings is obvious during the lunch break in the food lounge. In-group members are usually from similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds; they can honestly point out each other's mistakes. In addition, they explain American culture to each other and they share

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3 "New faces" refers to members who do not usually dine in the food lounge, such as members in the entry-level classes, or former members who return to the community to visit their peers or teachers. Visitors usually find conversation partners while they wait for their friends to appear. Members who are in the entry-level grammar or communication classes, however, rarely dine in the food lounge. Those who do not dine outside the institution stay in the classroom to eat their lunch and read books. New faces are embarrassed and frustrated in the food lounge because former students usually have regular conversation partners and rarely initiate conversation with new faces. More advanced students feel frustrated when they initiate conversations with new faces and the new faces can barely understand or respond to them. So what is most likely to happen to new faces in the lounge is that they eat quickly and quietly and return to the classroom.

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American experiences and endeavor to care about and understand each others' frustrations. Whoever comes to the lounge first has the responsibility of reserving places for his or her group members so that someone unfamiliar will not break into the group. If anyone who does not belong to the group tries to interrupt the gathering by sitting between in-group members, for example, in-group members may tell the out-group member directly, "Someone else has taken this seat already" — even though the seat is occupied only by a bag. In-group members stop their conversations when out-group members walk close to the table. Even the director of the CESL walking into the lounge will make the lounge suddenly fall quiet.

The language chosen in spontaneous gatherings in the lounge depends on the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of group members. Latin American groups speak in Spanish without hesitation. Asian groups, however, mostly communicate in English because their members come from countries that speak different languages. Groups are formed because members come from common linguistic or cultural backgrounds, or have mutual friends. The grammar and sentence structure used in spontaneous gatherings are not necessarily accurate, but are intelligible to other members. Usually the speaker who has a language problem will try to speak more slowly and clearly by stressing the pronunciation of difficult words, and other members, meanwhile, will also help to clarify and explain sentences or meanings. When members do not understand one another, the most common strategies involve skipping the part they do not understand, trying to catch the meaning from the context, or repeating the other speaker's words or sentences. Occasionally, Asian members write English words they do not know or cannot pronounce

in Chinese characters[4] to assist their understanding. On other occasions, community members appear to be involved in activities because they react with laughs, or various backchannels as signals of involvement; however, due to an insufficient understanding of what is happening, their reactions and behaviors during the activities are mimicked acts of the other members so that they can maintain "an occasioned main involvement" (Goffman, 1963, p. 50).

The content of talk during spontaneous gatherings in the lounge can range from casual talk on a superficial level about one another's academic or work history or specific food preferences in a specific culture to very personal disclosures of relationships and social frustration in their home cultures or in the United States. Opinions about class events, such as jokes or public disputes that took place on other occasions, when members were unable to express their emotions or to elaborate on their meanings, are often exchanged and clarified during the break with people whom they think are reliable and with whom they feel comfortable. Members also use the opportunities of spontaneous gatherings to obtain sufficient information and an explanation of social events from their peers to help them know what occurred the previous day.

Spontaneous gatherings may transcend regional and racial boundaries among members, but gatherings are largely constrained in situations such as class breaks or gym exercises. Unlike spontaneous gatherings with members from similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds in which participants of the gathering have mutually recognized certain interactions to take place, participants in spontaneous intercultural gatherings do

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4 Though Asian people speak different languages in their home cultures, most Asian countries require at least one year of education in Chinese. Most Asian people can recognize the meanings of some Chinese characters.

not plan or expect to become involved in the same situation with other ethnic members. Rather, the intercultural gathering occurs when no similar ethnic members or non-native members are present in the situation.

Instead of gathering with familiar members right away, intercultural gatherings result from the gathering of two or more participants who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds; thus, the number of participants will increase when other community members see other familiar members in the gathering. While gathering, participants exchange their personal backgrounds. If anyone raises more questions relevant to his or her personal backgrounds, participants provide more answers. No one avoids answering questions; however, no one asks questions that are too personal or too embarrassing. Such gatherings do not last long. They are very easily be replaced by other activities, such as seeing and joining with members from a similar cultural background or going to the next class.

Discussion

This chapter has described the ESL community by categorizing members' gatherings into compulsory gatherings and spontaneous gatherings. Rules of gathering and manners of talking in each type of social gathering signify social and communicative relations among members on different social occasions. In public places of the CESL, members are compulsorily arranged to meet and interact with other members coming from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Seminars or small group activities in classrooms are the most common speech events that demonstrate how members talk and interact in compulsory gatherings. In contrast, members' gatherings in the class breaks,

after classes, or on other occasions where they can freely choose their interactive partners, reveal the grouping preferences of the CESL community.

In compulsory gatherings, knowledge and familiarity of the host language and perceptions of other members' linguistic competence may become one of the factors determining members' motives for talking. During compulsory gatherings, Western participants, for instance, Latin Americans or Europeans, are usually more active talkers than those of other ethnicities. In the CESL community, Western members generally speak more fluently than members from other cultural backgrounds. As a result, Latin American or European members usually become frequent participants or group speakers in classrooms. In contrast, Asian members rarely take the chance to talk in compulsory gatherings unless someone allocates speech turns for them.

In compulsory gatherings, linguistic fluency and aggressiveness in speaking also establish members' social and linguistic prominence in the community to others. The characteristics of linguistic fluency and aggressiveness in speaking, regardless of members' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, create members' social roles in the community. The voices of the members who are willing to talk more easily gain responses from other members than those of less talkative members in the community. In compulsory gatherings, Western members can seize speech turns because of their greater English fluency and can gain attention more easily than members coming from other cultures because of their relatively greater aggressiveness in speaking (a detailed discussion of this can be found in Chapter V).

While compulsory gatherings usually take place in classrooms, spontaneous gatherings can be seen in the institution's smoking areas, the university cafeteria, or the

food lounge during class breaks or after school. Members from similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds tend to gather together spontaneously and build friendships outside of the institution. The cultural and ethnic tendency to gather spontaneously signifies that members of the CESL community feel more comfortable interacting with those who speak the same native language or who are perceived to speak English at the same level of fluency. Teaming up with partners with similar linguistic competence in English or with comparable cultural backgrounds can reduce social difficulties and frustration in explaining and understanding how and why others think and behave in certain ways.

This cultural-linguistic tendency of spontaneous gatherings explains why they are the gatherings in which community members seek personal and social information from others in the community. In spontaneous gatherings, members share their experiences and frustration with the United States culture. The sharing processes in spontaneous gatherings become their information channels as they adjust socially and emotionally to their lives in a foreign culture. In other words, members gain useful social and personal information about U.S. culture, not only from the institution's director and instructors, but even more so from other community members of similar cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

This chapter has attempted to depict the ESL community in broad strokes. More specific interactive characteristics, such as the occurrence of "third tongue" interactions in the classroom (or compulsory gathering) and members' patterns of participation, will be examined and analyzed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER V

THE STRUCTURE OF TALK IN INTERACTIONS

The goal of this chapter is to describe interaction order in seminar interactions and thus to answer the second research question proposed in Chapter II — how do members co-construct interactions and develop turn-taking sensibilities? Two features of seminar discussions prompt the exploration of the interaction structure within them. First, rather than maintaining traditional classroom interaction where the instructor is speaker and students are listeners, instructor/student interactions in seminar discussions elicit student/student interactions. Second, because non-native speakers have different degrees of socio-linguistic knowledge of English, they need to develop a sense of knowing "who should speak next" to maintain their information exchanges. The goals of this chapter are to demonstrate how instructor/student interactions launch interactions between students and to analyze how non-native speakers develop turn-taking sensibilities and establish social roles reflexively in the community as they co-construct interactions.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first part discusses the turn-taking system in daily conversations proposed by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1977) and the traditional turn-taking system in classroom interactions. The second part of the chapter describes the classroom structure of the setting and introduces the background of the data employed. The third part examines how the instructor manages instructor/student interactions and initiates student/student interactions. The fourth part of the chapter explores how non-native students negotiate speech turns without an interaction coordinator. The last part discusses the findings of this chapter in depth.

Turn-Taking System in Daily Conversation and Traditional Classroom

The management of the turn-taking system is governed by certain principles (Sack et al., 1977). Turn-taking principles in conversations may be summarized as follows:

1. Conversation participants take turns as speakers and listeners. Speech turns are constructed either by sentences, clauses, phrases, or words. Participants are allowed to take the next speech turn at each transition-relevance-place (TRP), the spot "that participants recognize as the potential end of a turn" (Nofsinger, 1991, p. 81).

2. Current speakers may transfer speakership by either selecting the next speaker or waiting until other participants self-select themselves to take the next turn. If no speakers attempt to take the next turn, the "current speaker may, but need not, continue, unless another self-selects" (Sacks, 1977, p. 13).

3. The turn-taking system allocates one party to talk at a time. Two or more than two parties simultaneously self-selecting themselves to take the next turn is common, but occurrences of starting the next turn at the same time are usually brief.

These principles suggest that how speakers and listeners take turns is not predetermined, but it is collectively determined as the conversation proceeds. Though turn overlaps are common in conversation, differing perceptions of and familiarity with prosodic and non-verbal turn-yielding signals (Duncan, 1973), and the different degrees of formality in different settings (e.g., job interviews, classroom or courtroom

interactions, casual talks) may result in varying levels of simultaneous talking and interruption (James & Clarke, 1993).

Speech turns in ordinary conversation are not pre-allocated but interactively negotiated (i.e., negotiated on-the-spot), whereas talk in a traditional classroom is strictly pre-allocated: the teacher reserves the right to talk first and uses his or her turn to allocate the next speaking turn (Sack et al., 1977, p. 729). The turn-taking system in seminar-type interactions falls in the middle of the continuum between ordinary conversation and classroom interactions: students can self-select to take turns, as in ordinary conversation, or they may be selected as the next speaker by the teacher as in a traditional classroom (Viechnicki, 1997). The dual nature of seminar interaction gives both the instructor and students multiple roles during interactions. The instructor in the seminar is not only the default expert in a certain area or language to whom students always turn for the final word on a topic under discussion, but also participates in any interaction, determines a communication channel, and mediates a potential conflict (Viechnicki, 1997, p. 113). Yet every student in the interaction is a potential participant, speaker, audience member, and learner.

Goals of the Course Design

The structure of classroom discussions varies with the nature of the subject and teaching style of the instructor. ESL classes such as Composition and Academic Skills are two classes that rely on the instructor's lectures. Questions or reactions of students in these two classes are mostly directed to instructors. Communication classes in the afternoon are designed for students to practice oral English, and participating in discussions fulfills the purpose of these courses. Giving speech turns to students during

the class period and increasing opportunities of information exchange among students can accomplish the purposes both of oral practice and of involvement.

Data Description

Examples used in this chapter are fragments from three class discussions. Two of these three class periods discussed cultural norms that govern romantic relationships in the United States and in other cultures. Students were asked to answer questions in their textbooks and to listen to two monologues from a boy and a girl who disclose their troubles in relationships. The other example of class discussion involved an exercise in which students must choose five people from the seven available passengers for the only lifeboat left in a shipwreck. The occupations, ages, life philosophies, and problems of the seven passengers are provided on the students' worksheets.

In analyzing these three discussion periods, names of non-native participants are abbreviated, followed by the first letter of their home countries; for example, JK stands for participant J who comes from Korea. The national backgrounds, gender, and abbreviations are summarized as follows:

Middle East	Asia	Latin America
AS - Saudi Arabia (Male)	JK – Korea (M)	GG – Guatemala (F)
	CM – Malaysia (F)	AG – Guatemala (F)
	KV – Vietnam (M)	RG – Guatemala (M)
	JT – Thailand (M)	JNG – Guatemala (F)
		JFG – Guatemala (F)
		CC – Columbia (F)

Instructor/Student Interactions

The basic responsibilities of the instructor in the communication class are to arrange class activities (e.g., field trips, discussion topics), to manage classroom order, and to provide communication assistance (e.g., social and cultural communication skills, linguistic knowledge) while encouraging students to talk in class. Initiating a discussion means not only providing a topic for students to express their opinions, but also creating opportunities for students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds to interact with each other.

As with traditional classroom interactions, the turn-taking system in the observed setting pre-allocates speech turns so that the instructor plays the role of creating the first statement-comment, question-answer, or summons-response adjacency pair part, and of expecting responses or comments from the students. In contrast to the turn-taking system in traditional classroom interactions, the next speech turn in the seminar is not always pre-determined by the instructor. Instead, students often self-select to complete the second pair part or to respond to prior turns made by other students.

Usually before class discussions, the instructor asks students to read a paragraph, to listen to an audio fragment of conversation, to watch 10-20 minutes of a videotape, or to answer questions from the activity worksheet. Such pre-class activities will provide topics for class interactions. Interactions usually rely on the instructor's addressing a wh-question or statement-type question to initiate interactions like Excerpt 1. Excerpt 1 is a partial transcript of discussion about cultural norms that govern romantic relationships in the United States, which originated from two pieces of audio-taped confessions made by

a girl and a boy, respectively, about their internal struggles over their mutual romantic relationship. To initiate a discussion, the instructor constantly addresses questions to the students when students themselves do not interact with each other. If no interaction emerges between students, the instructor will employ the traditional classroom turn-taking system to create more questions/answers and/or statement/comment adjacency pairs to maintain interaction between the instructor and students.

To realize whether an initiation can be successfully developed among students, the instructor normally uses one turn to paraphrase and conclude previous turns taken by students or to pose a new subject-question as a transitional turn to see whether more responses to the previous subject still remain. Any responses that appear in the transitional turn will temporarily delay the instructor's move to initiate a new subject and allow more responses and comments from the students. If no responses emerge during the transitional turn, a new subject will begin. Turn 6 (as marked by asterisk) in Excerpt 1 is a transitional turn spoken by the instructor to paraphrase and conclude the previous speech turns, and to pose the next subject for discussion, if KV (07) does not take a turn to comment on the previous subject or speech turns.

[Excerpt 1] CA 293

```
01      Instructor:  So what do you think is going to happen next?
02      JK:  °maybe°
                [[
03      GG:  she she would
                    [[
04      JNG:            >he is gonna to (        )<
05      Class:  ((laugh))
06      *Instructor:  so he would (         )
07      KV:  em em her adivces
08      Instructor:  What?
```

09	KV: give advice
10	Instructor: They're get (.) okay, somebody, okay somebody thinks, okay, why do you think John's friend would help?
11	Class: Slow down ((together))
12	Instructor: What should he do?
13	RG: To go there

In Excerpt 1, the question-answer format of the interaction between the instructor and students will proceed if no one else reacts or responds to turn 1. As with the interaction in the traditional classroom, the instructor proposes her first question (1) and expects that this question may extend the discussion. Her first question in Excerpt 1 elicits many responses from JK, GG, and JNG, but only JNG completes her response (4). To demonstrate the turn-taking order between the instructor and students in Excerpt 1, the alignment of the interaction can be presented in this way:

a) Instructor: Question as a probe in #1

b) Students (2-5): Answers to #1

c) Instructor(6): Transitional turn to paraphrase and conclude previous turns

d) KV(7): Respond to #1

e) Instructor (8): Request KV for clarification

f) KV (9): Repeat #7

g) Instructor: Transitional turn to pose a new subject based on KV's response (09).

As Sacks et al. (1977) suggest, the occurrences of overlaps are common but brief, and the overlap of JK's and GG's response to the instructor is short but incomplete. Rather than those, such as JK and GG, who immediately respond to the instructor's question, JNG (4), who interrupts GG (3), becomes the one who speaks next. Readers may notice that both JK (2) and GG (3) simultaneously respond to turn 1, but neither of

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them holds his or her turn to the end. Instead, JNG (4) starts her turn late but eventually

gets a turn at talk. In examining the turns of JK (2), GG (3) and JNG (4), JK's volume is

low when compared with GG (3) and JNG (4). In addition, JK does not show further

intent to speak.[5] GG, though using a much louder- and higher- pitched tone than JK, also

does not finish her turn when JNG (4) interrupts. JNG, on the contrary, persists in

completing her utterances and speaking in a clear and fluent tone that gains the attention

of other members, including the instructor, and signals her desire to give this turn to JK

and GG.

Turn 6 can be considered a transitional turn for both instructor and students. The

instructor's turn (6) is not only a response to JNG, a recognition of the completion of the

question-answer adjacency pair, but it is also a new attempt to initiate another discussion

with/among the students. In Excerpt 1, KV (7) jumps in to express his opinion while the

instructor (6) paraphrases and closes the responses of JK, GG, and JNG. Though the

instructor attempts to clarify what KV has just said in turn 7 and still holds one turn so

that KV can express his opinion, KV's turns (7, 9) do not arouse further reactions from

either the instructor or other class members. However, after KV's turn, the instructor

poses a new question based on KV's comment in turn 9, seeking the possibility of

developing another discussion.

In addition to simple answers like "yes" or "no" from the students, responses

appearing in any transition relevance place (TRP) signal that the subject can still be

developed. Excerpt 2 is another example of how the instructor determines whether a new

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5 Repeating words or sentences from prior turns and producing short phrases or low-volume feedback
channels seem to constitute JK's communication style in English. JK's speaking turns usually occur
simultaneously with the other participant's turn. However, he does not seem motivated to gain a full turn

subject should be initiated or not. If no other speaking turns or responses occur in the last

TRP, the instructor may continue to propose a new subject for discussion. In Excerpt 2,

the instructor tries to create a new subject (16) when the class only replies to her question

(14) with a short answer (15) and no one elaborates or makes further comments.

[Excerpt 2] CA 293

14	Instructor:	What about call her once a week?=
15	Class:	Nooo
16	Insructor:	=if you are a girl
17	Someone (probably JNG):	No:ooo
18	Instructor:	Why?
19	JNG:	Once a day
20	Instructor:	So, okay, what will you call that=
21	RG:	=they will give you some ((missing nonverbal cues))
22	Instructor:	Okay, do you think that's the big part of the chase?
23	GG:	Oh, yeah
24	Instructor:	you know that's the big excitement sometimes of the chase kind of?
25	JFG:	((laugh))
26	Instructor:	that maybe like you felt like. Like. Sometimes the girls should make the guy (.) like chase her
27	JNG, GG:	Ya
28	Instructor:	Yeah, like that? So if the guy calls them once a week will make it more exciting?

Turn 16 is a transitional turn for the instructor, allowing her to initiate another new

subject and the students to add comments to turn 14. Obviously, the instructor intends to

create a new situation for the students to discuss when no more responses appear in the

last possible TRP in turn 15. But while the instructor proposes a new subject for

discussion (16), JNG repeats the prior answer (15) "No" again. Such an act, which

involves consecutively repeating the same answer in the next turn and cutting off the

---

for himself during interactions. The issue of participation styles will be discussed in another chapter.

instructor's utterance, reminds the instructor that JNG might want to elaborate on turn 15.

The instructor thus turns to probe JNG by asking, "Why?" (18), soliciting further

comment from her. Rather than moving the discussion to the next new subject, the

instructor turns the subject back to what the class discussed previously. According to the

turn-taking order, the interactive pattern in Excerpt 2 can be simplified in this way:

a) Instructor (14): Question

b) Students (15): Simple answer, "no"

c) Instructor (16): An unfinished transitional turn to pose a new subject by creating
   a new situation

d) JNG (17): Repeat #15 and respond to #14

e) Instructor (18): Question form of requesting elaboration. Giving up the new
   subject posed in #16 and returning the discussion to the previous subject

f) JNG (19): Respond to #14

g) Instructor (20): Transitional turn again, "so, okay. . . ."

h) RG (21): Respond to #19 and #20

i) Instructor (22): Initiating a new subject, "Okay, do you think . . ."

If no interactions take place among the students, the traditional teacher/student,

question/answer turn-taking order will be sustained until students break up this order to

interact with one another. The instructor can distinguish whether an interaction is

developing between students by how they respond to her transitional turn.

[Excerpt 3] CA 293

28   Instructor: Yeah, like that? So if the guy calls them once a week will make it more exciting?
29   JK: Oh::::: No::
30   RG: But, you know what? Because the guy calls the girl often. Then she think that she should
        (.) should (.) (°be more arrogant°)

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31	AS:	Ya::: Yes, Yes, Yes
		[
32	JK:	Oh::::
		[
33	GG, JNG, AG:	((Laugh)) No, No, No
34	RG:	I think she (will think she becomes very big). I think we should call her (long time a day) then she will feel - Oh::::
35	Class:	((laugh))
36	GG:	not in every day. But, but, if you call her once a week, once a week=
37	RG:	↑Uhmm
38	GG:	=the girl would would think you don't matter
39	Instructor:	what what do
		[
40	JNG:	once every two days. It's not everyday, and we still feel (.) your know (.) important
		[[
41	GG	EVERYDAY
42	Instructor:	Okay, this is, this is what. What advice should the girl give to John.
43	GG:	John
44	JNG:	John. Slow down.
45	Instructor:	what what should he do?
46	JNG:	You call her the next day and invite her to go out walking
47	Class:	((laugh)) Wow:::
48	JNG:	Just walking
49	Instructor:	What kind of
50	GG:	I would tell him not to call her next day=
51	RG:	No.
52	GG:	=until they got her
53	AG:	Just call her
54	RG:	No.
55	GG:	Because then she is going to just say no.

In Excerpt 3, the instructor concludes previous turns, "yeah, like that," and poses another new subject question, "So if the guy calls them once a week will make it more exciting?" (28) to initiate a new topic. Besides "yes," or "no" answers, the instructor's

initiation (28) triggers various responses. Once interactions among the students occur, they voluntarily take the next turns, sometimes simultaneously, to express their opinions (29–41). The first interactive pattern in excerpt 3 can be demonstrated as follows:

a) Instructor (28): Transitional turn to paraphrase and pose a new subject

b) JK (29): Respond to #28

c) RG (30): Respond to #28 and express his opinion

d) Students (31-33): Respond to #30

e) RG (34): Elaborate #30

f) Students (35–41): Respond to #34

g) Instructor (42): Transitional turn to pose a new subject

h) Students (43–44): Respond to #42

According to the examples examined above, the instructor coordinates classroom interactions to maintain instructor/student interactions and to induce student/student interactions with a certain turn-taking order:

1. Using a certain theme (topic), the instructor will initially provide a subject to probe responses from the students by using a question/answer or statement/comment turn-taking order.

2. If the probe only elicits one or two short and simple answers and no further discussion is generated, the instructor will use one transitional turn to paraphrase or conclude what has been said and discussed among students, and then pose a new subject for discussion.

3. If the probe induces responses from the students, and the ideas and information are exchanged between students, the instructor will continue her speech turn as long as students continue talking.

The implication of this pattern is that the instructor uses question/answer interactions to continue the instructor/student type of interactions if no students intend to develop a discussion. The sense of whether a new subject for discussion is developing or that no further discussion will continue among the students depends upon whether a student volunteers to take the next turn in the last possible TRP.

Within the framework of instructor/student interactions, the instructor creates opportunities for non-native speakers to speak and communicate in English by providing them with different subjects to facilitate discussions. For students, this instructor/student framework does not constrain interactions between the instructor and students, but rather, allows them to co-construct an interaction under the control of the instructor. The following section will examine how non-native speakers co-construct interactions in the presence of the instructor.

<div align="center">Interactions Between Students</div>

Before students interact with each other, most of the interactions in class are conducted in a question/answer turn-taking order, as Excerpt 2 has shown from turns 20 to 27. When the instructor's initiation, in either a question or a statement form, produces more than one response from the students, the interaction can be developed among the students. Through these various responses, the students themselves co-construct an interaction. For example, in Excerpt 3, which continues the transcript of Excerpt 2, the

instructor's statement (28) provokes RG's comment (30) and RG's comment prompts

various responses from his peers.

[Excerpt 3] CA 293

28   Instructor: Yeah, like that? So if the guy calls them once a week will make it more exciting?

29   JK: Oh:::: No::

30   RG: But, you know what? Because the guy calls the girl often. Then she think that she should

       (.) should (.) (°be more errogant°)

31   AS: Ya::: Yes, Yes, Yes

           [

32   JK: Oh::::

           [

33   GG, JNG, AG: ((Laugh)) No, No, No

34   RG: I think she (will think she becomes very big). I think we should call her (long time a day)

       then she will feel - Oh::::

35   Class: ((laugh))

36   GG: not in every day. But, but, if you call her once a week, once a week=

37   RG: ↑Uhmm

38   GG: =the girl would would think you don't matter

39   Instructor: what what do

                   [

40   JNG: once every two days. It's not everyday, and we still feel (.) your know (.)

       important

               [[

41   GG   EVERYDAY

42   Instructor: Okay, this is, this is what. What advice should the girl give to John.

43   GG: John

44   JNG: John. Slow down.

45   Instructor: what what should he do?

46   JNG: You call her the next day and invite her to go out walking

47   Class: ((laugh)) Wow:::

48   JNG: Just walking

49   Instructor: What kind of

50   GG: I would tell him not to call her next day=

51   RG: No.

52   GG: =until they got her

53   AG: Just call her
54   RG: No.
55   GG: Because then she is going to just say no.

In contrast to the instructor/student interactions, in which usually one person takes

one turn at a time and most responses are addressed to the instructor in a low or moderate

volume, the student/student turn-taking system is regulated by simultaneous talking (or

interrupting), repeating words or phrases, and using high volume utterances as strategies

of negotiating speech turns among multiple speakers. In Excerpt 3, the first

student/student interaction (30–41) gradually emerges among RG, JK, AS, GG, JNG, and

AG when JK, AS, GG, and JNG simultaneously respond to RG's statement (29). Rather

than addressing responses to the instructor's question statement (28), AS (31), GG, JNG

and AG (33) simultaneously and repetitively use yes/no interjections as emphases to

respond to RG's statement. When RG further elaborates on his statement (34), JNG

starts to negotiate the details with RG about the length of a phone call (40). Meanwhile,

GG concurrently raises her voice and attempts to interrupt JNG (41) to gain her turn at

talk when JNG negotiates with RG.

Just as in the turn-taking systems found in daily conversation, participants

involved in student/student interactions self-select themselves to take the next turn in the

next TRP if the previous speaker does not address the next speaker. However, when

multiple participants self-select themselves to respond to the same source at the same

time, simultaneous talk becomes a transitional process to negotiate who should take the

next turn. In an instance of the turn-negotiating process, instead of keeping their

speaking turns (31–33), AS, JK, and JNG all yield their turns and determine the "one-at-

a-time" speech order (34–38) for their own.

There are three possible reasons why AS, JK, GG, JNG, and AG yield their turns to others after several turns of overlapping (31–33):

(a) they have no intent to elaborate on their opinions, but rather, they respond to their agreement/disagreement with the prior turn (30) only;

(b) they have no intent to elaborate on or retain turns at talk, but provide back-channels to signal their listening; or

(c) they assume they have taken the current turn already and should yield the next turn to others.

AS's giving up his turn in turn 34 falls into category (a) because he only wants to express his agreement with the immediately preceding turn (30). As the rest of the transcript of Excerpt 3 shows, AS does not respond to RG or to any other students in this interaction. Only providing back-channels to signal his presence is a predictable and consistent communicative behavior of JK in this community. Accordingly, GG and JNG later exchange information and opinions with RG regarding his comment in turn 34. GG and JNG do not take turn 34 because they have taken the current turns (33) and plan to take the next turn after turn 34.

The student/student interaction (29–41) continues to develop when the instructor uses a transitional turn (39) to initiate another subject and to solicit more responses. By applying the pattern generalized in the last section, the instructor provides a new subject and initiates a new subject question for discussion (39) until she perceives that no responses or speaking turns will be taken by the students. JNG's interruption (40) reminds the instructor that the previous interaction has not yet been completed. GG's simultaneously talking (41) with JNG is an act of showing JNG her disagreement with

the previous turn (40), in which JNG said, "Once every two days." The interaction is considered terminated in turn 41 since the instructor proposes another new subject for discussion in turn 42 and no further responses or reactions occur regarding the subject initiated in turn 28.

Another student/student interaction (46–55) in Excerpt 3 takes place four turns after the previous student/student interaction. Between the occurrences of these two interactions, the instructor provides a new subject question (e.g., "what advices should the girl give to John") and uses the question (42 and 45)/answer (43 and 44) format of the turn-taking order to continue the discussion. The formation of the second interaction among the students originates from JNG's response (46) to the instructor's question (45). Reactions from GG, RG, and AG to JNG (46) compose this interaction. The sequence of the interaction in the Excerpt 3 can be simplified as follows:

a) the instructor's question or statement at #28 and #45

b) Student A's response to the instructor at #29, #30, #46

c) Student B's (and C's) response to student A's turn at #31, #32, #33, #47

d) Student D responds to either B or C's turn at #50, #52; or

e) Student A elaborates his or her previous turn at #34, #48

[Excerpt 4] C 175

09   Instructor: Okay, that's stop this. So we are kind of agree like romance and feeling and good
      feeling part like all that. What about
                        [[
10   JK: Feeling with touch
11   ((Class laugh loudly))
12   AS: ((laugh)) feeling without touch
13   JK: No:::

```
14      Instructor:  Okay, let's think about this think about this
                                        [[
15      JNG:                            know that
                                        [[
16      Instructor:                              wait, wait, wait=
17      JNG: =touches with you face, with your (        ), or your tongue
18      GG:  that should mean a LOT
19      Class:  ((Laugh))
```

The same turn-taking and interacting pattern of the student/student interactions is evinced in Excerpt 4 as well, another class period in which the students are discussing the same topic. It usually takes several speech turns to regulate turn-taking among students in many of the student/student interactions. Simultaneous talking, repeating words or turns, and raising one's volume become strategies of negotiating who takes the next turn. In Excerpt 4, the interaction between the students emerges when JK responds and interrupts (10) the instructor's turn (09). Peer responses to JK (10) in Excerpt 4 include laughter (11), AS's comment (12), JNG's supplementary comment in turn 10 (15, 18) and GG's comment on JNG's supplementary comment (19) with a raised tone at the end of the turn. Followed by the class laughter, members such as AS (12), JNG (15, 18) and GG (19) jointly build on JK's amusing comment to create a humorous interaction.

The process of negotiating speech turns can be seen in Excerpt 4 between the instructor (14, 17) and JNG (15, 18). Before returning to a one-at-a-time turn-taking order in this conversation, JNG interrupts (15) the instructor to respond to JK (10) when the instructor has already started her turn (14) and attempts to regain control of the interaction (17) between the students. Again, the instructor later cedes her turn to JNG (18) and then waits until no one else takes further turns at talk.

[Excerpt 5] QB 378

```
01      Instructor:  Who do you choose to die?

02      GG:  We chose the ehhh scientist and the doctor to die

03      Others:  Ouahhhhh

04      GG:  the scientist↑ doesn't  why why need to  he he only work

                                                    [

05      RG:                                         he only works on for curing cancer=

06      JNG= so he (      ) how many others

                        [

07      GG:                      So, if he working, he have suffers so (it's not good for him to do the

        suffers)... the doctor (.) he is (.) mean (.) the baby↑ (.) the baby ↑ (.)

                                  [

08      AS:                       he is (              )

                                  [[

09      RG:                       ( no ..... )

                                  [[

11      JK:                       yeah

12      GG:                   but the prostitute is pregnant (.) so she has milk

13      The class:      ((laugh))

14      JK:  Oh, Oh, she got milk  ((laugh))

15      GG:  So so it's not a big deal (.) she just got the baby (that's it) just like movies↑ ((laugh))

16      RG: nobody (.) uh (.) what if you get sick? (      )

17      JNG:  First Aid


        ((Omit several turns))

25      CM: Hey, There is not food and nothing na (.) she is (          )=

26      GG:  Maybe she (              )

                        [

27      Others:         (laugh)  ((pause about 5 seconds))

28      RG:  Grandmother should die

                  [

29      GG:       No. no. no. no.no.
```

Simultaneous talking in Excerpt 5 demonstrates not only the negotiation of speech

turns, but also an outburst of diverse opinions. Excerpt 5 contains a long interaction

involving students only. From this excerpt, it appears that simultaneous talk is an action used to take over speech turns and to cover up a previous speaker's comment (GG). Simultaneous talk occurring in Excerpt 5 means more than simply negotiating speech turns and settling who should speak next. To show opposing opinions, simultaneous talking (or interrupting) is a common strategy to gain turns at talk and prevent others from finishing their turns. The origin of the discussion in Excerpt 5 results from the response of GG (02) to the instructor's question (01). Opposing GG's opinion, RG (05, 09) and AS (08) simultaneously supply different reasons that interrupt and refute GG's opinion.

In addition to simultaneous talk, repeating words or phrases and raising voices are assumed as tactics for participants to negotiate turn-taking order. For GG, simultaneous talk and raising her tone to speak are usually utilized to obtain speech turns and draw the class' attention to her, as at turn 41 in Excerpt 3 and at turns 7 and 29 in Excerpt 4. Other class members in various interactions also employed simultaneous talk to express their opinions so that their utterances can be heard, as at JNG's turn 40 in Excerpt 3, turns 16 and 19 in Excerpt 4, and AS's turn 8 and RG's turn 9 in Excerpt 5. Repeating yes/no interjections in the same turn appears in several excerpts in this chapter. Most of these repetitions — for example, in turns 31 and 33 in Excerpt 3 and turn 29 in Excerpt 5 — are performed as an expression of supporting or opposing one's opinion. In Excerpt 2, JNG's repetition (17) of her previous answer also attains a full turn for her. To grasp these kinds of rhetorical strategy requires linguistic and social familiarity with norms of the host culture (significantly, JNG spent her childhood and teenage years in Connecticut, returning to Guatemala in the middle of her junior high years). Similarly, repeating

oneself to gain a turn at talk might not be noticed among multiple non-native speakers if one keeps a normal volume. In other words, in this situation, it may be that only the instructor, who is trained to read verbally and non-verbally the needs of students, would notice the meaning of this act.

Negotiating Extension of Interactions

Interactions among students are not always full of interruptions and several competing voices speaking at the same time. Once the instructor provides a subject for the class to discuss and an interaction arises among the students, the speech turn order can follow the rules of the one-at-a-time turn-taking system to exchange information and cultural values, some of which is demonstrated in Excerpt 6.

[Excerpt 6] C 175

22   Instructor: Okay, think about this. This is what I think about. Think about culturally if you think
       romance is different in different cultures? Maybe like obviously in South Americans are so
       emotional. They touch all the time. Maybe. Is that true in South America?

23   Guatemala students: ((laugh))

24   Instructor: That's what always thought. I don't know. Maybe. Do you think?

25   AS: In our country, it doesn't have ah join boys and girls all together or spoke something for each
       other. (   ) boys for their own, or girls for their own=

26   JK: Uhh

27   AS: =and you don't know uh like I mean you don't know a girl friend. Just with uh (.) you have
       boy friend until you get married

28   Instructor: you don't have boy friend

29   Class: ((laugh))

30   Instructor: Male friend

31   AS: You have some friends and and your wife she should be your (   ).

32   Instructor: So first you get married

33   GG: When you get married, you don't know her

34   AS: Uh sometimes. Sometimes you marry your cousin=

35   JK and GG: Oh

36   AS: =Sometimes (   ) and just see her (   ) you ask about her

48   CM: the lady cannot choose but the male can choose right?

49   AS: Yuh (.) No, she she can choose but uh (.) (not all the time). She can spoke to someone and
      she can tell just her parents to ask my parents. Her parents won't do anything until ask her. If I
      took her, if it's all right to her. If it's alright (   ), but not talk (directly)=

50   AG: =you don't like it

51   Others: No. No.

52   GG: If you don't like this ↑person, you have to (leaving) him=

53   [[

54   Instructor: What about, what about in some other countries? Are there arranged marriage still?

55   [[   ]]

56   GG: (What if you don't like her?)

57   [[

58   AS: Yeah, it was (   ) because in my country, (   ) and I will leave (   )

59   JK: Yeah

60   AS: if I don't like her. Okay, I will just leave the person and affair with other person. You have
      to stick with this person

61   AG: Stick

62   AS: Yeah. Uha….

Excerpt 6 is composed of both instructor/student and student/student interactions.

The original intent of the statement made by the instructor (22) seems to be to seek the

opinions of Guatemalan or Colombian students. Rather than summoning the intended

verbal responses from target Guatemalan students, the instructor receives only laughter

(23) as feedback. Instead, AS voluntarily takes the next turn to respond to the

instructor's prior turns (22 and 24) by introducing the topic of marriage and romantic

relationships in his culture.

The students involved in the interaction attempt to maintain their interaction but

the instructor wants to shift gears to another discussion topic. The students continue

exchanging their turns to prevent the subject under discussion from being changed. An

example of maintaining the interaction among the students can be seen in Excerpt 7 (54–58). By occasionally providing the appropriate vocabulary and clarifying meanings for the students, the instructor lets the interaction develop naturally until turn 54. In turn 54, the instructor interjects a statement and a question in order to allocate AS' speaking turn to the other students, but GG (56) and AS (58 and 60) do not stop their interaction. Instead, they ignore the instructor's turn (54) and continue the question-answer interactions as previous participants have (25–52). Other participants like AG (61), GG, and AS are not influenced by the instructor's move to initiating another interaction. Such types of maintaining interactions and negotiating extensions of the interaction with the instructor occur on many occasions when the instructor wants to initiate a new subject. If the students engage in debating or exchanging information, the participants involved will not give up their speech turns to the instructor until they have completed their sentences.

In Excerpt 7, the turn-taking order regulates the order between the students. JNG, GG, and RG discuss what they would do in a relationship dispute. Preparing to take the next turn after JNG finishes hers(48), the instructor cannot break into their discussion (49) and yields her turn until JNG, GG, and RG are willing to close their interaction.

[Excerpt 7] CA 293

46	JNG:	You call her the next day and invite her to go out walking
47	Class:	((laugh)) Wow:::
48	JNG:	Just walking
49	Instructor:	What kind of
50	GG:	I would tell him not to call her next day=
51	RG:	No.
52	GG:	=until they got her
53	AG:	Just call her
54	RG:	No.
55	GG:	Because then she is going to just say no.

Excerpt 8 is another example where the instructor is unable to break into the

students' discussion until the interactive participants have completed their discussion.

Though the discussion between the students comes to an end, the interaction is not

interrupted or affected by the instructor's attempt to initiate another subject question (87).

In this case, JNG still tries to give more information in turn 86 and AS offers her

suggestion turn 89, both in response to the original subject question proposed by the

instructor in turn 80.

[Excerpt 8] CA 293

80 Instructor: It said exactly what you should do. Maybe I'll find it and bring it to the class. Okay, so what advice will you give to Tina?

81 JNG: Uh (.) Take it easy.

82 Class: ((pause)) and ((laugh))

83 GG: it depends=

84 AG: (   )

85 GG: if it continues to be (oriented) that she should talk to him and tell him that she also wants to go to class and she only wants to be friend with him

86 JNG: Honest with him.

87 Instructor: So if you were you were

               [[

88 JNG: A thousand rules of relationships

               [[

89 AG: (just go to school)

90 Instructor: Okay. if if you were Tina, if you were Tina, okay and John treated you the way he did. How would you feel?

Several features of the turn-taking structure in student/student interactions can be

generalized as follows:

1. An overall multiple-party interaction between students usually originates from a

    dyadic interaction between the instructor and the students. The development of the

    student/student interaction usually springs from a sequence of question/answer

structure between the instructor (A) and the student(s) (B). In order to participate in the dialogue and gain turns at talk, the third (C) or a fourth party (D) will talk simultaneously, interrupt, repeat the same answer in the same or different turns, or raise speech volume. The development of interactions in a seminar classroom can be described in a sequential structure: A-B(-A-B)-C-(D)-B-C-(D) or A-B(-A-B)-C-D-C-D. When the students respond to one another, the instructor usually removes herself from the interaction.

2. Periodically, especially when the speakership is unclear among the students, the regular turn-taking rules in which only one speaker speaks at a time will be suspended to negotiate who secures the next turn. Unlike the interaction in Excerpt 7, in which the speakership is distinct because AS is the speaker and the others are audience members, interactions involving multiple participants habitually use simultaneous talk, repetitive words or phrases, or high volume to negotiate who takes the next turn.

3. To keep intruders from breaking into interactions, interactants manipulate speech turns by ignoring or not responding to them, and by sustaining "one-at-a-time" order under discussion. Actions such as responding, ignoring the intrusive speaking turns, sustaining conversational subjects, and maintaining the previous turn-taking order are important vehicles that allow participants to preserve the interactions. What makes these actions interesting is that when the students enthusiastically interact, the institutional role of the instructor as an authoritative coordinator does not guarantee a turn at talk for her among them.

Discussion

This chapter has demonstrated and discussed how the native English instructor

elicits responses from non-native participants, and how non-native participants negotiate

speech turns among themselves in classroom seminars. The results of analyzing the

instructor/student and student/student interactions are useful for explaining how the

interactions between non-native speakers are initiated and developed. In addition,

communication strategies and speech features used by participants to gain turns at talks in

compulsory gatherings are associated with participants' ethnicities and reflexive social

roles in the speech community.

First, two types of interactions, instructor/student and student/student that occur in

seminar discussions verify an assumption proposed by Viechnicki (1997) — that the turn-

taking system in seminar interactions falls midway on the continuum between ordinary

conversations and traditional classroom interactions. The classroom interactions in this

non-native speech community first rely on the question/answer, or summons/statement

turn-taking structure proposed by the instructor to maintain dialogue between the

instructor and students. By violating the regular turn-taking order between the instructor

and students, non-native participants start developing interactions of their own. The pre-

allocation of turns at talk in seminar discussions is not as strict as in traditional

classrooms, nor as free as in ordinary conversations. By switching between two discrete

styles of turn allocation, student participants not only have different ways of taking turns

at talk during two interactions, but also reflexively display differences in their roles in

instructor/student and student/student interactions.

Among these two types of interactions, social manners and roles of the student participants are reflected differently in the turn-taking systems of instructor/student and student/student interactions. Before a student/student interaction occurs, student participants use their turns at talk to provide answers or statements to complete the instructor's first pair part. By following the question/answer and summons/statement turn-taking orders, student participants seem to recognize the instructor as a language expert and a potential mediator, and the student as a potential participant, speaker, audience, and fellow language learner during instructor/student interactions. In student/student interactions, however, student participants talk to others in the interest of expressing their opinions and letting their opinions be heard. During student/student interactions, student participants who engage in interacting with other students do not perceive themselves merely as potential participants, audience members, or language learners, but as speakers or class leaders. When student participants are less concerned with the superiority or authority of their interlocutors, their manner of talk is more likely to sound like mundane conversation between non-native speakers with less reliance on the one-speaks-at-a-time regularity and other conventions of conversation (e.g., speech volume).

In addition, a cultural difference emerges in initiating and engaging in seminar discussions. The emergence of student/student interactions usually results from student participants' violation of the previous instructor/student turn-taking regularity. Usually, comments on or responses to previous answers or statements from one student participant initiate student/student interactions. Ethnographic data, as well as excerpts in the analysis section, indicate that community members of Western ethnicities are more likely to break

into instructor/student interactions and initiate interactions between non-native speakers. In many compulsory gatherings, Western members take on the roles of speakers and active participants more than the roles of listeners and audience members. Western members feel more comfortable than members coming from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds to talk in public and negotiate turns at talk with instructors or other non-native speakers by using interruptions, word or sentence repetitions, or raising speech volumes.

Such a tendency, related to ethnicities, of violating the previous turn-taking system to negotiate turns at talk leads to another issue which may occur in multi-ethnic group discussions. Student participants who lack negotiating skills to attain turns at talk, or who were conditioned to speak and communicate in a less aggressive or loud manner in public in their native cultures, are less likely to be verbally involved in interactions or discussions. In this analysis, student participants who initiate interactions and engage in interacting with other participants mainly come from Western linguistic and cultural origins. The differences in socio-linguistic knowledge of English and socio-cultural norms in members' native cultures may explain why some ethnic members contribute markedly less to decision-making and are perceived to be less attached to the group in multi-ethnic task groups (Kirchmeyer, 1993; Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1992; Mullen, Johnson, & Anthony, 1994).

The structures and patterns of different interactions between instructor/student and student/student interactions display how non-native speakers in this CESL community collaboratively maintain interactions in seminar discussions. What has been described and examined in this chapter, however, does not represent the wholeness of the

interactional phenomenon of the community. The next chapter will focus on the other

group of members in seminar discussions, those who are perceived and recognized as

quieter and less involved in group interactions, not only by this participant-observer, but

also by other research findings.

CHAPTER VI

PARTICIPATION IN MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS

Cross-cultural and intercultural research has found that cultural backgrounds and values influence communicative behaviors (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Chang & Holt, 1991; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986a; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986b; Gudykunst, Yoon & Nishida, 1987; Hall, 1976; Hui & Triandis, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Ma, 1992; Schwartz, 1990; Triandis, Brislin & Hui, 1988; Yum, 1988). The way native language is used and understood in a particular culture represents fundamental cultural beliefs about how people perceive objects and time, and about the nature of interpersonal communication within a specific culture (Whorf, 1956). Difficulties and misunderstandings in various intercultural social settings, such as job interviews (Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982), committee negotiations (Gumperz & Cook-Gumperz, 1982), and courtroom testimony (Gumperz, 1982), usually appear when the participants' learned ways of talking do not conform to the patterns of communication that are expected within each context.

Research recognizes that discontinuities of culturally learned ways of talking and expected uses of the second language influence students' motives and the success of their participation in classroom events (Delgado-Gaitan, 1987; Malcolm,1979, 1982; Ogbu, 1982; Willett ,1987). The most common discontinuity found in the ESL institution concerns differences in communicative styles among speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Members of second language groups living within a dominant culture may not acquire the range of interactional competencies necessary to participate successfully in the host culture. Johnson (1995) concludes that those students who have

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acquired different ways of talking and communicating are more likely than others to participate in classroom events than others. In addition, linguistic or communicative competency (Long, 1984; Young, 1995), cultural communicative habits (Johnson, 1995; Meeuwis, 1994), and the familiarity with the discussed topics as related to interlocutors (Gass & Varnois, 1985; Zuengler & Bent, 1991) have been found to influence how non-native speakers participate in interactions with other native or non-native speakers.

Purpose of the Chapter

The structures of classroom discussions between instructor/student and student/student interactions discussed in Chapter V have shown that turns at talk are dominated by a few participants. Communication strategies used to gain speech turns and public attention have been discussed and examined in Chapter V. The present chapter shifts the focus to those who rarely speak up in discussions in order to analyze participation styles in discussions and to answer the third research question proposed in Chapter II — how some members in the community participate less than others in classroom discussions. In addition, participants' previous foreign experiences and competencies in managing interpersonal relationships in a new culture are taken into account to scrutinize how some members are more likely than others to speak up in their second language.

This chapter will demonstrate problems and styles of three participants, JK, JT, and KV. The investigator chose these three participants, instead of members of other ethnicies for the analysis of participation styles, because JK, JT and KV are from Asian cultures. These Asian cultures are identified as "visible minorities" in multicultural task groups who are perceived as having lower status (Asante & Davis, 1985; Tuzlak, 1989)

and being less committed to group decisions (Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1992). Without

carefully examining transcripts, researchers may have ignored their participation in

discussions on many occasions. JK, JT, and KV are the only three Asian males in the

class. Their participation rarely occurs in public, and their speaking performance in

English is less visible among other participants than their written performance on the

TOEFL exam. Constrained by their spoken linguistic competence and the learned ways

of speaking in their first language, JK, JT and KV demonstrate different problems and

styles in participating in large group discussions. The following sections will examine

and discuss these problems and styles respectively.

The analysis of this chapter begins by describing participants' previous

experiences in the United States and their communicative competencies when they

became involved in the new culture. Such background information about participants

may substantiate why speaking behaviors of the participants are distinctively different

even though institutional evaluations of their linguistic competencies are rated on the

same level.

Communicative Competence and Previous Experiences in the U.S.

Among non-native speakers in this ESL community, members in the

communication class are characterized in the advanced level (the highest level) of the

communication class.[6] Even though all the students perform well on oral examinations,

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6 According to the director of CESL and the instructor of this class, this class is the most advanced
communication class in the institution, because most of the members in the class can almost communicate
in English without any problems. All but one student scored at least 500 on the TOEFL. They remain in
the institution so that they can fulfill entrance requirements of either the Graduate College or their national
scholarship programs.

the distinction in fluency[7] and communicative competency among students is still

noticeable during interactions. The distinctions in English fluency and communicative

competency in intercultural contexts result from the participants' English training in their

home cultures, and their linguistic and cultural familiarities with the U.S. culture. As

discussed in the previous chapter, 11 participants in the analyzed data respectively come

from Latin America (Guatemala and Columbia)[8], the Middle East (Saudi Arabia) and

Asia (South Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand). In general, the Latin Americans

are more fluent and behave in a more outgoing manner in the non-native speech

community; the Asian students, on the contrary, are quiet and usually avoid expressing

their opinions in public unless they are assigned to or are given opportunities to express

themselves. The only member from the Middle East, though without previous American

experiences before coming to the United States, is socially and linguistically competent;

he converses and make friends with native English speakers or with members from other

ethnic groups who speak in English.[9] Asian members, in contrast, mostly have no

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7 Riggenbach (1991) declares linguistic fluency is an impression of speech pauses, repairs, and the rate of speech. In other words, fluency is an impression of ease or smoothness of delivery. It is weakly related to the production of grammatically correct phrases. Fluent non-native speakers use lexical fillers (e.g., "y'know," "I mean") and avoid repairing utterances to maintain the smoothness of their delivery.

8 Latin American members are generally more active in participating in discussion and interacting with other participants in the class. Three of the five Guatemalan students lived in the United States for over two years. JNG grew up in Connecticut and had her early education in the United States until junior high school. AG went to her high school in California as an exchange student and stayed with an American host family during that time. RG attended community college in the United States for two years. He then returned Guatemala for an unknown period of time until he earns government scholarship. The other two students from Guatemala have no problems in written and oral English. The youngest among these five students from Guatemala, GG, is a high school graduate. Though without previous American experiences, GG actively participates in every discussion in each class and engages in information exchanges with American friends at the dormitory. JFG was a young dance teacher in Guatemala students and always walks with GG. Compared with her Guatemalan classmates, she is less fluent in English and shows less concern for communicating with non-Spanish speaking members or in participating in English activities on many occasions. The only Saudi Arabian member, AS, is also verbally active in expressing his emotion and opinions in English during interactions.

9 AS is called "socially and linguistically competent" because AS not only can speak simple and understandable English, but can also find conversational topics for initiating conversations with his native

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previous foreign experience, except CM,[10] and are likely to avoid expressing their responses in multi-party interactions.

Performance on the institutional language tests is not commensurate with one's linguistic or communicative performance of the second language. One can have good knowledge of vocabulary or grammar when answering institutional language test questions, but not necessarily use this knowledge adequately to make oneself understandable. In contrast, those who score low on the institutional tests may employ different strategies by using simpler words, pronouncing words slowly and clearly, and speaking only words rather than phrases to give clues for the audience members to re-arrange their syntax. Members who are fluent in English and have lived longer in the United States have previously developed socio-linguistic competencies, for example, grasping the audience's attentions and making their opinions sound prominent, to follow the interactive patterns in the classroom. Moreover, the teaching and interactive styles of the classrooms in their home countries might be similar to what they encounter in the ESL program.

Participation Style I: Producing Back-channels

Regardless of their familiarity with and knowledge of rhetorical strategies in English and teaching styles in U.S. classrooms, some participants have more problems in oral communication than others, though participants in the class performed equally well

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or non-native English interlocutors on various occasions, such as at the gym or on the classroom's front porch.

10 CM is a Chinese Malay who used to work in Cambodia for a Singaporean institution. Since English is also one of the official languages of Singapore, CM also speaks fluent Singaporean English with a Singaporean accent. Singaporean English (some called, "Singlish") is a hodgepodge of Chinese and Malay words grafted onto English with indigenous dialect accents. Hiebert (1996) illustrates Singlish by providing several Singlish sentences used among Singaporeans in daily life: "Come on, lah. You no need to be so shy," "You makan already or not? (Have you eaten already?)" (p. 44).

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on the TOEFL. Most of the Asian students, for example, struggle with producing understandable syllables in interactions. Their problems in speaking meaningful sentences and pronouncing understandable are prominent. Their struggles in pronouncing understandable syllables or words make them sound as if they have a speech impairment and this further influences their fluency. To display to others that one is paying attention, listening, and understanding, and to avoid exposing one's linguistic weaknesses, the participant may produce back-channels to show his/her involvement in group discussions. JK is found using various back-channels including "yeah," "oh," or partial repetitions of the previous turn to demonstrate his involvement in the group discussion.

Examining JK's participation in the classroom discussion raises two contrastive findings: JK does not talk, but he is involved. When the analysis focuses on whether JK speaks to other participants, JK rarely delivers information verbally to them. However, the investigator cannot assert that JK is not involved as a participant in the discussion, because his voice and back-channels are frequently heard in the audiotapes. After listening to the audiotape and examining transcripts, the investigator finds a more acceptable explanation of JK's participation behaviors in classroom interactions. By producing various back-channels, not only can he evade spoken incompetence among the other non-native speakers, but he can also demonstrate his efforts to participate in interactions.

[Excerpt 1] QB 378
```
01      Instructor: Who do you choose to die?
02      GG: We chose the ehhh scientist and the doctor to die
03      JK: Ouahhhhh
```

96

04   GG: the scientist↑ doesn't why why need to he he only work

                                                              [

05   RG: he only works on for curing cancer=

06   JNG= so he (   ) how many others

                          [

07   GG: So. if he working, he have suffers so (it's not good for him to do the suffers)... the doctor (.)
      he is (.) mean (.) the baby↑ (.) the baby ↑ (.)

                          [

08   AS: he is (   )

                          [[

09   RG: (no .....)

                          [[

11   JK: yeah

12   GG: but the prostitute is pregnant (.) so she has milk

13   The class: ((laugh))

14   JK: Oh, Oh, she got milk ((laugh))

15   GG: So so it's not a big deal (.) she just got the baby (that's it) just like movies↑ ((laugh))

16   RG: nobody (.) uh (.) what if you get sick? (   )

17   JNG: First Aid

18   JK: Aid

Although JK does not take a full turn to speak his opinions, JK's back-channels

reflect that he follows and pays attention to the discussion. Types of back-channels in his

turns vary according to the content of previous turns; for example, turns 3 ("*Ouachhhhh*")

and 11 ("*yeah*") correspond to his disagreement/regret (03) and agreement (11) with the

holders of previous turns. Other types of back-channels, the repetitions of other

speakers' previous phrases, as shown in turns 14 and18, indicate JK's listening and

understanding of what others say.

Instead of taking full speaking turns to express his opinions, JK only produces

back-channels in turns 3, 11 and 14. Turn 3, "*Ouachhhhh,*" can be interpreted as JK's

expression of regret or disagreement to GG (02) before GG takes the next turn. JK can

elaborate on his reasons of regret or disagreement followed by "*Ouachhhh*" at the same turn, but he does not do so. In turn 11, he also has the opportunity to express his agreement or disagreement with the previous turns simultaneously with GG (07), AS (08), and RG (09). He yields his turn again. In turn 14, when the other participants have not recovered from GG's ridiculous statement (12), JK is able to gain the turn to repeat GG's words in turn 14. Therefore, JK could also take turn 14 in full to express his ideas or opinions. Again, he does not say much besides repeating the previous turn. A similar case of repetition happens in turn 18 as well.

While back-channels are recognized as continuers (Schegloff, 1982), and as listening and understanding markers (Duncan & Fiske, 1977), JK uses back-channels to avoid taking full turns among other fluent participants. Instead, JK utilizes various forms of back-channels with emotional intonations to express his opinions and turns vocally. Turn 3 in Excerpt 1 and turn 76 and turn 78a in Excerpt 2 are back-channels which signify his feelings about previous turns. As mentioned in Excerpt 1, the prolonged back-channel in turn 3 reveals JK's regret and disagreement with turn 2. In Excerpt 2, JK first shortly expresses "*Wow*" as regret or surprise (76). The same expression becomes more clear and exaggerated (78a) when the other participants show similar reactions and laugh (78).

[Excerpt 2]

75   Instructor: It is written for girls or women who want to get married and it's the rules of how to get
      men to ask you to get married=

76   JK: Wow.

77   Instructor: = and it's all over the (girls talk)

                              [[

78   Class: Oh ((laugh))

		[[
78a	JK:	<u>Wow!</u>
		[[
79	JNG:	Aark!

Along with utilizing back-channels to signal his feelings and participation, JK's back-channels frequently coincide with the other participants' laughter or talk. It is always with in a series of simultaneous turns at talk that the investigator can find JK's back-channels, as shown in Excerpt 3. Like those occurring in Excerpt 2, JK produces back-channels (28) to respond to the instructor's statement. The same response (32) is iterated along with the other participants' opinions (31,33) to the other speaker, RG.

[Excerpt 3] CA 293

28   Instructor: Yeah, like that? So if the guy calls them once a week will make it more exciting?

29   JK: Oh:::: No::

30   RG: But, you know what? Because the guy calls the girl often. Then she think that she should (.) should (.) (°be more errogant°)

31   AS: Ya::: Yes, Yes, Yes

          [

32   JK: Oh::::

          [

33   GG, JNG, AG: ((Laugh)) No, No, No

34   RG: I think she (will think she becomes very big). I think we should call her (long time a day) then she will feel - Oh::::

35   Class: ((laugh))

36   GG: not in every day. But, but, if you call her once a week, once a week=

In Excerpt 3, JK still has not displayed intent or made further motions to take a full turn to speak in turn 29 or in later turns. The speaker (RG) after JK is a soft, slow speaker. If JK wants to take a full turn, he has plenty of time to elaborate on his response

in turn 29 because RG (30) does not speak right after the instructor (28) and JK (29), but waits until JK finishes the prolonged final tone of "no."

<p align="center">Participation Style II: Speech Turns Allocation</p>

Students members in the ESL community have learned ways of talking in their native languages. All student members enter the classroom with a background knowledge of at least two languages, or learned ways of talking that reflect the socio-cultural values of their own ethnic social groups when they communicate with other members in the classroom. Difficulties arise when student members' learned ways of talking do not conform to the patterns of communication that are collectively created by the instructor and other class members. Such non-conformity between learned and expected ways of talking in the setting may make participants less likely to participate in classroom events. In most Asian cultures, for example, appropriate student behavior includes gratefully accepting what is taught and keeping silent except when asked to speak. Likewise, participants from different cultures may possess different perceptions of social participation structures, such as the allocation of interactional rights and obligations (Johnson, 1995).

The seminar type of open discussions can be difficult for student members who are familiar with the traditional instructor/student and question/answer classroom structure in many aspects. The primary difficulty of adopting new interactive styles in the classroom is, of course, overcoming problems in English. In addition to conquering the language problem, knowing when to speak and how to speak among fluent speakers takes time to learn and tackle. Among participants who are more fluent in English and

<p align="center">100</p>

familiar with expected classroom styles in the United States, JT and VK's voices can hardly be heard in class discussions.

To create opportunities for participants who rarely speak up in the discussion, the instructor will especially allocate speech turns in a heated discussion. With the instructor's allocation, the less fluent and active participants can legitimately gain speaking turns without interruption even though they hold a maximum of two or three turns. JT's speech turns in the class discussion are mostly allocated by the instructor as shown in Excerpt 4.

[Excerpt 4] CA 293

97   Instructor: let's listen to JT. He hasn't talked.
98   JT: (On that situation) she should (.) give him a chance.
99   Unknown: Give him a chance?
100   Instructor: Yeah, Yeah.
101   JT: But, but, not much in the first time. More and more after that. If she thinks he is he is the
        man she like.
102   Instructor: You think he should wait before she makes him. Uhm, °I have a question in my head°
        Should she talk to him? Should she tells him what her friends?=
103   JNG: Well
104   Instructor: = if you think she should tell everything she tells her friends?
105   JNG: Uh, ya
106   GG: but before that it has to be
                 [
107   JK: yes
                 [
108   JT: no
109   Instructor: No? JK says no
110   JNG: Not exactly the next day, not exactly the same words but that's to get the meaning across

From turn 97 to turn 110, the instructor creates an opportunity for JT to speak by directly and indirectly allocating speech turns to him and by providing back-channels to

encourage him to elaborate on his opinion (100). When an issue is discussed extensively between the instructor and other students, the instructor explicitly allocates the next speech turn to JT (97). Following JT's turn (98), the instructor does not take over the speech turn. Instead, the instructor uses the back-channel, "*yeah, yeah,*" to acknowledge JT's statement (98) and to encourage JT to continue speaking. When the other participants assume JT's speech turns are finished, because the instructor does not specify JT as the speaker in turns 102 and 104, JNG (105) and GG (106) successively take speech turns to express their opinions. Though JNG and GG are involved in the discussion, the instructor still anticipates JT's speaking. The instructor's anticipation of JT is seen in the instructor's acknowledgement of JT's brief response in turn 109, even though JT's response (108) occurs simultaneously with two other participants, GG and JK.

When the instructor allocates speech turns to less involved participants, the discussion's pace usually slows down to leave more time for these participants to express themselves. The fluent, active participants accommodate the less involved participants by holding their turns longer, avoiding interruptions, or helping the speakers clarify their meaning or pronunciation. In Excerpt 4, all the class members halt their turns to listen to what JT says when the instructor announces he will take the next turn. Agreements or disagreements with JT's opinions are held until other participants perceive that JT has finished his turn. The repetition of JT's words in turn 99 can be a disagreement with JT's opinion in turn 98, or a request of pronunciation clarification. The unknown speaker in turn 99 still holds his/her speech turn without further interrogation of JT. By using the speaking turns the instructor has allocated to him, JT displays his incentive to say more

after expressing his opinion (98) and elaborating on his opinion (101). JT's incentive to

say more is displayed in his brief answer, "*no,*" in turn 108. However, JT does not make

any further attempts to secure the speech turn when the instructor responds to his turn

(109), but does not explicitly announce another turn for him.

Similarly, the instructor allocates speech turns to KV when he reveals the intent to

speak in the discussion, as shown in Excerpt 5. When KV tries to speak for the first and

only time in the discussion (672) and the turn is interrupted by GG (672), the instructor

legitimizes KV's speech turns (673) by telling GG with a low volume, "*let KV talk.*"

With the instructor's authorization, KV takes a full turn to raise an issue in the

discussion.[11]

[Excerpt 5] QB 378

670   RG: I see a children like maybe a year or two-year-old

671   KV: There is a problem with uhh =

                 [

672   GG: (children. people.   )

                 [

673   Ins: °Let KV talk°

674   KV:= There is a problem with so call so call uhh humanity becuz we can live with the gradual
        death or   whether live it sink gradually

Participation Style III: Ineffective Participation

Producing back-channels and relying on the instructor's speech-turn allocation are

used by some participants, especially less fluent speakers, to show their involvement and

_____

11 Unfortunately, the audiotape wears out after KV's turn. According to the field notes and the observer's
memory, KV's turn does not result in further responses or comments from the other participants. The two
turns that appear in the transcript become the only two turns representing KV's participation and
involvement in this discussion period.

participation in discussions. Producing back-channels can give other participants the impression of less fluent speakers' involvement in discussions. Relying on the explicit allocation of speech turns can passively guarantee gaining the attention of and speech turns among the other participants. Knowing how to participate effectively in multi-party interactions in the classroom context requires practice. Effective participation infers that the act of participating in interactions is noticed by or responded to by the other participants.

There are occasions where some student members attempt to adapt the expected participation style during discussions, but other participants ignore their efforts to participate. An expected pattern of participation in this classroom is to encourage participants to take the next speaking turn self-selectively or to yield speaking turns to the others in order to maintain the structure and order of classroom interactions. If the participant is forced to yield his/her speech turn, he or she may try to take the next turn again. For some participants, the learned ways of participating in classroom discussion in their ethnic cultures first requires getting approval from the instructor, and then speaking at the instructor's turn-allocation. On many occasions, attempts to speak up in the discussion are not responded to by the instructor or the other participants, because the actions of obtaining a specific speaking turn, such as raising one's volume to negotiate a speaking turn or trying to acquire a turn later in the interaction, are infrequent when compared with other participants.

The examples of struggling between the learned and expected ways of participation are frequently found in KV's action. Occasionally, KV raises his hand to signal his attempt to speak during discussions when other participants raise their tones

and interrupt the others to gain the speaking turn. While he raises his hand and expects the instructor to allocate a speech turn to him, other participants still speak one after another, regardless of the approval of the instructor and of KV's signals to speak. Because the interaction among the other participants is fast-paced, very few participants, even the instructor, notice that KV raises his hand to request a speaking turn.

There are times when KV tries to take speaking turns without the instructor's allocation in the discussion, but his endeavors to participate in the discussion are not recognized by the instructor or the other participants. Sometimes, KV speaks while the instructor is in the middle of proposing a new subject to the class as shown in Excerpt 6. Even though the instructor gives KV one or two speaking turns to express himself (07, 09), neither the instructor nor the other participants respond to or comment on KV's turns, thus ignoring them.

[Excerpt 6] CA 293
```
02      JK:  °maybe°
                  [[
03      GG:  she she would
                      [[
04      JNG:            >he is gonna to (        )<
05      Class:  ((laugh))
06      Instructor:  so he would (          )
07      KV:  em em her adivces
08      Instructor:  What?
09      KV:  give advice
10      Instructor:  They're get (.) okay, somebody, okay somebody thinks, okay, why do you think
        John's friend would help?
```

Excerpt 6 displays one example of KV's ineffective participation. In the excerpt, KV's speaking turns are not directly responded to or commented on by the instructor. Instead, the instructor initiates a new subject and encourages other participants to discuss it (10). In the example, JNG first says something funny (06). When the instructor paraphrases what GG (03) and JNG (04) say and possibly proposes another new discussion subject for discussion, KV (07) initiates his speaking turn (07) right after the instructor's turn (06). Though the instructor's new discussion subject is somehow inspired by KV's turn, without further probing or responding, KV concedes his speaking turn and becomes quiet again.

Another ineffective attempt to participate, shown in Excerpt 7, takes place when KV's turn (72) is muted by the other speaking turns, which continue to proceed. Before KV's turn (72), the other participants are interested in how often a man should call a woman during dating. Many participants provide different opinions and joke during the discussion. KV's incomplete turn appears after the laughter (72), but is soon covered up by the instructor's speaking turn (73). [12]

[Excerpt 7]   CA 293
65   Instructor: why?
66   CC: But. Because at least he has a part
67   Instructor: Uh (.)
68   CC: but (he can arrange a day)
69   RG: A date?
70   CC: I am de he can can
71   Class: ((laugh))=

---

12 The responses of the instructor to KV, according to the transcript, may make readers suspect that the instructor does not appropriately react and encourage KV's participation. According to the data, the instructor seems to ignore KV's speech turns on various occasions.

72	KV: =but you got a lot
	[[
73	Instructor: I never know it is so planned ((laugh)). There is a book right now called the rules. Has any girls ever heard about that? =
74	JNG: °no°

The examples in Excerpts 6 and 7 demonstrate KV's efforts and potential

frustration due to his ineffective participation in classroom discussions in the United

States culture. KV first applies the learned pattern of classroom participation by

signaling his intent to speak to the instructor or other participants non-verbally, and then

by waiting for the instructor's speaking turn allocation. However, this learned pattern of

participation does not permit him to participate in discussions successfully. He then tries

to self-select speaking turns during the discussions. KV's efforts are neither noticed nor

gain opportunities for him to exchange opinions or information with the instructor or

other participants.

<center>Discussion and Conclusion</center>

This chapter discusses and analyzes how some participants substitutes cultural,

linguistic, and communication difficulties in United States classrooms by focusing on

three Asian participants whose cultural backgrounds are quieter and less involved than in

different multicultural contexts. The description and analysis in this chapter also furnish

answers to a question frequently asked in the research on Second Language Acquisition

(SLA), organizational, and small group communication: What influences the perceptions

of non-native speakers participating in face-to-face interactions in the intercultural

context? While the results of many research investigations conducted within

intercultural contexts conclude that members from Asian cultures are perceived as less

involved and less attached to group discussions than European descent or Western cultural groups, this chapter provides examples and interpretations of how and why Asian members participate in discussions.

In a non-native speech community in which members have varying degrees of linguistic and social difficulties, how to become involved in social interactions such as classroom discussions is a primary lesson in learning how to "getting by." Some participants actively and verbally practice English, as discussed in Chapter V, during classroom discussions. Others use different approaches to become involved in interactions. The first participation style used by one Asian member is to produce back-channels during the discussion to show involvement. Even though back-channels signal the presence and attention of the participants, JK does not substantially utter words or express his/her opinions in the discussions. In this analysis, the researcher interprets the behaviors of producing back-channels and avoiding taking full speaking turns as tactics used by some participants to mask their incompetence in and apprehension of speaking.

The second participation style used by quieter and less involved participants is to speak only when the instructor allocates speech turns to them. Waiting for a legitimate allocation of turns at talk is a participation style learned and used in some Asian cultures. Such a participation style can secure speech turns from other participants in a heated discussion. On several occasions, participants use nonverbal cues, such as raising their hands to signal to the instructor to allocate a speech turn to them. However, it is sometimes difficult for the instructor to allocate speech turns to specific participants or to halt others from speaking when turns at talk are mostly taken by fluent and aggressive participants.

Another participation style, which is found in one of the three participants, reflects the effort to participate in and adapt to the new social structure in discussions. The impression of being quiet, however, cannot be changed when the participants start trying to participate voluntarily, because the participant's self-selected speaking turns are concealed by louder turns during the on-going discussion. Speaking with low and soft volume commonly possessed by three Asian participants usually blemish their efforts to participate in seminar discussions. Their efforts in participating in discussions and exchanging information with the other participants can eventually be noticed and may succeed if participants use a higher or louder speech volume to gain the attention of others. In speech activities in the CESL community, opportunities to speak are presumed equal for each member. Even though turns at talk can be interrupted once or twice, their voices and opinions can eventually be heard if they persistently try to take them.

Through a continued analysis and demonstration of how members structure interactions in seminars, this chapter examines and analyzes how some members find it difficult to co-construct interactions with other participants. The communication and participation patterns that occur among non-native speakers in seminar interactions encompass joint analyses in Chapters V and VI. What lessons readers or researchers can derive from these findings, and what the limitations of these findings are and what future research they suggest will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Previous chapters describe and examine social gatherings, interactional order, and participation styles of the CESL community in the classroom. This dissertation describes and analyzes how members of the CESL community form their social groups, organize turn-taking structures in the classroom with the instructor and the other non-native speakers, and participate in classroom discussions. This final chapter summarizes and discusses the importance and applications of findings in each of the previous chapters.

Talking and Gathering in a "Third Tongue" Community

Community members in the CESL program commonly speak English as a foreign language, learn to communicate and understand others in English, wait to enroll in the regular university program, and have limited contact with native English speakers and American culture and society. When members try to overcome linguistic and social constraints in the American culture, the community becomes a transitional phase for connecting members with the U.S. culture.

On many occasions, members in the community tend to associate their social lives and personal relationships only with those who have similar linguistic or cultural backgrounds, or possess an almost equivalent linguistic or cultural knowledge of U.S. culture, regardless of how the gatherings are compulsorily created by the institution or the instructors, or spontaneously formed by members. In spontaneous gatherings that indicate social encounters, such as conversations during lunch breaks or in the smoking area, members use personal preferences in selecting interlocutors or members. Compulsory gatherings infer members' presence in classrooms, or public spaces in the

institution, where they have no control in selecting their interlocutors, and allow them to engage in various activities such as seminar or small group discussions. Personal friendships and interactions are rarely established among members from discrete cultural backgrounds (e.g., Koreans vs. Guatemala). In different social settings, members are still prone to interact or talk with other members who are linguistically/culturally familiar with many of the unfamiliar interlocutors in compulsory gatherings.

Communicative habits and styles of members' ethnic cultures could affect the participative roles of members in multi-cultural interactions. In a community where different ethnicities mix, Western members are comparatively more talkative and outgoing than those who come from Asian or Middle Eastern cultures. By interrupting others or raising their voices, Western members can easily draw members' attention away from other speakers. In addition, Western members usually feel free to express their opinions during classroom discussions and argue with either the instructor or other class members. As a result, Western members' speaking manners and attitudes while participating in discussions among Western members can determine the speaking and participative environment of a multi-ethnic group. Western members can remain outgoing and talkative, and engage in monologues (e.g., telling a long story) in the discussion without considering whether other members in the group have something to say. On the other hand, they can become natural leaders by soliciting other ethnic members to speak in the discussion and create a less threatening environment so that each member in the group can participate.

The description and findings in studying social gatherings in the ESL community can generate several concerns which may benefit "third tongue" interactions. First, as a

learning and transitional phase of entering American academic culture, the ESL institution should create opportunities for student members to become familiar with the social and academic environment in which mostly native English speakers are involved. The special accommodative teaching and communication patterns in the institution only help student members survive in the non-native spoken community and later result in isolating their social contact in a non-native speaker's community. In the community, current and former ESL community members cannot recall having any access to Americans except the director and instructors. When members enroll in regular university classes, they become familiar with non-native speaking friends only. Classmates (mostly international students), roommates (usually another non-native speakers speaking either the same native language or English), and members of their own ethnic groups constitute their entire social circles. The teaching and communication patterns, as well as classroom requirements, which members learn and with which they are familiar, are specially designed to accommodate members' linguistic competence. In the institution, instructors frequently describe classroom conditions and requirements, and advise non-native students how they can fulfill academic disciplines in the university. However, personally observing the classroom interactions and experiencing normal classroom requirements and speech pace may be more efficient for familiarizing students with their host environment and satisfying their basic needs in their university lives. One suggestion would be to allow non-native speakers to audit one university class as a part of the ESL requirement when their linguistic competence, indicated by both the TOEFL test and class performance, has almost reached the requirement of university enrollment policy (e.g., 500 on the TOEFL).

Second, in a task-oriented multi-ethnic group, an ethnic sub-group needs a coordinator to break up ethnic boundaries. According to gathering patterns in different social occasions, ESL community members are prone to interact only with those who are linguistically or culturally close to them. Such an inclination of forming sub-groups with familiar linguistic and cultural background members also takes place in task-oriented small groups. In addition, when discrete cultural background members commingle in a small group, Western members usually perform more assertively and expressively, which has the effect of making Asian members behave more submissively and timidly in groups. To avoid imbalanced participation in a multi-ethnic task group, a natural emerged group leader or coordinator, who is perceived as linguistically more competent, verbally expressive, and patient by the submissive group members, can usually solicit opinions and encourage them to talk. The roles of leaders or coordinators in a multi-ethnic group demand members' mutual recognition of the leaders' linguistic competence in the common spoken language, institutional authority (legitimate power), and credibility in creating a comfortable and equal environment for each member. Otherwise, the nature of a multi-ethnic group can easily result in a situation in which one member or sub-group dominates most of the group decisions, and the other sub-groups become minor suppressed groups.

Third, instead of speaking fluent English, employing verbal and non-verbal tactics and strategies can help to attain speaking turns for members who are less competent in oral communication. The tendency to employ paralinguistic cues and non-verbal tactics and strategies indicates that members who have comparatively superior linguistic or cultural knowledge in the common spoken language dominate interactions in the

gatherings. During seminar discussions in the ESL community, the instructor plays a role in facilitating interactions and equalizing speaking turns and opinions for non-native students. Without the presence of the instructor, culturally or linguistic competent members can easily possess most of the speaking turns and dominate discussion content/topic. However, various verbal and non-verbal strategies, such as directing eye contact to support the other interlocutor's speaking turns, or raising speech tones, can be used to counterbalance interaction domination.

The Structure of Talk in Interactions

Chapter V examines the order of classroom interactions between non-native speakers in order to comprehend how the instructor/student interaction co-constructs interactions and provokes non-native speakers in developing turn-taking sensibilities. The order of classroom interactions between non-native speakers usually relies on the coordination and solicitation of the instructor. The instructor provides discussion topics and uses question/answer and statement/comment adjacency pairs to solicit opinions from the students and to encourage students developing interactions without the instructor's involvement. The instructor recognizes opportunities of developing student/student interactions from any student reaction and response violating question/answer or statement/comment orders.

One student's (C) violation of the previous question/answer or statement/comment turn-taking order between the instructor (A) and the students (B) may become an initiation of student/student interactions. When the turn-taking routine between the instructor and the students (A-B-A-B) is broken down by a third party (C), or the previous party (B) or a fourth party (D) responding to C, the interaction between the

students thus generates A-B-(A-B)-C-(D)-B-C-(D) or A-B-(A-B)-C-D-C-D patterns. In seminar discussions of the CESL community, even though each participant in the discussion may perform equally well on the institutional test, Western members seem to feel confident speaking in public, whereas Asian members do not. Individuals who show more aggression and less concern with interrupting the other's speech turn, in fact, speak and contribute more to the discussion. It appears that group members who are more assertive and express less concern for others can easily be associated with dominant and majority status in the group.

As with ordinary turn-taking order in English, non-native speakers self-selectively take the next speaking turn at each transitional-relevance-place (TRP). However, with various degrees of socio-linguistic knowledge and perceptions of TRPs in English, non-native speakers usually take several turns to negotiate "who speaks next." Usually, active participants in discussions use simultaneous talk, interruptions, word or turn repetitions and increased volume to attain speech turns and public attention.

In addition to realizing how non-native speakers organize speech turns and interactions, the ways that participants attain turns at talk and public attention implicates the participants' and investigators' perceptional differences between cultures in classroom interactions and communication styles. What has been demonstrated in seminar discussions between non-native speakers is how Western members, as mentioned in compulsory gatherings of Chapter V, actively participate in interactions and use tactics such as interruptions, repetitions or high volume to dominate interactions. In contrast to the dominant patterns of participating in discussions, Asian members may perceive these tactics to be impolite and unacceptable during interactions, especially in the classroom.

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The findings in Chapter VI also reflect the instructor's dilemma of preventing interactions from being dominated by a few students while at the same time creating a free communication environment in the classroom. From the interactions, English competence and efficiency, and U.S. cultural knowledge have substantially attributed power and status among student members. Future investigations may explore how student members attribute assertive/unassertive, competent/incompetent, majority/minority status among foreign language learners.

Participation in Multicultural Contexts

While Western members feel more confident and comfortable to participate in discussions due to linguistic and cultural familiarity to the United States culture, or verbally more competent to express themselves in English, Asian members, by contrast, are involved less in the group discussions than are other ethnic members. The chapter examines participation styles used by three timid and quiet Asian members. When compared with Western members, Asian members are perceived as passive and less motivated in participating in discussions. This can be concluded from the fact that they conceal linguistic competence, struggle between the learned and used way in the classroom, and fail to attain speaking turns or attention from the instructor and other participants.

This first passive style of participating in discussions is to produce back-channels and to avoid taking full turns at talk. Among other active and talkative members, back-channels of this participant (JK) are hearable, but rarely did he speak or contribute thoughts or ideas to the discussion. It is possible that the participant produces back-channels (e.g., "*yeah*," "*Oh*," or repeating the other's words or speech turns) to conceal

his lack of fluency in English and his apprehension of speaking to signal involvement in discussions.

Another passive style of participating in discussions is to wait for the instructor's speech turn allocations. Using the learned and used styles of classroom interactions in their ethnic cultures—the instructor's speech turn allocation—in multi-ethnic discussions, though passive in participation, sometimes can insure one or several full turns for the participants from the other fluent and assertive members. Sometimes, participants employ another learned and used style of classroom participation—non-verbally signal intent to speak to the instructor and other members—to wait for turn allocation. Instead of jumping in discussions to grasp a speaking turn from the other members, a non-verbal signal intents to speak (e.g., raising hands) is usually ignored by the others in a heated discussion.

The other way of participating in discussion is to learn to obtain turns at talk from other fluent, aggressive participants. The participation style exemplified by KV is called passive style because the efforts of voluntarily participating in discussions are not noticed by the others due to his low and soft speech volume. Participants can persistently and verbally display their intention to speak to the instructor and other speakers by using higher or louder speaking volume to gain the attention of the others.

For a coordinator or facilitator in a multi-cultural group, in order to balance differences in communication and participation styles, it seems more practical to concentrate efforts on developing group processes that ensure that members with unassertive orientations have ample opportunities to contribute to the group. Urging group coordinators or facilitators to ensure opportunities for unassertive members does

not suggest that unassertive members are inferior or incompetent when encountering

assertive members. Rather, in a multi-cultural group, setting up support-oriented duties

to assertive members and assigning task-oriented duties to submissive members to build

reciprocal interdependencies among community members may improve participation

motives.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

<u>Strengths</u>

Liberman (1995) criticizes that analysts of intercultural communication miss the

radical importance of interactional phenomena by "[being] lodged within the task of

cultural comparisons and contrasts based on generalizations" (p. 145). In Liberman's

self-examinations and analysis of intercultural encounters in a Tibet abbot in Tibetan, he

claims that the competence to maintain an intercultural interaction involves

comprehending a topic and the technical skills to format the interactions. While many

intercultural communication researchers devote their efforts to comparing, contrasting

and concluding what happened during intercultural encounters, what should be shown

and presented in intercultural investigations is "the looks of world for the participants"

and the sociological "facts" that the participants are attending to (Liberman, 1995, p.

119).

Conforming to Liberman's comments on the shortage of analyzing the

phenomenon from the participants' viewpoints in intercultural investigations, the first

strength in this project is to offer sociological facts and evidence to describe what is

going on during the intercultural interactions. The sociological facts of the community

and its participants are truthfully transcribed and demonstrated through examples in the

analysis. The nature and purpose of the analysis and findings in this dissertation do not attempt to generalize and predict interactions and social activities happening between non-native speakers who speak English as a common foreign language. Instead, the results and findings of this project indicating and suggesting interactional and social patterns that have occurred in this non-native community can also take place in different social contexts of other non-native speech communities.

The second strength of this study, corresponding to Hopper's (1990–1991) and Mandelbaum's (1990–1991) criticism of the legitimacy of the participant-observer in the methodological chapter, is to describe and analyze the speech community from the perspective of a native participant-observer. The description and interpretation of this non-native community are the product of an investigator who has opportunities to encounter three types of interactions, NS/NS interactions in her native language, NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions in English, on a daily basis. Such opportunities to enter three different speech communities also provide her with social and cultural sensibility to monitor differences in the interactional relations, attitudes, social roles of herself and her interlocutors among different speech communities. Instead of making generalizations or conclusions based on laboratory experiments and statistical interpretations, the description and interpretation of this speech community reflect how non-native speaking members in the community interpret and perceive social and communication behaviors in the community.

Third, the findings of this study indicate potential issues and problems among different non-native speakers in different social settings. Issues such as the familiarity with the expected social and communication patterns, participants' cultural differences in

speaking and participation styles, and comparative social roles among non-native speakers can provide future investigations in intercultural interactions with information, propositions and assumptions to verify and hypothesize NNS/NNS interactions in various social contexts.

Limitations

However, no research methods or investigations can catch the holism of the phenomena. First, data analyzed in this study focus largely on the structures and patterns of interactions during compulsory gatherings. While members have linguistic and cultural preferences to socialize and interact with certain groups in and out of the ESL community, this study does not describe and examine social activities and interactional structures in spontaneous gatherings as comparisons and contrasts to structures and behaviors in compulsory gatherings. The descriptions and analyses of the interactions during spontaneous gatherings can reflexively report how non-native members differently communicate and behave when encountering different members coming from discrete linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Second, the educational nature of this speech community makes the findings difficult to transfer to other social contexts. In an educational institution, the primary concern of most of the CESL community members is learning to understand and to be understood in English. Without involving specific tasks or missions during the interactions, the interactions between non-native speakers become less structured than interactions with special missions or tasks. In many intercultural encounters, such as business negotiations or diplomatic conferences, the processes of interactions may carry substantial gains or losses. When power, money, or other beneficial factors are involved,

the structures and styles of interactions can become very different from the interactional nature described in this study.

Conclusion

This dissertation explores the ESL community by describing social gatherings, interactional structures and participation styles in the classroom. Beyond understanding how non-native speakers gather, interact with and participate in classroom discussions, descriptions and findings of previous chapters can help re-shape socio-linguistic features generalized from various NS/NNS and NNS/NNS interactions (see Chapter II). For instance, in the ESL community, linguistically fluent participants seem to dominate interactions in that they constantly possess the speech floor. Socio-linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge of the host culture (i.e., U.S. culture) privileges participants to know "when to speak" and "how to speak" in English. In the description of the compulsory gatherings, members' flexibility to interlocutors' socio-cultural and socio-linguistic differences (e.g., accommodating to the other's participation styles, or soliciting opinions from less expressive members) is shown to be helpful in facilitating interactions.

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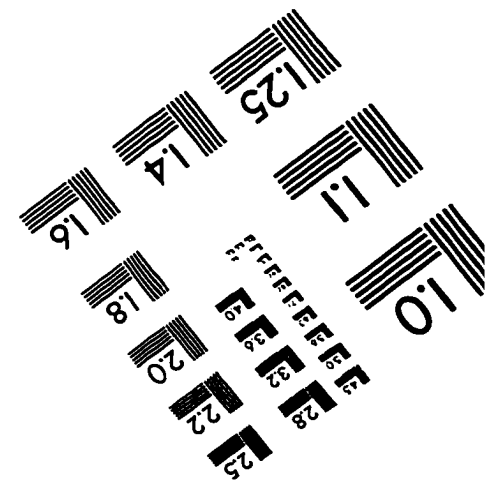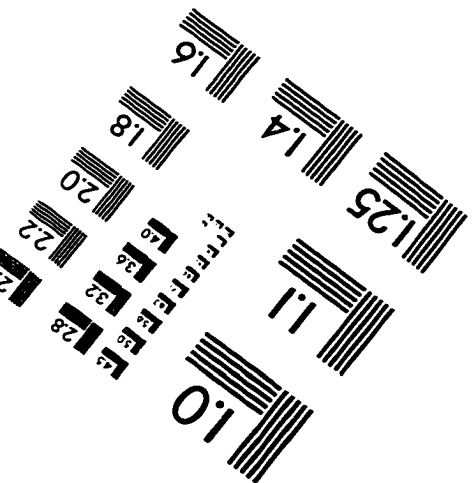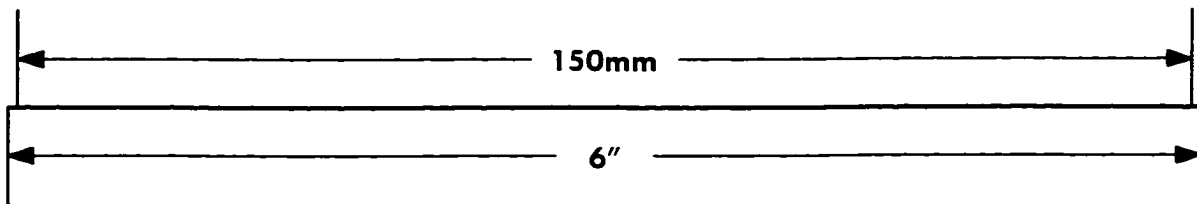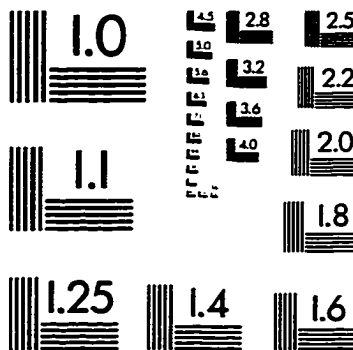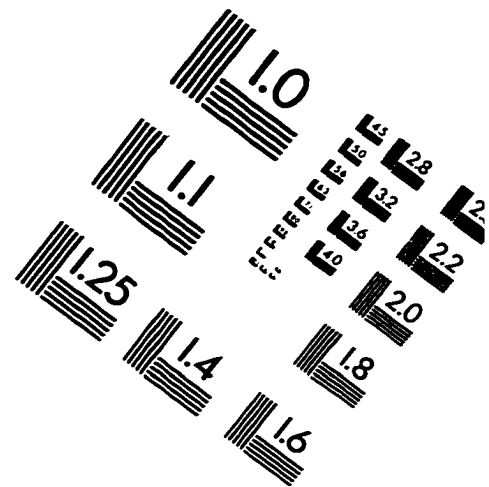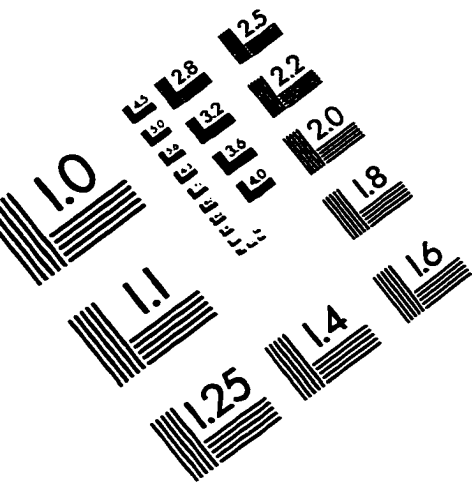
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