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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

INTERACTIVE COMPETENCE IN A MULTILINGUAL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Norman, Oklahoma

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INTERACTIVE COMPETENCE IN A MULTILINGUAL
ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

This study examined the language use in a multilingual English as a second language school located in the Midwest. The primary objective of this study was to uncover and display the ways in which members of this setting manage the various activities involved in the teaching and learning of English in light of extreme linguistic barriers. Those members included the native English speaking teachers and staff, as well as the nonnative speaking students representing a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Both Hymes' ethnography of communication and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology informed and guided the study. Namely, this investigation included an inspection of the language school as a special kind of speech community, and the use of conversation analysis to describe the details of native/nonnative, and nonnative/nonnative speaker (interlingual) interaction. Based on those efforts, I argue that much of the social activity of the members can be understood in terms of the pressing orientation to display and assess interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. The nature of that activity as an oriented to way of speaking is explored, including how it is similar to and differs from other conceptualizations of communicative and intercultural communication competence, its relationship to the concepts of interlanguage and the negotiation of

meaning, its cooperative turn-by-turn achievement, and its consequences for the members. Additionally, a description of the members' various speaking patterns reveals a paradoxical aspect to inter-lingual interaction at the language school. Specifically, despite the espoused goodness of the official and unofficial rule to "speak English whenever possible," these interactions are largely prohibited. Implications of this study, both in terms of its methods and findings, for theories of language use and their concomitant methodologies are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

Communicative Competence and Linguistic Deficiency
at an ESL School: An Introduction

In 1990, 25.5 million immigrants over the age 18 living in the United States spoke a language other than English in their homes, and 12 million of those adults spoke something other than English as their primary language (NCES, May 1998). By the year 2000, 10% of the U.S. workforce will be immigrants, and 25% of those will have limited English proficiency (McArthur, 1997). Each year, nearly 1,200,000 students study abroad, 470,000 of those in the United States (NAFSA, 1999). To gain admission to college, most of these students require instruction in English as a second language (ESL) and are included in the millions of immigrants who participate in various ESL programs throughout the country in an effort to better their lives. In the United States and Canada, there are 210 institutions offering over 300 programs relevant to teaching English as a second language: 33 doctoral programs; 195 master's programs; 42 undergraduate programs; 74 state certification, endorsement, and validation programs; and 43 minor certification programs (Muchinsky, 1998).

The widespread phenomena of second language acquisition, and the accompanying intercultural or interlingual encounters, has been conjoined with an academic

interest in such fields as linguistics, communication, sociology, education, and others. Research and theorizing specifically relevant to communication involving the learning and use of a second language represents a wide spectrum of methodologies and perspectives of social interaction. At many points in this diverse landscape, we can notice a central concern, however obscured or spotlighted: The description, measurement, delineation, or explanation of the features of, factors contributing to, or consequences of, a particular kind of communicative competence--i.e., the practical use of English in interaction.

The importance of communicative competence in all social interactions, and the relevance of that concept for the phenomena of interest here, can be grasped by reflecting on Garfinkel's (1967) concern with "commonplace activities of daily life... whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs." (p. 1). The management of everyday activities, including the various practices of teaching, learning, and using a second language, like other activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs. . . consist of an endless, ongoing accomplishment;... the[se] practices are done by parties to those settings whose skill with, knowledge of, and entitlement to the detailed work of

that accomplishment--whose competence--they obstinately depend upon, recognize, use, and take for granted (p. 1).

Given the diversity of approaches, we find little agreement regarding specific conceptualizations of communicative competence. The range of those conceptualizations will be addressed in the next chapter. However, as a starting point, we can briefly extend Garfinkel's description here.

Communicative competence, in terms of actual communicative phenomena involving same or different native-language participants, can be viewed generally in terms of the "competences which ordinary speakers use and rely on when they engage in intelligible, conversational interaction" (Heritage, 1984, p. 241). Conversation analysts, as well as others doing the work of ethnomethodology, uncover specific competencies that interactants in general use and rely on (e.g., turn-taking), as well as those competencies used and relied on in specific settings (e.g., convicts in a half-way house).

Whether existing approaches to these interactions offer explanations of factors contributing to foreign language assessment test scores, the assessment of various teaching techniques, the grammatical and interactional modifications made, or some other aspect of second language use, learning, or teaching, they all share a central concern. Namely, the

cooperative achievements of native/non-native speaker (NS/NNS) or non-native/non-native speaker (NNS/NNS) interactions (including the general and specific interactive competencies used and relied upon) are intensely relevant.

My observations of diverse communicative activity at an English as a second language school revealed the cooperative displaying of interactive competence to be (1) of primary importance in virtually all NS/NNS, NNS/NNS, what will be referred to as "inter-lingual" interactions, and consequently (2) less "taken for granted," and of more immediate, however fleeting, interest to the participants themselves. Thus, the cooperative achievement of interactive competence in spite of the linguistic deficiency of at least one of the participants is viewed as a "competency" that members of the language school use and rely on in their daily affairs.

The various social activities members participate in require and work to display the participants' competence at "learning" or "teaching" English, or an ability to accomplish some other task relevant to being a competent member of the language school in spite of the linguistic deficiency assumed or manifested in the interactions. These competencies are realized when the participants interact (in English) competently in spite of the linguistic deficiency of either participant. All of the inter-lingual English

language encounters at the language school could be viewed as opportunities (welcomed or not) that display how well the members are doing at "the business" of the language school: learning and teaching English, primarily, and other relevant affairs (e.g., paying fees, sending mail, getting directions, etc.). Every endeavor to that end, then, requires, to the extent that it becomes an expectation, the cooperative display of interactive competence in spite of linguistic deficiency, and being obliging to problems that linguistic deficiency seems to create, or potentially may do so.

In many instances, this kind of communicative competence, which will hereupon be referred to as interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, becomes more important than that which it produces--recognizable "objective" fact. Evidence for this exists, among other places, in cases in which one or more of the interactants offer indications that they understand the other, which are later revealed as feigned understandings. Ironically for the participants, in these and similar instances of feigned understanding, interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency itself becomes suspect or placed into doubt. Thus, we can view virtually all of the interactions at the language school as cooperative efforts to keep that fragile and doubtful, and usually-assumed-and-

expected-competence in working order over the course of the interaction.

Describing the features and consequences of this orientation to and enactment of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency at the language school is the focus of this study. While the literature pertinent to specific conceptualizations of communicative competence in this setting will be addressed in the next chapter, an outline of the general relevant findings in NS/NNS, NNS/NNS, or second language acquisition (SLA) research can be offered here.

Relevant Conceptualizations and Findings

Very few NS/NNS or SLA studies actually investigate the practices of everyday interaction and their accomplishment as a topic. Liberman's (1995) study of gratuitous concurrence in intercultural interactions, Meyer's (1990) ethnomethodological analysis of a second language translation episode, and to some degree various investigations of Gumperz (1977, 1982), Varonis and Gass (1984, 1985), Long (1985) and Meyers-Scotton's (1993) code-switching studies, represent some exceptions. Most, rather, are concerned with the influences of various processes on second language acquisition.

Teacher variables include attitudes, cultural knowledge, interpretation skills, and a host of teaching

"styles" or techniques. Learner variables provide a longer list including attitudes of the individual and learner's community, various cognitive constructs, and individual characteristics such as age, gender, and ethnicity. Environmental or interactional factors include the relationship of native and non-native language speakers, and various dimensions of the setting or place in which these interactions occur such as number of people, event types, and topic. Much of the research has been primarily concerned with the quantification of these and other "classroom factors" (See Larson-Freeman and Long, 1991; and Preston, 1989, for extensive reviews of SLA research, and Paulston, 1992 for a summary of sociolinguistic research in bilingual education specifically).

Paulston (1990), in making a familiar distinction between linguistic performance (the actual utterance) and communicative competence (activity reflecting the social rules of language use), added the term "communicative performance" to characterize "communication that carries no distinctive social significance" (p. 90). This communicative performance, she argued, cannot occur in the "real world," but does in the "artificial world of (second) language classrooms" (p. 90). This latter distinction is troubling in that it represents an assumption that the

social meaning of utterances is only sometimes relevant or only sometimes exists.

Paulston attempted to clarify, and defend, this claim by making yet another distinction, that between the "social interactional rules of the subculture of the (second language) classroom" and the development of "communicative competence in the target language," that which supposedly does have "distinctive social significance" (p. 290). This comparison is both insightful and unsatisfactory. Social meaning, however deeply embedded or "significant," should be assumed to be a fundamental aspect of all social interaction. However, the delineation of the second language classroom as a setting in which special or unique communicative competence occurs, is productive, with the caveat that social interactional rules, of some sort (perhaps a unique set), still apply.

Lieberman (1995) observed the use of a "competence-monitoring channel" by intercultural interactants to assess the adequacy of communication. For Lieberman, this channel operates separately from the "semantic channels." The extent to which one can make a confident determination of distinct channels of this sort at work in an interaction is not particularly important. However, Lieberman does reveal a uniquely important aspect of "intercultural" or "interlingual" interactions--a relatively greater awareness (and

doubt) of the adequacy of one's interactive competence. Because there is no other good option, the inter-lingual conversational participants at the language school must take for granted the interactive abilities of the other, and also be suspicious of them, knowing they can merely work to smooth out the conversation.

Varonis and Gass (1984) briefly addressed this practice of smoothing out the interaction at the expense of actual understanding and ultimately the successful achievement of the "task at hand." In their study of the "negotiation of meaning," they assessed the difference in the number of times NNS/NNS versus NNS/NS dyads corrected or asked for clarification of a not-understood utterance. They found that NNS/NS pairs were much less likely to stop the flow of the interaction in order to clarify the sense of the other's utterance. Most relevant for our discussion is Varonis and Gass' speculation that this difference could be attributed to the unequal language status of the subjects. In other words, the interactants were motivated to avoid correcting not-understood utterances in favor of maintaining a smooth flowing interaction and appearing competent in these inter-lingual encounters.

There are a host of similar studies of "negotiation" and evidence of a broader research interest in what may be referred to as "(conversational) modifications" (Wagner,

1996). These studies "aim at the description of the linguistic and interactional procedures by which (native) speakers make elements of the foreign language accessible for their (non-native) partners, which otherwise would be above their comprehension threshold" (Wagner, 1996, p. 217-219). Long (1985) made a distinction between "modified input" of linguistic forms, and "modified interaction," or changes in the interactional structure. Another distinction could be made between those "negotiation" studies interested exclusively in NS modifications, NNS modifications, or an interest in the "interaction" of the two. No matter what the research predilection, most studies of negotiation of meaning and modification are concerned with the influences of these processes on second language acquisition. While this applied interest is no doubt productive, an examination of the local achievement of these modifications, the social order enacted by the interactants, is lacking. An understanding of that social order need not be divorced from the second language acquisition environment. Rather, the social order is part of and helps create the environment (in this present case, an ESL school environment).

While some studies have made attempts to address more general concerns about the teaching/learning environment in bi- or multilingual settings (See Gumperz, 1971, for examples of ethnographic data collection and analysis in

similar settings), few have examined the language school as a speech community with recognizable patterned ways of communicating (i.e., rules for members' ways of speaking). Guthrie's (1985) ethnographic analysis of bilingual education was informative, but primarily dealt with the relationship between the school and the surrounding city, and not the specific ways in which participants in the school organized their daily social affairs. Peshkin's (1991) examination of a multicultural California high school offered insightful analysis of ethnic attitudes and relations, but not matters relevant to inter-lingual issues or second language use.

Other second language acquisition researchers have addressed the relationship between classroom and non-classroom or non-pedagogical communicative activities. Some of the factors include types of competencies second language (SL) students must be oriented toward to be successful: participative (classroom), interactive (peer and others), and academic (performance/evaluative) competence (Griffin, 1994). Other relevant social factors discovered included the influence of language learners' attitudes such as the fear of sounding foreign (to a second-language native speaker), and the unwillingness to give up tokens of one's native language when speaking English as a second language,

i.e., the fear of sounding foreign to one's native language peers (Aronson, 1973).

Cohen and Manion (1983) found similar attitudes present among West Indian children's use of standard (British) English in British schools. The students reported they would be accused of "showing off, being English, or being mad" if standard English was used (p. 211). It was not clear from the study if the students were asked to imagine speaking with native standard English speaking peers, native Creole speaking peers, or if a distinction was made at all. Regardless, the point is clear and has relevance: The appropriateness of speaking a second language (how, when, with whom, etc.) is contextually determined.

These studies represent at least two areas of interest relevant to the present study: the consequences of the larger speech community, context, or environment in which the interactions occur; and the varied types or levels of competencies at work in the interactions. There is also an important implication made here, and in the literature concerned with inter-lingual communication: These interactions constitute a unique communicative phenomena.

The Study

It should be obvious at this point that the concern in this present study is not with determining the influence of teacher, student, or setting variables as causal or

correlated factors in second language acquisition. Rather, the focus is the investigation of a multilingual language school as a speech community "of sorts" with important distinguishing features, and describing those features in terms of the communicative rules that members recognize and orient their actions toward (see Gumperz and Hymes, 1972, and Hymes, 1974). More specifically, that description concentrates on the nature of communicative activity in a multilingual setting in which the teaching and learning of English is the expressed focus of daily activity, with particular attention paid to the ways in which competent communication is enacted and determined in spite of linguistic deficiency. Or, to employ Garfinkel's phrasing, the "practical actions" and "practical circumstances" of inter-lingual interactions at an ESL school were made the topic of inquiry (1967, p. vii).

Preston (1989), in arguing for a sociolinguistic approach for studying second language acquisition, wrote as follows:

If learners of languages are acquirers of rules of linguistic and social behavior which go beyond those associated with what might be called the sentence grammars of a language, then researchers must have the sociolinguistic and ethnographic skills to study the communicative competence of (native speakers) and

fluent bilinguals and the developing communicative competencies of interlanguages. (pp. 1-2).

While Preston's primary interest is with bilingualism and perhaps more specifically code-switching, he clearly addressed the importance of a more general understanding of how language is actually used by second language learners and those native speakers they interact with, including second language teachers.

I made no attempt at measuring language acquisition or even some movement in the non-native speakers from being less to more acculturated, both of which might count as worthy research objectives. Rather, the present study examines the communicative activities of a second language acquisition environment, which include the use of numerous first languages by various members of the language school, and the various communicative practices of members of that speech community.

Quite expectedly, the use of English by non-native speakers in various situations was a central, that is critical, communicative activity. That fact introduces an intriguing dimension of our focal phenomena: The competent use of English is both the means and end of virtually all of the social activities at the language school. By means we refer to the in situ use of English in an interaction to accomplish some task (even a social one). The acquisition

of knowledge about English, and the development of English usage skills (i.e., fluency), is also an ultimate goal of the students and others at the language school. Of course, various practical uses of English in their lives are also ultimate goals. A central achievement of the encounters at the language school is the displaying of competent interaction in English despite the linguistic deficiency of at least one participant. This central achievement facilitates and provides evidence for both the means and end of a given encounter.

Based on the observation that displaying interactive competence in spite of linguistic deficiency is both a central concern and achievement at the language school, we can propose two guiding research questions. Given the linguistic constraints of many interactions at the language school, how is communicative competence determined? And how do the inter-lingual participants come to agree upon the sense of their interactions? We can introduce the answers briefly here.

Heritage (1986) summarized Garfinkel's "procedural" approach to intersubjective understanding as follows:

The actors are conceived as agreeing about their circumstances by virtue of the fact that they share, rely on sharing, and trust one another to implement common methods or procedures in terms of which

circumstances and their constituent actions are "brought to book". . . [however] there is no "external guarantee" which ensures the shared implementation of the procedures through which the factual character of events is determined (p. 99).

In spite of the real and/or assumed linguistic deficiencies, and/or "cultural" differences that the members of the language school are confronted with in virtually all their daily affairs, they must rely on these same agreements and "common methods" Heritage described above. These "procedures for making sense" are essentially identical in any interaction, including inter-lingual encounters. However, what is normally "seen-but-unnoticed" in intra-lingual or "intra-cultural" interactions, is often (but not always) noticed or made to be overtly recognized at the language school.

"Culture" and the Language School Speech Community: An Excursus

One aim of this present study was to examine the communication patterns and social interactions at the language school, as they exist and are enacted through the daily affairs of the students, faculty, and staff, regardless of the assumed cultural backgrounds of the participants. This position required the suspension of the researcher's presuppositions regarding cultural differences

and the influences of those differences. However, close attention was paid to evidence (in the members' activities and comments in interviews) that might suggest that the members of the language school had assumptions regarding cultural differences and the influence of those differences. Whether the assumptions that the interactants make are accurate or not, if those assumptions work their way into the interaction, they are features of the interaction, and thus, at least have the potential for becoming prominent features of a speech community. As noted earlier, members' conceptualizations of cultures and cultural differences seemed to have limited influence on much of the interactions at the language school. What does seem to be a central concern for the members of the language school, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, is displaying interactive competence. This concern (and practice) is, then, a prominent "cultural" feature of the language school.

Methods and Data Collection

Following a Hymesian conceptualization of a speech community, this study examined actual communication in the contexts of an environment that in itself constitutes a "culture" or "community" or "network of persons" (Hymes, 1974, p. 4). Like Goodwin and Goodwin's general research interest, the effort of this study was to

investigate interaction in the endogenous situations where people actually live their everyday lives. . .

[in which] talk is intrinsically interactive, and thus shaped as much by recipients as by speakers, as well as the activity within which the talk and its participants are embedded (Editor's introduction in Goodwin and Goodwin, 1992, p. 147).

Specific ethnographic methods that offered entrance into the sense of the interactants' everyday lives included participant observation and open-ended interviewing.

Approximately one hundred and fifty hours of observation were made at the language school, and included varying degrees of direct participation in the everyday activities of members of the language school. For example, a good portion of my on-site observations were of the sort in which I merely "looked on" from the "outside" in a corner or at a desk. In other instances I more directly interacted with the non-native speaking students, not quite as an English teacher or staff member, but clearly as a native English speaker (See appendix F for Institutional Review Board approval).

These observations took place in virtually every area of the language school including the administrative offices, teacher offices or lounge, 8 classrooms, library, computer lab, lunch area or student lounge. In addition to extensive

observations, approximately thirty students, seven of approximately ten instructors, and all 3 of the school's staff including the director, financial manager, and office manager, were interviewed using an interview guide that was continually modified as more observations and analyses were made.

Approximately five hours of audio recordings were analyzed for general interaction practices producing approximately one hundred and fifty pages of roughly transcribed pages. Many of these recorded interactions were also analyzed using conversation analytic techniques which produced approximately fifty pages of detailed transcripts. The audio recordings were made either by the native English faculty or staff member, during class or in their offices, or by the students themselves at my request. While all members of the language school were aware of my efforts, in only a few instances, and only momentarily, were they visibly affected or interested. That is, the members of the language school were quite obviously busy with their activities, and were devoted to participating in them, and not particularly interested in mine.¹

An invaluable source of information was the discussions with "informants." Recently, I was a host parent for one and a half years in which two students at the language school lived with me and my family. One student in

particular offered insight into many activities that the students experience. Also, my spouse, a teacher at the language school for two (one month) sessions, and a teacher at another English language school for two (six week) sessions, provided valuable perceptions of the native speaker's experience at the language school and similar environments.

Data collection occurred at different points between November of 1997 and October of 1998. Ethnographic analysis was coupled with conversation analysis to identify the order of interactions, and the meanings of those conversational accomplishments for the participants.

The Language School

The language school is a private school offering nine levels of English language teaching to students of various adult ages and cultural/language backgrounds. The language school's parent company is an international educational organization which has been in operation recruiting students worldwide since 1961. The company operates in 23 U.S. locations.

Nine levels of language learning are organized into nine four-week sessions. Levels one through three are beginning, levels four through six are intermediate, and levels seven through nine are advanced. In the beginning levels, the program is set, and includes three hours of

grammar instruction and one hour each of reading, writing, and listening. The intermediate levels include three hours of grammar instruction, one hour each of reading and writing, and one hour of elective classwork (or independent study). The advanced levels include two hours of grammar, one hour each of reading and writing, and two hours of elective work. At each level, grammar instruction includes instruction in English language structure as well as English language use or "speaking." In these courses, some sort of classroom discussion is coordinated by the instructor.

Students may complete any number of sessions and are encouraged to stay with an approved native English speaking host family, and almost all of the students do so. The language school also offers an accelerated "macro" session in which a student studies individually with various instructors (and not in the classroom with other students) for a two to three week period.

The number of students during any session varies, depending upon the number enrolling and graduating. Typically, there are 30 to 40 students, at various levels, participating each month. Upon arrival (and often within hours of completing a long plane trip), the students are tested for their English proficiency, then placed in the appropriate "level" of instruction. Upon completion of satisfactory work in each session, they can graduate to the

next level. Six fifty-minute classes begin at 8:30 and end at 3:30 each day.

Native/Non-Native Language Interactions and Contexted Social Activity: Communicative Competence as an Emergent Focus

In order to more clearly define the approach to communicative competence used in this study, the relationship of context, competence, and the interaction setting needs to be addressed. The following discussion provides a quick overview of the most pertinent existing arguments regarding that relationship.

For conversation analysts, as well as those operating in the other major lines of work in language and social interaction, context is not determinably what somehow surrounds an interaction, or is "talk-extrinsic" (Hopper, 1991, p 163). Rather, context is built and used by the interactants and made observable for all practical purposes both to themselves and to some degree to outside observers. The emergent structure of interaction provides grounds, or the context, for participants to assess the achieved meaning of utterances, as well as sense-making tools for the observer. In arguing against conceptualizing and investigating context as talk-extrinsic and a priori, Hopper (1991, p. 163) pointed out the doomed task of pre-selecting aspects of "context" most likely to be relevant from a "bewildering list" of possible contextual features (e.g.

physical characteristics, values, social class, cultural origin/background, etc.). It is precisely because analysts cannot pre-select confidently, that we must see how culture, or linguistic differences/deficiency, or relational status, or any other potentially important dimension of a given interaction (if indeed it becomes contextually relevant) is manifested; not what might be, but what is actually achieved in interaction. As it turns out in this analysis, the issue of cultural differences is only occasionally brought up, both as a topic of conversation and as a way of explaining the other's behavior at the language school. Perhaps because of the broad range of differences (assumed by the interactants) and the even broader range of linguistic differences that must be managed moment by moment, the members' efforts to create a world that makes sense centers around the immediate and local concerns of communicative competence, which apparently transcend cultural and linguistic differences.

It certainly would be worthwhile to investigate the ways in which confidently determined cultural tendencies might show up in and influence the various interactions at the language school. Equally important would be a study of how specific assessments of the influence of cultural tendencies are created in interactions and in turn impact those same interactions. Unfortunately, these endeavors are

beyond the scope of this present investigation. The focus and usefulness of this present study is the explanation of how extreme linguistic differences and deficiencies, and possibly assumed "cultural" differences, are managed in the daily affairs of the members of the language school--affairs which, quite interestingly, are conducted in English (for the most part) and are about learning the structure of English as well as how to use the language in interaction.

Summary and Preview of Remaining Chapters

Generally speaking, this study is concerned with the ways in which communicative competence is demonstrated in conversations involving native/non-native English language or non-native/non-native English language pairings at the language school. Similarly, Meyer (1990) aimed "to reveal the phenomenon of communicative competence as it is experienced, produced, and witnessed by the individuals taking part in the communicative interaction" (p. 196). In addition, we are specifically interested in the ways in which the demonstration of communicative competence is achieved in the diverse circumstances in which members of the language school find themselves, and how those same actions work to make sense of their varied daily affairs.

By addressing these concerns, several underlying issues will also be discussed. Specifically, analyzing the language school as a speech community of sorts will require

the description of some of the features of this type of setting in which (1) membership (teachers and students) changes on a regular basis and (2) membership (for the students) is clearly temporary, and (3) many different languages are in use at relatively the same time. The range of communicative activity is described in chapter 4.

Throughout the study, however, interactive competence in spite of linguistic deficiency, as a central feature of the setting, is examined.

We could also note that offering a definition of this type of place as a speech community (of sorts) should be relevant to ethnographic research as well as conceptualizations of intercultural or multicultural communication. Relatedly, descriptions of the various activities of the members of the language school as socially determined and recognized activities for the members should be relevant to those interested in second language learning per se.

Because of the central role that communicative competence plays in the descriptions and explanations offered in this study, and the range of conceptualizations of communicative competence available, it will be necessary to address at some length the various approaches to communicative competence and social interactions, and clarify the particular conceptualizations used in this study

in the next chapter. It may also be helpful at this point to draw a distinction among several related concepts relevant to this study.

That distinction needs to be made between four concepts: the phenomena that communication researchers most often refer to as "communication competence"; a hymesian conceptualization of the competencies a member of a speech community must know and practice; Garfinkel's organized "interactional competencies;" and what is described in this study as interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. While all four have much in common and special relevance for this study, differences as well as connections need to be established. In the next chapter, the first three concepts are addressed, delineating the importance of ethnographic and ethnomethodological approaches for this study. Then, in the following chapter, the later concept is detailed and its importance at the language school is discussed. Chapter four offers a description of broader communicative constraints contributing to a primary orientation toward interactive competence faced by the members of the language school. Lastly, chapter five provides a detailed account of encounter specific ways of orienting toward and the consequences of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-competence.

Chapter Endnotes

1. Virtually every site within the language school was utilized as a place to make observations. Based on the amount and kind of interaction taking place, and the ability for me to remain relatively out of the way, I developed preferred areas to conduct my observations. Specifically those were at a corner table in the lounge area, and near the back of one of the larger classrooms. Whomever seemed interested and willing to operate an audio recorder at their table or in their classroom were asked to do so. Likewise, interviews were conducted with those students and teachers that I could quickly establish some sort of trusting relationship with. Some of the interviews lasted only a few minutes while others extended several hours.

Chapter 2

A Synthesis of Diverse Conceptualizations of
Communicative Competence

Given the complexity of the concept of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, including its similarity to a host of concepts such as communicative competence, communication competence, interpersonal communication competence, intercultural communication competence, and various other uses of the term "competence," it is necessary to spend some time here delineating and tracing converging lines of thought in the literature. Also, the methodological perspectives used in this study can be further developed by addressing the exact conceptualizations of communicative competence that (1) emerged from the naturalistic investigations of communicative activity at the language school and from (2) existing conceptualizations and perspectives of communicative competence and social interaction. The input of these existing approaches will be the topic of this chapter.

The Central Role of Communicative Competence

In order to establish the central and narrow concern of communicative competence in this study, it is important to delineate the diverse ways in which intercultural communication competence (ICC), primarily, is

conceptualized. How communicative competence is conceived in this present study and how that conceptualization is similar to and different in important ways from other conceptualizations will also be addressed. This will be accomplished by drawing on concepts articulated in diverse areas of research particularly relevant to the kinds of communicative activities prevalent at the language school. The resources I will be drawing from, directly or circuitously, could be categorized into three groups: Individualistic/generalizable approaches, emergent/contextual approaches, and ethnomethodological approaches to communicative competence.

The individualistic/generalizable approach consists largely of "mainstream" theorizing about communication competence. By "mainstream," I am referring to that work offered primarily by communication scholars who explicitly set out to address "communication competence" either as the primary focus of, or as a significant part of, their theorizing/study. Although definitions vary and controversies exist, these mainstream scholars deal with communicative competence as a recognized and more or less agreed upon concept used to explain a certain kind or range of communicative activity. Most of the mainstream efforts present communicative competence as inclusive of either what an individual knows, the attitude of an individual, or the

specific behaviors of an individual. These dimensions of communication competence, including the specific types of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, are typically viewed as being widely generalizable.

In contrast to the individualistic/generalizable approaches which typically extract communicative competence from, as Spitzberg (1989) put it, "experienced" social interaction, the emergent/contextual approaches to intercultural communication competence attempt to define and study competence as it emerges out of and is determined by the contextual forces of a given actual interaction. There are several specific approaches to ICC that fit into this category. Some "mainstream" theorizing is presented here, as well as the ethnographic perspective. Those working from the ethnographic perspective employ the term "competence" which has a more or less agreed upon definition, albeit not exactly interchangeable with the more "mainstream" use of the concept. More importantly, the ethnographic perspective includes a whole set of ideas relevant to any ethnographic study that should be taken together with the idea of competence in order to see and study communicative activity accurately from this perspective. Relevant studies that either directly address communication competence or deal with concepts related to the teaching and acquisition of English as a second language are placed in this category.

Lastly, the ethnomethodological vantage offers another distinct insight into social interaction. The work of Garfinkel, (1967, 1974), conversation analysis, and Liberman's (1994) intercultural self-reflections make up the bulk of the literature utilized here. As we shall see, the turn which separates these ethnomethodological studies from ethnographic ones and more "mainstream" perspectives of communication competence occurs in the rigid and narrow pursuit of the sense-making that occurs for and by the participants in the taken for granted features of interaction. "Communication competence" per se is not addressed by ethnomethodologists, but the features of interaction uncovered in taking their perspective are deeply relevant to the development of my perspective.

Individualistic/Generalizable Input

"Mainstream" approaches to intercultural communication competence (ICC) display such diversity in method and perspective that the term "mainstream" can only be used to identify a very loose category. It is important to note that there are some studies or perspectives that generally fit into this category, but present significant shifts or differences that do not. "Mainstream" is not used to refer to a set of studies that use similar research methods or theoretical assumptions. Rather, the term mainstream groups those studies/perspectives that aim to address communication

competence per se. As it turns out, much of this work shares many similarities in research methods and theoretical assumptions, while also presenting some differences. The individualistic/generalizable approaches typically isolate intercultural communication competence to individual persuasive efforts, attributes, or judgments.

This general perspective has been criticized by others. Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1989) and Casmir (1993), argued for a paradigm shift in theorizing about intercultural and international communication. The roots of what they refer to as the dominant intercultural communication paradigm (also referred to as the old paradigm) are traced to Aristotle and present rhetorical models that are based "on concepts that result in domination, trust in the ability of some to persuade others to 'see things their way,' and the general assertion of power and control by one group over another" (Casmir, 1993, p. 407-408).

Of the many characteristics of this view that Casmir (1993) pointed out, two are of particular importance. First, much of the intercultural communication literature represents a primary concern with cultural differences. One of the most basic assumptions within this view is that the participants in an intercultural communication event represent differences in norms, beliefs, values, etc., and that these differences will "show up" and influence the

interaction. Great efforts have been made to categorize societal cultural differences in such terms as high and low context (see Hall, 1966), and individualistic or collectivistic orientations (see Hofstede, 1984). With these categorical schemes and others in mind, the tendency for these scholars is to approach the study of intercultural communication situations with presupposed differences, whether they are confidently in-hand or not, as explanatory tools. Kramer (forthcoming) referred to some uses of presupposed cultural differences like those mentioned above as "social engineering, a utility box of suggestions useful for organizations that want to extend into foreign environments but minimize their foreignness at the same time," or as a "passive nichism" (p. 11, and 10).

Second, to some extent, much of the intercultural communication studies assess the subjects' knowledge, abilities, or behavior apart from how they "work" in actual, naturally occurring interaction. As Casmir (1993) put it, "our past efforts could thus often be interpreted as having failed to address either "co"mmunication or "inter" cultural aspects (p. 415). How can these limitations help us analyze current "mainstream" approaches to intercultural communication competence? The tendency to focus on differences in intercultural communication is echoed in several approaches to ICC. Collier's (1989) overview of ICC

(and others that follow) can be viewed in light of Casmir (1993) and Casmir and Asuncion-Lande's (1989) depiction of old and new paradigms.

Collier (1989) described four approaches to ICC: cross-cultural attitude, behavioral skills, ethnographic, and cultural identity. The first two, cross-cultural attitude and behavioral skills approaches, can be viewed as fitting into the "individualistic/generalizable category and the "old paradigm." The last two, ethnographic and cultural identity approaches fit the "emergence of meaning" category, and may represent the beginnings of a "paradigm shift" or new paradigm in understanding intercultural communication.

Cross-cultural attitude approaches conceptualize competence in terms of "understanding culturally specific information about the other culture, cultural general understanding and positive regard [for those differences]" (Collier, 1989 p. 292). This approach seems like a natural result of a focus on the delineation of cultural variability. The emphasis in these approaches is the cognitive knowledge of the participants regarding broad cultural differences typically defined in terms of national affiliation or other broad categorical differences (see Abe & Wiseman, 1983; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1984; and Wiseman, Hammer, and Nishida, 1989 as examples). Thus, these cognitive or attitudinal approaches utilize broad,

categorical cultural differences assumed to be applicable to, or manifested in, virtually any intercultural situation.

Within the behavioral skills tradition, somewhat universal skills which can be learned and used in intercultural interactions are identified and studied as independent variables influencing the success or effectiveness of the interactions. Interestingly, these skills (with few exceptions) are thought applicable or useful in virtually any intercultural situation, in spite of the assumed cultural differences. The behavioral skills approach also fits the "individualistic" category to ICC in that, even though these skills are conceptualized as skills used in interaction, they are often ultimately assessed in a non-interactional analysis.

Several other ICC review articles and specific research studies further demonstrate limitations of the "individualistic" approach and the need for a perspective that can account for the context specific management of communication competence. Hammer's (1989) review of ICC basically was a review of behavioral skills thought to be applicable cross-culturally. His general argument was that universal communication (competence) skills may exist, but that there are culture-specific manifestations of those skills (e.g. display of respect, behavioral flexibility, descriptiveness, understanding, expressiveness, openness,

listening, negotiation, social relaxation, interaction management, attentiveness, etc.). The problem he did not address is how scholars conceptualized "culture-specific." If culture is conceptualized in terms of existing categorical differences, then the specific ICC skills sought for and identified will be limited by those static conceptualizations.¹

Olebe and Koester (1989) attempted to measure the universality and cross-cultural validity of similar behavioral skills. Briefly, university students categorized in terms of being part of dyads that were either high, moderate, or low in interculturalness completed scales assessing their roommates communication competence. Their findings indicated that there was little difference in the structure of the scale assessments for the three groups, and thus the behavioral skills appeared to be universal and applicable to each (all) intercultural situations. Whether the specific cultures represented were identified, or how the degree of cultural similarity or dissimilarity was assessed, the fact that there was no observation or analysis of actual interaction is characteristic of this approach.

Perhaps, in an attempt to recognize interaction dynamics, mainstream communication competence scholars have made a distinction between ability and inference (Spitzberg, 1989). It is interesting to note here that each of the

above approaches, cognitive/attitudinal and behavioral skills, can also be understood in terms of a distinction between ability and inference. The ability/inference distinction represents a familiar dichotomy in communication competence literature, that of defining competence as either a person's ability (to perform skills or demonstrate cultural knowledge) or as judgments made by participants in the interaction. Both the ability (similar to behavioral skills) and the inference approaches are non-interactive in nature and fail to more fully account for creative, emergent ways of competently interacting in the intercultural setting. Clearly, it is not the case that scholars operating from this mainstream "individualistic" perspective view communication as a non-interactive phenomena. Rather, I suspect that the often accompanying variable analytic methodology limits the investigation to presupposed non-interactive accounts about the phenomena.

Hammer (1989) also addressed the problem with the "individualistic" approaches, whether describing individual abilities or judgments, by stating that "it is not the communication skill per se that contributes to the various adaptation and/ or effectiveness outcomes ... Rather, it is the individual interactants' judgments of self and other's competence based upon the communication performances engaged..." (p. 251). Hammer attempted to escape from the

imposed ability-inference dichotomy and describe actual intercultural interaction. Perhaps realizing that existing skills and/or judgment accounts of ICC falls short, Hammer concluded "intercultural communication competence research must examine the behavioral dynamics that take place when people from different cultures interact with one another" (p. 255).

Dinges and Lieberman (1989) also argued that many models of ICC fail to consider situational and interaction variables. In an attempt to remedy this, they designed a study to "assess the communication competence of persons in specific situations and to measure the influence of situational factors on judgments of observers" (p. 372). Unfortunately, their experimental research design plummeted them into the same non-natural, non-interactional abyss they attempted to overcome. Six Japanese-American and six Caucasian (static categories) were asked to imagine various job employment (interaction) situations and act in front of a camera. Clearly, being alone is not interactional, and imagining a situation, and actually being in one, are two very different things. In an attempt at objectively identifying judgments (supposedly those made by the participants), 64 undergraduate students viewed the videotapes with general orientations to the "situation" recorded and completed scales assessing the recorded

persons' thoughts, feelings, and overall response. Alas, this study merely paid lip service to the importance of the situation and actual interaction dynamics. Unfortunately, ICC was not discovered in actual interaction because of the limitations dictated by the presuppositions of the authors and their measurement tools.

Martin and Hammer (1989) performed a similar study in their attempt to develop an inventory of behavioral skills based on responses to imagined intra- and intercultural situations. Again, undergraduate students were asked to imagine themselves in dyadic interactions varying in terms of where (what country) the other person was supposedly from (clearly assuming broad cultural stereotypes are sufficient criteria for assessing behavioral skills appropriate for intercultural communication). This evidenced a combination of ability (the hoped for behavior inventory) and inference (judgments about the competence of potential interlocutors). The findings did offer a vague representation of stereotypes of ingroups and outgroups and the accompanying presupposed appropriate communication styles.

Hammer, Nishida, and Wiseman (1996) measured the influence of situational "prototypes" on intercultural communication competence. Again, the authors recognize the tremendous influence of the situation, or contextual factors that make up the intercultural interaction, but seem to miss

the importance of assessing the actual communication event. Working from a number of previously determined types of situations (e.g. competitive-and-hostile versus cooperative-and-friendly), they determined ten situation factors with a high degree of correspondence: intimacy, friendliness, pleasantness, equality of power, anxiousness, involvement, equality of status, competitiveness, task/social orientations, and formality. The two assumed basic dimensions of communication competence assessed were understanding (rule-specific, and culture-general) and perceptual judgments of self and other.

Two sets of questionnaires were distributed to two different college student samples, both of which predominately consisted of "white" US-born subjects. The first set of respondents identified which of the ten situational factors fit 44 hypothetical intercultural situations involving an American and a Japanese person that included some culture-relevant misunderstanding. The second set of respondents were assessed regarding their (a) understanding of the rules for the hypothetical interaction, (b) understanding of Japanese culture in general, and (c) impressions of the Japanese character in the situations (favorable or unfavorable). It was not clear whether the respondents were asked to imagine themselves as the Americans in the situations, or merely rate the situation as

uninvolved observers. In either case, an analysis of actual interaction and the real situational factors influencing communication competence was not accomplished. Based on various statistical manipulations, the authors determined that (a) competitive/task type situations are associated with the least degree of understanding Japanese rules for behaving, and the least degree of understanding the Japanese culture in general, and (b) task-oriented situations evoked the greatest display of negative affect toward Japanese culture (and supposedly the Japanese characters represented in the situations).²

Redmond and Bunyi (1993) examined the relationship between ICC and the handling of stress among college students. Of importance to us here is how they conceptualized intercultural communication competence. ICC was defined in terms communication effectiveness, adaptation, social integration, language competence, knowledge of host culture, and social decentering (empathy). Cognitive or attitudinal measurements and behavioral abilities were thought to impact the amount of stress and the handling of stress.

Interestingly, measurements of the various concepts thought to give an indication of ICC (an interactional phenomena) were gathered in self-reports. So, these assessments of ICC were inference-oriented, but not

inferences about someone else's competence in specified situations. Rather, ICC (self perceptions of it) was used as a predictor of the amount and the handling of stress. Again, there is little offered in terms of understanding "inter" cultural "co"mmunication as Casmir would put it.

Chen and Starosta (1993) offered a slightly different categorization of ICC research than what has been presented here thus far. They suggested that past research in this area could be classified as either the subjective culture approach, the multicultural person approach, the social behaviorism approach, the typology (of behavioral styles) approach, or the intercultural communicator approach. Without offering a separate description of each, one could argue that each approach focuses on describing what the individual must know, what sort of attitude the individual must possess, or how the individual must behave to conduct themselves in appropriate and effective ways in an intercultural encounter. In that sense then, each of the approaches fits into the "individualistic" category. Chen and Starosta attempted to set their approach apart, and stated that past research was prescriptive and failed "to give a holistic picture that can reflect the global civic culture in which people can mutually negotiate their multiple identities" (p. 361). They claimed to present an interactive model that "aims at promoting interactants'

abilities to acknowledge, respect, tolerate, and integrate cultural differences, so that they can qualify for enlightened global citizenship" (p. 362). Like Casmir's (1993) third-culture building model, Chen and Starosta's model is prescriptive, painting a picture of not only an ideal communicator, but an ideal person-for-the-twenty-first-century. Ultimately, they do not offer a significantly different approach to ICC, but a more conclusive articulation of the existing individualistic cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral approaches.

The most significant way that Chen and Starosta's approach varies from the communication competence approaches above is in their profile of the intercultural interlocutor as one who manages his or her and others' multiple cultural identities. Culture, and its influence is understood as:

a set of preferences and possibilities that inform, rather than determine, given interactions.

Communicators both shape and are shaped by these familiar meanings. Especially as individuals draw from multiple identities, interactions may not perfectly resemble any one cultural expectation (p. 359).

This statement, unfortunately not sufficiently addressed elsewhere in their chapter, conveyed a productive perspective, at least for the purposes of this present study. While perhaps too narrowly focused on the idea of

multiple identities, the authors display here an insightful awareness of the powerful meanings each interaction brings that at once transcend background cultural influences and also are constitutive of some sort of cultural/interactive present. This idea is similar to that of Casmir's (1993) third-culture building perspective and Collier's (1989) cultural identity theory of intercultural communication competence which are both introduced in the next section.

It seems evident that the "individualist" approaches are intuitively correct in the offerings of categories of appropriate and/or effective individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that one possesses, displays, or judges in others. The scholars representative of this approach are concerned with fundamental communicative practices—those activities that make social interactions work well. However, the definitions of communication competence and the methodologies employed to test the validity of the constructs seem to be too far removed from actual communicative activity.

Several scholars studying intercultural communication and ICC specifically have attempted to make a more radical departure from individualistic knowledge/attitude/ability conceptualizations and/or the ability/inference dichotomy and explore communicative competence as it emerges from actual interaction.

Emergent/Contextual Input

The approaches presented here illuminate how communication in general and communication competence specifically is characterized in terms of coordinated interaction, creation, and emergence of meaning in specific contexts. Spitzberg (1989) used the term "macrostructure" to refer to those ICC approaches concerned with the development of "generalizable" structures (e.g. knowledge, attitudes, behaviors) and "microstructure" to refer to those approaches that "intend to account for the moment-to-moment phenomena of interactive behavior in specific episodes of communication" (p. 249). As we shall see in the case of ethnographic approaches, the "micro" features of interaction are viewed as manifestations and creations of the larger, more generalizable speech community. Some of the studies presented in this section explicitly focus on ICC, while others include relevant conceptualizations as a dimension of some other primary interest. There are also hints of a reliance on an ethnomethodological perspective of social interaction, which will be fully introduced later.

As alluded to above, Casmir's (1993) third-culture building model is an effort to break away from research orientations characterized in terms of dominance/submission, non-interactional, and sender or receiver foci. Casmir's model, representing a self-proclaimed paradigm shift in

intercultural communication, is perhaps better labeled prescriptive than descriptive. Briefly, Casmir (1993) hoped to develop a model that "has as its primary function and basis the human communication process, that is a joint, cooperative, participatory, mutual building process" (p. 408).

Casmir and Asuncion-Lande's (1988) concern was with the more immediate (and more temporary) creation of culture. So, culture is viewed in non-static, fluid terms:

We must provide for the possibility of the creation of a third or new culture that does not merely use earlier component parts, but that can create new insights, new goals, new techniques, and new roles, precisely because diversity of experience requires something new without domination by any one of the partners contributing to the process. (p. 289).

Although Casmir and Asuncion-Lande did not develop a clear definition of ICC based on their "new" perspective, they did offer some pertinent comments. In discussing the "type of person" engaging in this third-culture building, Casmir and Asuncion-Lande suggested that this person's "philosophical and psychological outlooks [should] exceed the limits of his or her indigenous culture," and that they should "possess certain attributes, such as cognitive flexibility, cultural sensitivity, relativism in cultural

values and attitudes, empathetic understanding, and innovativeness" (p. 295). These traits are undoubtedly good ones, beneficial to intercultural communication, and not that different from what might be seen in a list of "individualistic" competent knowledge, attitudes, or even behaviors. What is needed is a more descriptive explanation that shares the same goal of reflecting actual creative processes of intercultural communicators. Indeed, Casmir and Asuncion-Lande (1988) admitted that a definition of ICC reflecting their model is needed.

Many theoretical approaches to intercultural communication share some of the characteristics of the third-culture paradigm (e.g., coordinated management of meaning presented by Cronen, Chen, and Pearce, 1988; and constructivism presented by Applegate and Sypher, 1988). One theory that addresses ICC directly and one that may represent this kind of paradigm shift is Collier's (1989) Cultural Identity theory.

Collier (1989) positioned her Cultural Identity theory against traditional approaches to cultural and intercultural communication competence. According to Collier (1989), a "Western bias may be reflected in the teleological assumptions that humans have intentional goals and make choices in their behaviors to achieve those goals" (p. 294). Her proposed framework emphasizes ethnic or cultural

identity as it emerges in a particular conversational context. Like Casmir and Asuncion-Lande, Collier conceptualized culture as an emergent phenomena. Her theory allows for historically transmitted dimensions of a person's culture, but views cultural identities as "intersubjectively defined by similarities in symbols and norms, which are posited to potentially change during the course of a conversation" (p. 295).

Cultural identities that emerge from the interaction are used by the interactants to "identify" themselves and others as either being different or similar in cultural terms. Competence then is "conduct which is appropriate and effective for the particular cultural identity being adopted at the time in the particular situation" (p. 296) and intercultural communication competence is "mutually competent behavior for both cultural identities being advanced" (p. 297). According to Collier, ICC is not abstracted from actual communication, but conceptualized only in light of specific interactions, and in terms of "mutually competent behavior" that is "negotiated" by the interactants together (p. 297).

Collier's cultural identity approach also attempts to define what is cultural or inter-cultural communication.

Communication emerges as intercultural when interlocutors identify themselves as different in

cultural terms in the discourse or create impressions of each other as having different cultural identities. The distinction between cultural and intercultural communication competence thus becomes important (p. 296).

This distinction is important for our purposes here because it takes the power to define an interaction as either cultural or inter-cultural out of the hand of the researcher, and into the hands of the interactants themselves as a matter that the participants orient to. This is not only relevant in terms of taking the participant's perspective of the interculturalness of the interaction, but also challenges the researcher to maintain that perspective for conceptualizations of communication competence. Collier suggested one way in which ICC can be identified is comparing the "ascribed and avowed" identities as they emerge in the discursive text. At this point, it is not clear how one might do this in terms of data collection or what might mark an utterance or behavior as ascribing or avowing a particular cultural identity. She suggested the possibility of questioning interlocutors about their "impressions" of the competence of the other immediately following interactions--a post-interaction analysis.

The appeal of the cultural identity approach is based largely on its insistence that cultural identities and

relevant communication competencies "emerge" from the interaction at hand, and cannot be abstracted from it. That is, in agreement with Hymes (1972), Collier recognized that "competence must be contextually defined" (Collier, 1989, p. 291). Her implicit extension of Hymes' more general recommendation is that cultural identities are always part of the context (sometimes more saliently advanced). One could take odds with that assessment. After all, if the context, that which is constructed by the participants, determines competence, why is it necessary to assume some sort of "cultural" identity is always advanced?

Collier's (1989) Cultural Identity theory has the power to integrate diverse conceptualizations of ICC like those included in the brief list reviewed above. Abilities need only be reconceptualized as situational, contingent on the cultural identities that emerge. In this sense, there are no universal ways of being competent, rather, contextual dynamics provide the way, one only need to follow. The idea of inferences need not be discarded but understood in terms of emerging cultural identities and the accompanying negotiations of competent behavior. The displaying of cultural membership may always be with us. And as Collier pointed out, that could be an effort to display a similar or dissimilar cultural identity than the other. Yet, there may be more pressing concerns for the interactants. Collier

(1989) partially addressed this contingency: "In some encounters, nationality may be a key construct, but in others, gender, the relationship, or one's professional position may be key constructs in understanding and accounting for outcomes" (p. 295).

It is not clear whether these other "key constructs" could be anything whatsoever or if they are all identity-related. If the key constructs could be anything whatsoever, then her theory is really a theory stating that "key constructs" to communication competence exist in each encounter and should be identified to understand and account for outcomes. If the key constructs are always identity related, then theory becomes more specific and points to the need to identify those more specific constructs as such. The implications for both alternatives are very different. I believe she is arguing that identities (cultural and other) are always part of (and key to) encounters. Based on that interpretation, the job for the communication competence researcher would be to determine what identities are being displayed. As we shall see in the later analysis in this study, the identity of "competent interactant" may be a key construct at work in many of the encounters at the language school.

Extending Heise's (1979) affect control theory (and other perception process theories), Spitzberg (1989) argued

that both the macrostructure (providing lists of fundamental and generalizable dimensions of competent communication) and microstructure (providing insight into the "transient" moment-by-moment dimensions of interaction) approaches are correct, or rather part of the same process of interpretation and action. Basically, Spitzberg argued that expectancies (based on the generalizable/universal individual competent knowledge, attitudes or behaviors) are either violated or not violated in actual "experienced" interaction.

The suggestion to study the "experience" of interaction is consistent with the perspective I am developing in this dissertation. However, if one only investigated the assumed generalizable dimensions of individual competent communication, no matter how confident one was with their universal validity, actual in situ communication competence issues might be missed. Investigating the generalizable/universal aspects of competence would no doubt shed some light on the communication competence of a given interaction. However, it seems logical to assume each situation, or at least each set of situations constituting some sort of environment, like a specific ESL school, would also provide a unique set of expectancies.

While most research dealing with NS/NNS and English (or other language) as a second language is limited to

identification and analysis of pedagogical variables thought to effect second language acquisition, some do provide insight into aspects of the environment relevant to conceptualizations of communication competence.

The ESL input.

There are at least two lines of research having to do with SLA or non-native language interaction relevant to our purposes in this chapter: those studies addressing communicative competence per se, and those studies of "negotiation of meaning" (mentioned in the previous chapter) or linguistic and structural modifications made by the inter-lingual participants. Each of these areas of research will be discussed in turn. As we shall see, both share a set of similar concerns and conclusions.

Clement (1980), in developing a theoretical framework for understanding "communicative competence" in a second language as more than, but inclusive of, "linguistic competence," argued

linguistic competence is but one aspect of inter-ethnic communication which includes, as well, the acquisition of norms, values and patterns of behavior which are characteristic of the second language culture.

Further, it is assumed that the same processes underlie the acquisition, maintenance and practice of linguistic

and paralinguistic skills, now subsumed under the term "communicative competence." (p. 148)

At least one important aspect of this conceptualization of communication competence is the awareness of the influence of the broader context, ambiguously referred to here as the second-language culture. Unfortunately, Clement failed to further explore the actual practice of communicative competence in a second language setting, and instead focused on a schematic representation of individual mediational processes including fear of assimilation and relative ethnolinguistic vitality. So, like Collier (1989), Clement is concerned with the dimension of cultural (or ethnic/linguistic) "identity." But unlike Collier and others addressing the emergence of meaning in interaction, Clement ultimately only offers a representation of possible variables affecting communication competence.

Coupland, Wiemann, and Giles (1991) addressed various issues relevant to what they term "miscommunication," including communicative competence in intercultural interactions. We see here too a distinction made between linguistic and communicative competence (p. 6).

Communication competence is, of course, a constraint on communicative adequacy, whether to do with minor considerations of fluency (e.g., slips of the tongue) or levels of syntactic and pragmatic proficiency (e.g.,

in a second language). On the other hand, it is clearly wrong to associate cross-cultural interaction with inevitable "communication breakdown" (p. 6).

The authors proffered four reasons why fluency and/or pragmatic proficiency are likely to be judged as less important in "intercultural" situations compared to similar problems occurring for intracultural or native/native language interactants. Linguistic "problems" may be less or unimportant because

- (a) they are often easily identified and remediated;
- (b) the deficiencies are attributable to language or language-knowledge itself (rather than to grosser incompetence or malevolent intent); and because (c) language differences may in turn be attributed to "cultural difference." Also, (d) participants may have lower initial expectations of cross-cultural interaction, with the consequence that talk itself may be restricted to particular topics or modes that are mutually selected to be manageable... the ultimate degree of problematinality may actually on occasions be tempered interculturally (p. 6).

Discovering if these or similar reasons are at work, and/or other ways in which interactants, both the native speaker and non-native speaker, negotiate various linguistic and

paralinguistic "problems" could provide insight into how communication competence is constituted in a given context.

A related view is presented by Loveday (1982). He developed a sociolinguistic approach to learning and teaching a second language, and offered this definition of communicative competence in the second-language learning environment: "the operational knowledge of a culturally and contextually embedded meaning-system" (p. 100). He referred to this meaning-system as a code for verbal conduct that "fulfills a multitude of social functions" and includes "many different dimensions and channels, some of which help to symbolize meaning and others of which serve as the framework for the transmission of the symbols. . . all adapt to and evolve differently in each individual situation" (p. 61).

Loveday also offered a model representing the linguistic constituents of communicative competence. The model depicts a number of influences on the production of meaning including stage of interaction, topic of conversation, other background knowledge, participants definition of activity, roles and relationships, and setting--all of which influence communicative competence which in turn influences the production of meaning. The author pointed out, however, that only some of the features thought to be relevant to the context and meaning production

are presented in the model. Although the model and general approach Loveday offered are promising ways of conceptualizing communication competence in the second language setting, Loveday himself pointed out that the "interpretation of communicative competence offered here is intentionally slanted towards the [native] speaker's production because this appears the most pedagogically useful way of approaching the phenomenon" (p. 63).

It seems evident that Loveday hoped to maintain a view of communication competence as an interactional phenomenon, but at times failed to do so. He essentially developed a model of the competent individual (allowing for contextual determinants) based on an ethnographic understanding of the context. For example, he argued that "meaning is not the simple result of transmitting the appropriate signals but emerges in relation to what the interactants try to demonstrate they are doing, what they have done before and what they are momentarily engaged in. The meaning only derives from the context of ongoing interaction" (p. 64). Then she subsequently offered this definition: "communicative competence then is, simultaneously, the knowledge and the ability to construct meaning in a way that is socioculturally appropriate in all contexts of communication" (p. 64, italics are in the original).³

Berns (1990), working from an ethnographic perspective, argued that the second language learner must be able to interpret a speaker's meaning, as well as express meaning, through linguistic and paralinguistic means that are determined to be appropriate in the speech community of that language. Her specific concern was with developing a model of communicative competence and intelligibility in speech communities where the language spoken was a variety of English, or a non-native English. Of importance to us here is Berns' (1990) articulation of how context and competence are inextricably intertwined: "If the context determines a person's communicative competence, and if there is more than one social setting in which appropriateness in using a language can be shaped, the concept of communicative competence cannot be considered in monolithic terms" (p. 31). Berns ultimately offered a criteria for the development of a model (a pedagogical standard) for teaching nonnative varieties of English.

While Berns' (1990) focus was an attempt to identify an understanding the specific constraints on communicative activity involving a specific non-native variety of English, Preston (1989) offered a review of sociolinguistic theorizing and research relevant to the "description of interlanguage, the systems which develop during language acquisition" (p. 1, italics in the original). Like Berns,

Preston was working from an ethnographic perspective that seeks to account for the influences of the broader contexts in a given speech community on "what must be said, to whom, with what tone of voice and how the talk (or silence) of others is to be taken" (p. 10). Of particular interest here is the recognition of different fluencies (i.e. reading effectively aloud, listening well, linguistic ability, etc.) as aspects of communicative competence. What is important for second language acquisition research, according to Preston, is to know "what fluencies are expected in everyday speech community performance. . . the fluencies expected of a speaker in one ethnolinguistic speech community may not be the same as those expected in another" (p. 118).

Thus far in this section, we can see that several scholars particularly concerned with communication competence in the second language acquisition setting recognize that what is constituted as competent communication is significantly constrained by the context. That context can in turn be productively understood in terms of the broader speech community. The nature of a speech community and how communication competence is conceptualized within the ethnography of communication perspective will be addresses momentarily when we consider the ethnographic input. Immediately, we will turn our attention to a set of related concerns, although not directly aimed at

conceptualizations of communicative competence: The analysis of the "the negotiation of meaning" in inter-lingual interactions.

Negotiation of meaning in this line of work refers to those modifications to the form and structure of utterances by either the native or non-native partners in interaction. These modifications are generally thought to occur in an effort to make incomprehensible native language input understandable. For example, by repeating what the nonnative speaker said, the native speaker can check the accuracy of that utterance. Consequently, these same efforts at modification are generally recognized as resulting in the acquisition of a second language (e.g., Pica, Young, and Doughty, 1987).

Various features of these modifications have been identified and studied including simplified lexico-grammatical native speaker input or "foreigner talk" (see Long, 1981 for review). Also, various structural modifications have been examined such as comprehension checks, repetitions, and clarification requests (see Long, 1985; Varonis and Gass, 1985a and 1985b; and Ehrlich, Avery, and Yorio, 1989). These techniques, although used in both inter- and intra-lingual interactions, have been shown to occur more frequently in NS/NNS and NNS/NNS than in NS/NS interactions (Varonis and Gass, 1985b). Many scholars have

reviewed and critiqued these approaches in terms of their assumptions regarding affects on comprehension and language acquisition (see Pica, 1994 for a thorough review). The most pertinent critique is formulated in Aston's (1986) alternative perspective of these modifications or "trouble-shooting."

For Aston, the term "negotiation of meaning" is too narrow and based on a faulty assumption that any modifications made by inter-lingual interactants is motivated by and results in (better) comprehension. He argued that modifications or "trouble-shooting" procedures should be viewed as "contributions to routines which are constructed by both participants" (1986, p. 138) that work to achieve a "formal display of the convergence of [the] participants' worlds" (p. 139). For Aston, trouble-shooting procedures, like those conversational techniques listed above, function to build and maintain social rapport between the interactants:

What such procedures seem to have in common, therefore, is that they allow participants to display--regardless of what troubles may beset their interaction--that that interaction is in some respect successful. Through them participants can jointly reaffirm the possibility of satisfactory communication and satisfying rapport through talk. (p.139)

This idea is similar to my developing argument that much inter-lingual interaction work is not primarily about negotiating the specific meaning of utterances (i.e., actual understanding), but is, instead, simply facilitative of the appearance of interactive competence. This present study also extends and varies from Aston's "social rapport" perspective (and the "negotiation" studies he critiques) in a number of ways. Namely, interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is not only inclusive of some of the ways in which communicative competence is accomplished in NS/NS interactions, but also it is also a unique, oriented-to way of communicating at the language school. One way this analysis is accomplished is in examining the ways in which the context of the interactions influence and are influenced by these "modifications." In so doing, we begin to answer a question posed by Aston: Why are displays of rapport more frequent in these types of interactions than in others? One dimension of that context is viewed here as the broader speech community, conceptualized in terms of the ethnography of communication.

Ethnographic input.

Perhaps especially for those studying NS/NNS language interaction, the distinction between linguistic and other more socially defined competencies is important. Miller

(1995) articulated the distinction and need for naturalistic methods to investigate communication competence in this way:

Structural understanding (or misunderstanding) is located in features of language such as its lexicon and grammar and is often recognized consciously. Pragmatic understanding (or misunderstanding) relies on cultural assumptions and expectations that speakers bring with them to the encounter. . . . Traditional research methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and other self-report data will not be of much help in understanding this aspect of intercultural interaction (p. 142).

Thus, for many, Hymes provided a perspective on language and social interaction, as well as a method for investigating them.

According to Berns (1990), Dell Hymes use of the term "communicative competence" has had "the most significant impact on linguistics and language teaching in the United States" (p. 28). Loveday (1982) summarized the impact this way:

The significance of Hymes' work for non-native language teaching has been in its profound replacement of formal linguistic knowledge by functional linguistic knowledge, in the shift it has caused from knowing how to produce a correct sentence to knowing how to produce

an appropriate, socially acceptable and natural one (p. 61).

We can see from this statement, and its emphasis on appropriateness of utterances, that conceptualizations of communication competence, even in the individualistic/generalizable approaches, are likely to have been influenced by a Hymesian depiction of language use. For Hymes (1972, 1974), the appropriateness of speech can only be understood in terms of the experiences of social life and knowledge of social rules (not grammatical rules) by the members of a speech community. Ethnographic analysis offers an analysis of situationally determined and "culturally developed" communicative competence. Competence is then conceived of as the "doing" of competent membership in the speech community. Thus, context determines a person's communicative competency. Hymes (1972) referred to the complexity and scope of the language competencies a child must acquire in order to function successfully in a given speech community as such:

He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with

attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language, with the other codes of communicative conduct. (pp. 277-278)

How communication competence is integrated with such things as attitudes toward language, particular speech acts, events or encounters, and other codes of conduct will be explored more fully in the analysis of communicative behavior at the language school in subsequent chapters. For now, it is important to see a glimpse of the integral nature of communication competence and the speech community.

Competence in a speech community.

Most ethnographies of communication have studied speech communities with a more homogeneous cultural/ethnic/language make-up than an English language school. The study of intercultural communication or native/non-native language interaction is potentially set in contrast to a homogeneous-culture study. The particular set of problems related to conceptualizing intercultural "places," like the language school, as a singular speech community will be addressed in a subsequent chapter. For now, the following will suffice.

The perspective on interaction, including communication competence, is essentially the same for ethnographers studying either homogeneous or heterogeneous speech

communities. The boundaries of a speech community are not determined by, or do not determine for, the member's cookie-cutter conformity. Rather, "any given speech community is an organization of diversity. Its spoken life is fashioned from diverse, even discrepant, motives, practices, and preferences, but nonetheless there is, in any particular community, a knowable system in its language use" (Philipsen, 1994, p. 1160).

The speech community can be thought of as a place that is created, established, and even changed by those who find themselves interacting in it for the purpose of managing their daily affairs. These activities include "emergent and cooperatively achieved aspects of human behavior as strategies for establishing co-membership in the conduct of social life" (Duranti, 1988, p. 217). In this sense, the "members" of a speech community establish, through the course of their social interactions, the "rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech [communication]" (Philipsen, 1994, p. 1158). It is these rules, the knowing, following, and judging others based on these rules, that constitute communicative competence in that speech community. Another point to be made here is that these rules are knowable. That is, they are not reinvented in each interaction, but exist for the member, both new and old, to draw upon.

Any ethnographic analysis of a speech community involving intercultural interactants would likely address the issue of communicative competency in some way. However, studies of intercultural or multicultural "speech communities" are not plentiful. The ESL studies (including bilingual and code-switching studies) reviewed above, and Peshkin's (1991) ethnographic investigations of relationships in a multiethnic high school community are the exception. There are, perhaps, good reasons for this shortage.

Conceptualizing intercultural communication competence from an ethnographic perspective produces an interesting problem. Defining a situation as "inter" cultural requires an assumption that the participants are from different speech communities, and yet the potential features of the situation-at-hand (i.e. a speech community that includes members from other, different speech communities) can be considered as elements of a third or new speech community—however, temporary. If the intercultural interaction is limited to one encounter, then making this leap to assuming a newly formed culture does not seem to make sense. However, if the members of different speech communities interact for relatively extended periods of time, like the language school studied here (or Peshkin's multicultural high school community) then the assumption of a "new" speech

community (however fragile or "in-formation") seems justified. The language school does seem to be a speech community with similar features to better known speech communities such as Philipsen's (1990) Teamsterville or the Wieder and Pratt's (1990) and Pratt and Wieder (1993) dispersed Osage tribe. Examining the speech community-like features of the language school will be a significant contribution of this present study.

An ethnographic approach to intercultural communication in general, and intercultural communication competence in specific, offers a way to investigate Casmir's call for a "third-culture" perspective of intercultural communication. The "third-culture" can be conceptualized in terms of the speech community in which interactants from a variety of quite distinct cultural and linguistic backgrounds find themselves and manage their communicative activities in accordance with the rules for language use in that speech community. An ethnographic approach to intercultural "speech communities" could then provide an understanding of communication competence at work in such places.

Ethnomethodological Input

While ethnomethodology does not address communication competence as a separate identifiable concept or area of study, there are many features of social interaction illuminated by scholars working from an ethnomethodological

perspective that are directly relevant to a study of "communication competence."

Garfinkel's (1967) perspective on social activity revolves around the consideration of the indexical and reflexive features of utterances. At the simplest level, these features of interaction refer to the ways in which the context provides for and is provided by the production and interpretation of utterances. These same "activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making those settings 'account-able'" (p. 1). Virtually all social action is accountable action. That is, Garfinkel views "social action as designed with reference to how it will be recognized and described" (Heritage, 1984, p. 140). Understanding these features of social activity is of primary importance for both the social actors engaged in the interaction and social researchers attempting to grasp the sense of their social activities.

To further explain the accountable character of social interactions, and to introduce the ways in which these practices relate to a conceptualization of communication competence, we turn to Garfinkel's (1967) own elaboration.

When I speak of accountable my interests are directed to such matters as the following. I mean observable-and-reportable, i.e., available to members as situated

practices of looking-and-telling. I mean, too, that such practices consist to an endless, ongoing, contingent accomplishment; that they are carried on under the auspices of, and are made to happen as events in, the same ordinary affairs that in organizing they describe; that the practices are done by parties to those settings whose skill with, knowledge of, and entitlement to the detailed work of that accomplishment--whose competence--they obstinately depend upon, recognize, use, and take for granted. (p. 1)

Competence can not be extracted from the production and management of everyday activities. Rather, that accomplishment is a display of the parties' cooperative interactional competence--not in terms of a presumed appropriateness or effectiveness, but in terms of the accomplishment of social activity itself. There is some connection here, though, to the ideas of appropriateness and effectiveness of "someone's" communicative efforts (like those depicted above in the "individualistic" approaches to communication competence). Each party relies on the other party to be able to "recognize" and "use" a common set of accountable practices, inter-actions, if you will, that are understandable in the given context. By "understandable," the widest possible meaning is being asserted here, that is, that it makes sense in terms of who said it when, in support

of what else has been said, or in terms of what other actions it is projecting or retrospectively projects, etc. The whole ethnomethodological effort is an attempt to explicate this activity. There are an undetermined number of ways of accomplishing this task (See Fehr and Stehr, 1990 for an index of ethnomethodologies). It is clear, however, that all of these endeavors include the analysis of actual social interaction as it unfolds, for "social interactional things are phenomena that happen: They make their appearance as spatially and temporally specifiable moments of and within the very encounters of which they are reflexively account-able constituents" (Wieder, 1998, p. 7). One concentration of such work is found in conversation analysis.

Conversation analysis has "distinguished itself as a prominent form of ethnomethodological work" (Heritage, 1984a, p. 233). Again, according to Heritage (1984a), the objective of conversation analysis

is to describe the procedures and expectations in terms of which speakers produce their own behavior and interpret the behavior of others. . . it is assumed that both the production of conduct and its interpretation are the accountable products of a common set of methods or procedures. (p. 241)

In accord with Garfinkel's (1967) description of what ethnomethodologist do, conversation analysts are "concerned with the analysis of the competences which underlie ordinary social activities. . . the competences which ordinary speakers use and rely on when they engage in intelligible, conversational interaction" (Heritage, 1984a, p. 241). There are three basic assumptions that conversation analysts make: "(1) interaction is structurally organized; (2) contributions to interaction are contextually oriented; and (3) no order of detail can be dismissed, a priori, as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant" (p. 241).

The following brief listing provides an overview of the competencies conversation analysts have discovered. Although the diversity of topics addressed and specific methods used by conversation analysts varies greatly (Heritage, 1984a), it is possible to get a handle on some of the core "findings." Some of those include the organizing practice of turn-taking in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson, (1974, and others), change-of-state tokens such a "oh" (Heritage, 1984b), speech in telephone openings (Hopper, 1988), adjacency pairs such as "greeting-greeting" and "summons-response" (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973), and the structure of interruptions (Drummond, 1989) to name a few.

It is interesting to note that in some sense that what amounts to communicative competence, both for ethnographers

and ethnomethodologists, include generalizable features, not unlike that of the behavior, knowledge, and attitudes thought to be "universally" competent offered by the "individualistic" approaches. That is, for ethnographers, the requirements for competent speech community membership vary from community to community and setting to setting; and for ethnomethodologists the various competencies required in everyday "ordinary social interaction" are locally produced and managed; yet, these approaches also assume that the same general category of requirements are requirements for interactants everywhere, in every community, and in every conversation.

There are numerous other intricacies that must be explored to tease out all the indexical and reflexive features of social interaction relevant to our understanding of communicative competence at the language school (e.g. the maintenance of institutional realities, the "mastery of natural language," and others). However, this will be better accomplished in later chapters. For now, it is enough to see how this approach differs from the individualistic and ethnographic approaches. In order to further articulate this distinction, I will outline an existing attempt at addressing intercultural communication competence utilizing an ethnomethodological perspective.

Based on analysis (conversation analysis informed by ethnographic knowledge) of his own conversations in a monastery with a Buddhist monk, the Abbot of the Monastery in Nepal, Liberman (1995) argued that "the first rule of intercultural interaction is survival; understanding the meaning takes second place" (p. 120). Following this assumption, Liberman provided an understanding of ICC in terms of levels of competence--or the kinds of competence that interactants are oriented to.

At one level, intercultural collaborators must "develop (and train in) a metadiscourse for monitoring the adequacy of the communication" (p. 121). At the metadiscourse level, interactants are oriented to (displaying and interpreting) claims of understanding. For Liberman, understanding the meaning of an utterance and claiming an understanding "are different orders of experience and require different competencies" (p. 128). It is this metadiscourse that formats the conversation, allowing for its "survival."

The displaying of competence (not actual or real understanding) is accomplished through conversational devices that are used to keep the conversation going, such as gratuitous concurrence (e.g., saying "I understand" or "right"). The conversational cues that display understanding (or competence) develop from the conversation itself, recognized by the producers of the utterances as

devices that work to display understanding and keep the conversation going. So, the first kind of competence can be summarized as one's competence at the level of metadiscourse that structures the conversation.

The other level of competence already alluded to is that of correctly interpreting or actually understanding an utterance or the point of the conversation (e.g. getting directions, paying the correct amount of money, answering a question accurately, etc.). It is important to note that the ability to "keep the conversation going," even when actual understanding does not exist, can lead to actual understanding as the conversation unfolds. Likewise, actual understanding or the lack of it (evidenced somehow--perhaps in some action), may in turn prove the preceding displays of understanding to be feigned or factual.

Lieberman's argument leads one to believe that intercultural communication must be minimally understood as interaction in which these two levels of competence are at work. His argument also reveals much about both the nature of intercultural communication and intercultural communication competence. An ethnomethodological analysis can display both as they are interactively managed by the participants in conversation.

Summary of Diverse Input

In accord with those perspectives of language and social interaction that Wieder (1999) categorized as EM-CA-MA-ES approaches (i.e., ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, Goffman's micro-analysis, and the ethnography of speaking), communication, and communication competence, is viewed as only happening in real time and space:

The spatial and temporal specificity and concreteness of these phenomena that are analyzable as events, and things that happen, as things that make their appearance within the encounter or interaction, are explicitly conceptualized within the scheme of social interactional concepts [employed in EM-CA-MA-ES], such that their predominant temporal mode of being and internal temporal structure is that of an historically locatable, tightly ordered sequence. . . The spatiality of social interactional things makes the ecology of the setting within which they occur always relevant. (p. 6)

Considering that orientation, the ethnographic perspective is well suited to investigate this sort of communication competence as it actually occurs at the language school. This is especially true given the distinction made between linguistic and "communicative" competence and that those same competencies are acknowledged dimensions of learning English at the language school. Thus, one part of this present study is the description of

communication competence in light of or based on the constraints of the multicultural/multilingual setting (the assumed "special" speech community of the language school).

A second approach, distinct yet compatible with the ethnographic study, is ethnomethodology, mostly relying on conversation analysis as a method of investigation and analysis. Based on a "levels of competence" view articulated in Liberman's (1995) ethnomethodological perspective, my own ethnographic observations, and conversation analysis, I will present how various levels of communicative competence are at work in the details of social interaction at the language school.

CA, Ethnography, and Liberman's input: Reconciling the
"monitoring channel"

Liberman's use of the terms "meta-discourse" and "monitoring channel" are problematic for our purposes here and need some clarification. The idea of acute "monitoring" abilities, such as those involving the use and interpretation of various non-verbal actions, are verifiably part of interaction and are at the disposal of interactants. These sorts of communicative tools, however, are not what Liberman seems to be alluding to. It is not altogether clear what Liberman asserts this monitoring channel to be or how it operates, or if it exists at all. Some possible interpretations or explanations might be that it is (1)

another way of communicating, or (2) merely another interpretation of an action or utterance, or (3) another act (the act of displaying and interpreting understanding/misunderstanding, accurate/inaccurate interpretation).

While there may be other ways of interpreting Liberman's terminology and the activity it points toward, the third option seems to be the most productive and verifiable in the analysis of interaction. That is, the displaying and monitoring of competence or incompetence is quite simply another something (in addition to but of equal status to the possible other activities of the interaction) that the interactants are up to. And it may be an activity that "intercultural" or native/non-native language speakers find themselves participating in more often, more intensely, and for different purposes than "intracultural" or native/native language speakers do.

When this idea of a monitoring channel or (additional and distinct) monitoring activity is considered in light of EM and CA assertions, the dissection of interaction into altogether separate activities seems ill-advised. That is, the potential accomplishments of social interactions are endless, but each have a similar status as accomplishments of the interaction. More to the point, "monitoring the adequacy of the communication" (accomplished through this

monitoring channel according to Liberman) is at once not more than what every interactant must do in that they display this activity (adequately or inadequately) moment by moment, and turn by turn, and yet it is also a distinct phenomena. A description of that activity at the language school is offered in the next chapter.

Chapter Endnotes

1. This kind of conceptualization is potentially misleading considering that the cultural characteristics outlined by scholars may rarely, if ever, be similar to what the lay person, who is actually engaged in intercultural communication, has in mind. Schutz put it this way, cultural patterns "have a different aspect for the sociologist and the man [or woman] who acts and thinks within it" (1960, p. 99).
2. Perhaps Hammer, Nishida, and Wiseman's study could have provided another category of situation types, or dimensions of communication competence, that could be investigated in actual interactions. It can also be deduced from the study that the respondents (albeit predominately white traditional college students) can readily recognize communicative activities as "communication competence" activities.
3. The distinction between an interactional focus and an individualistic one being made here is a fine one. An alteration of the latter definition of communicative competence offered by Loveday (1982) may help clarify this distinction. If the definition read something like the following, there would be much greater consistency in Loveday's conceptualizations: communicative competence then is the socioculturally appropriate meaning that emerges in relation to what the interactants in a given context are doing including what they have done before and what they are momentarily engaged in. This statement represents more than a mere merging of definitions (i.e. of meaning and of communicative competence), but addressing how the two are inextricably tied to the context.

Chapter 3

The Expectation of Interactive-Competence-In-Spite-Of-
Linguistic-Deficiency and The Moral Requirement of
Obligingness¹

From observations of a wide range of activities, including interactions in which at least one participant is a non-native English speaker, it is readily apparent that each member of the language school takes for granted that they, and the others, know how to and will use the rules of interaction (i.e., the basic structural, organizational precepts of any conversation-like those required in any social interaction). Moreover, the members' apparent assumptions regarding this know-how is present in spite of the more or less lack of fluency in English of one or more participants in a given interaction. That is, in the way that both the native and non-native speaker interact, they make the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency recognizable to one another, and take it for granted that the other will orient themselves to this expectation. One way of developing the idea of this expectation is to reflect on what can be referred to as the institutional reality and moral requirement of obligingness—the obligation to “look over” or “not make much of” the failings of either native or non-native language speakers in

their efforts to interact competently in spite of linguistic deficiency.

The display of obligingness (the actual overlooking or not making much of problems caused by the linguistic deficiency of the interaction) takes the following general forms. For the native English speaker, the display of obligingness is accomplished by (1) overlooking grammatical or phonetic problems in the utterances of the non-native English speaker, (2) the use of no (or minimized or softened) foreigner talk, (3) not making much of the display of the lack of understanding, and (4) overlooking apparent displays of feigned understanding. The non-native English speaker displays obligingness in the above ways when interacting with another NNS, and when interacting with a NS by (1) offering displays of understanding (when there is a lack of understanding), and (2) not making much of the native English speaker's lack of clarity (a kind of linguistic deficiency).

Similarly, but not precisely the same, the display of the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency takes the following general forms. The native English speaker displays this expectation through (1) the use of no (or minimized or softened) foreigner talk, and (2) seeking and responding positively to displays of understanding. The non-native English speaker displays this

expectation through (1) the mere attempt at interacting, and (2) offering displays of understanding (feigned or factual).

The relationship between these two orientations, if not already obvious, can be stated this way: the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, in order to be maintained in light of problems caused by linguistic deficiency, requires that the interactants be obliging to those same problems (i.e., overlooking or not making much of them). When we speak of obligingness here, therefore, we are making reference to those specific actions performed by the interactants that display obligingness about the problems caused by linguistic deficiency. In other words, both native and non-native English speakers at the language school may be obliging to one another in many other ways and for many reasons other than those required to maintain the expectation of interaction competence, but these are not of immediate concern for us here.

"Common Culture" and Interactive Competence at the Language School

To understand how this expectation and the concomitant obligingness can be viewed as a part of the institutional reality and moral obligation of members of the language school, we can refer to Garfinkel's (1967) depiction of "common culture" and the sociological reasoning alluded to by its use. Common culture is the

socially sanctioned grounds of inference and action that people use in their everyday affairs and which they assume that others use in the same way. Socially-sanctioned-facts-of-life-in-society-that-any-bona-fide-member-of-a-society-knows depict such matters as the conduct of family life, market organization, distributions of honor, . . . [and] competence... (p. 76)

The language school members make use of the expectation-for-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency to manage their daily affairs, some of which are clearly pedagogical activities, and virtually all of which include the display and assessment of both interactive and linguistic competence for both NS and NNS.

The moral requirement of obligingness is squarely about communicative competence. More precisely, the known-by-any-member quality of the special expectancy and the moral requirement of obligingness enforces the distinction between interactive competence, linguistic competence, and actual understanding, while at the same time buffers the inequality of these "kinds" of competence. These kinds of competence, and the priority given to interactive competence, are managed as "observable-reportable" phenomena through the use of accounting practices such as displaying the apparent overlooking of linguistic problems and offering

and responding to change-of-state tokens like the "oh"s discussed below.²

In this chapter, an introduction to the force of the primary expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency will be offered, including the development of the idea of the institutional reality and moral requirement of obligingness. When making this reference to the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency and joining it with the idea of obligingness, we are essentially describing a critical feature of how communicative competence is determined, enacted, and made recognizable--how it is "at work" in the social interactions at the language school.

In later chapters, examples of the range of encounters members find themselves in will be explored in terms of this conceptualization of communicative competence, providing additional details for its validity.

Speaking and Learning English and the Moral Requirement of Obligingness

Learning and teaching English is quite obviously the "official business" of the language school. This is apparently so, for members and observers alike, based on the various pieces of literature produced by the language school, the classroom activities that "students" and "teachers" engage in throughout the day, the books, dry-

marker boards, and desks that any one can see and that students and teachers must use, etc. Pedagogical activities are quite expectedly not the only kind of activities that occur at the language school. Non-pedagogical interactions (e. g., casual conversations) take place between the official teachers and students, and similarly, pedagogical interactions occur between non-teachers (administrative staff and other students) and students. One would expect to find similar activities and kinds of interactions occurring in other school settings.

It is interesting to recognize that the students, in all their activities with native English speakers, whether engaged in a pedagogical or non-pedagogical activity, must use English to interact (i.e., ask questions about word choice, or buying stamps). In a very real sense, all native/non-native language interactions at the language school are about learning English. That is, there is a recognition for students, faculty and staff that the more you speak English, the more you will learn English. This is evident in their favorable appraisal of the official rule of speaking English at all times (regardless of the native language status of the interactants).

In terms of clearly pedagogical activities, typically between student(s) and a teacher, the use of English to teach and learn English is worthy of special note. While

some of the teachers are fluent in another language, in one case several other languages, they rarely use the language of the student, if they are able, to help them learn English. Second language proficiency is not a requirement for teaching at the language school (or most other ESL schools). As both student and teacher engage in a pedagogical activity, they are faced with using the language in which one interactant is clearly deficient, the language that the topic of conversation has at least something to do with, and the language that the student is attempting to learn how to use. Consequently, the use of English is both a central part of the interactive repertoire of student and teacher, as well as the central purpose of their activity. Even in non-pedagogical activities, this relationship exists to some degree. It is also this relationship between English usage as a means and end that prompts the special expectation and moral requirement of obligingness.

The expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is not only the expectation that the native language speaker has about the non-native speaker, this expectation is also apparently a part of the non-native language speakers' expectations regarding the native language speaker (more specifically in this case, the "teachers" of English). That is, the linguistic deficiency of one or more of the non-native speaking participants

affords an overall linguistic deficiency for both participants in the social interaction regardless of the native language status of the other participant(s).

In order to keep in mind the co-operative effort in interactive competence, we should note again generally what is being obliged to. That is, the interactants (whether made up of two or more non-native speakers or a native/non-native speaker combination) are (1) obliged by the other to be able to interact competently in spite of linguistic deficiency, and (2) are also obliged to not "make much of" the failings of the other to interact competently due to linguistic deficiency. This paradoxical aspect of the moral requirement of obligingness points us toward the fact that a pure (or flawless) interactive competence is typically in doubt or not performed in social interactions at the language school.

The members of the language school are quite expectedly preoccupied with learning and teaching English. This is not only the official business of the language school but also the members' primary objective while interacting at the language school, at least most of the time, and in most social interactions, even in non-pedagogical encounters.

It is important to note that this requirement of obligingness is not altogether unique to the language school, but is likely to be a requirement at all second

language schools, and similar institutions in which daily affairs must be accomplished in spite of severe linguistic deficiencies/differences.

A Case Study

This section presents a case study of an episode in a conversation between a native English speaker and a non-native English speaker (apparently with minimal language skills). The expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency operating in the discourse episode is strikingly revealed, for both the interactants and analyst at two places of other-repair initiation and their achievement. The use of these repair sequences, change-of-state tokens, continuers, interruptions and other devices provide evidence for interactive competence, and also the lack of it by both participants, as well as evidence for the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. There is also evidence for the lack of actual understanding which casts a new light on devices used in the conversation that work to only, or merely, display understanding.

Even a first glance at the interactions at the language school provides some evidence for the obligingness that predominates the efforts and accomplishments of those same interactions. By "first glance" I am referring to the ease at which observers, lay and professional, can recognize this

common-place practice. This feature of native/non-native language speaker interactions, obligingness, is clearly not the only important or readily recognized feature of this sort of interaction. Indeed, what we might legitimately label as the opposite of obligingness, an intolerance for any interference to the smooth organization and "flow" of conversation due to linguistic deficiency (or perhaps even assumed "cultural" differences) is equally recognizable, although rarely seen at the language school.

Although this sort of intolerance is not extreme, and is rarely seen at the language school, we can make a logical argument regarding its "presence" as an option for both the native and non-native language speaker. As an assumed option, we can see that it provides grounds for the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-linguistic-deficiency and obligingness to function the way it does in interactions of all sorts at the language school. In either case, "intercultural" or native/non-native language interactions clearly have the potential, if not probability, to be difficult for the interactants.

All conversationalists are "painfully aware of the potentially embarrassing or tragic consequences of a conversation 'gone wrong'" (Nofsinger, 1991, p. 111). This is perhaps exaggerated in encounters recognized as "intercultural" or as a conversation that may suffer as a

result of linguistic deficiency. That is, if an interaction is somehow marked, and thus characterized as linguistically deficient, then there is likely to be efforts made to bypass, rectify, or overcome these same linguistic deficiencies. Or, in other circumstances and settings, quite the opposite reaction by the native language speaker to apparent linguistic deficiency might occur.

Non-Obliging Features of Native/Non-Native Language Interaction

An example of a "non-obliging" interaction was observed in a downtown hotel restaurant in Chicago between the restaurant's only visible cook/cashier/waiter and a patron who, upon placing an order, immediately displayed at least a moderate amount of difficulty with speaking English. In the minutes that followed, the cashier's only attempts at overcoming the linguistic deficiency of his customer included loudly repeating questions in quite obvious disgust, to the embarrassment of both myself (the only other customer) and the recipient. While a recording of the conversation was not made, an analysis of notes of the encounter outline some specific accomplishments of their conversation that are relevant to our discussion here.

Specifically, agreement of a sort regarding the food order was reached at several points during the conversation in spite of the customer's lack of fluency in English and

the cashier's ruthless attempts to overcome that deficiency. The customer offered signs or indications throughout the interaction that he understood or agreed with something the cashier said, latter to be revealed as something the customer (who appeared to be Arabic) would have strongly objected to if he had indeed understood (e.g., the inclusion of pork sausage on his plate). From this brief depiction of the breakfast interaction, we can draw some relevant conclusions.

The expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency was not operating, at least it did not seem to be an expectation that both speakers displayed. That is, through the customer's conversational actions (i.e., attempting to place an order and the specific forms of agreement uttered) he displayed his confidence that the interaction could indeed be managed. The cashier, on the other hand, displayed an expectation that he and the non-native language speaker could not interact competently, in that he became belligerent when the linguistic deficiency threatened the cooperative accomplishment of interactive competence (e.g., placing the order).

The expectation that the interaction will be merely finished is different than the expectation that it will be accomplished at least somewhat smoothly and successfully, through a cooperative effort. Thus, one could not argue

that the expectation-for-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is operating whenever an interaction occurs that exhibits linguistic deficiency. That distinction becomes clearer when we consider that the special expectation also requires both parties to be obliging to the troubles that the linguistic deficiency may present.

In virtually all interactions, the members of the language school display that expectation, and the concomitant moral requirement of obligingness. It is important to note that this is not necessarily the case. That is, we could imagine that both student and teacher (and staff) not have the special expectation, and not be obliging to troubles that may arise. This sort of scenario at the language school would likely result in extreme frustration, and little success at teaching and learning English or any sort of administrative activities. In the restaurant case discussed above, it is clear that the cashier was not obliging to the customer's linguistic deficiency, while the customer did seem to be obliging to the "social deficiency" of the cashier (which of course has everything to do with his ability/willingness to engage in a native/non-native language interaction. It should not be taken for granted that non-native speakers are always required to be obliging to the native speaker's lack of ability or willingness to

interact with a non-native speaker. That is, the same alternatives that the native language speaker may turn to are available to the non-native language speaker.

Thus, what is not being argued here is that native/non-native language speakers are especially motivated to smooth out crinkles in the conversation. Rather, if the conversation is marked by the participants as one involving linguistic deficiency (or more precisely potentially influenced by linguistic deficiency), it is also recognized and oriented to as an interaction in which these unique "problems" must be addressed and handled in some way. Accordingly, the argument here is that the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency and the concomitant moral requirement of obligingness mediate this effort by the interactants at the language school.

A Conversation Analysis of Inter-lingual Interaction

The ability of people to converse with others from vastly different cultures with minimal shared language skills is fascinating. The phenomena of intercultural communication is recognized as a special kind of interaction both to scholars in the social sciences and to those doing the work of lay sociology. That designation is perhaps primarily focused around assumptions regarding the transparently troublesome nature of such interactions. While much work in intercultural communication has focused

on cultural differences and the development of categories of cultural variability, the procedures of conversation analysis offer a footing for examining actual "intercultural" communication apart from presuppositions regarding the assumed general cultural backgrounds of the participants.

Because all conversational interactants are subject to, and participate in, the rules of conversation, discovering those structures can display what meaning or interpretation is both constrained and created by those structures. The objective of conversation analysts is "describing the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior and understand and deal with the behavior of others" (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, p. 1). Whether the conversational participants are from assumed similar or dissimilar cultures, the description of that organization can display the "normatively oriented-to grounds for inference and action" (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984, p. 3). This present analysis attempts to uncover some structural features of the verbal interaction of native English speakers and non-native English speakers.

More specifically, the proposal here is that the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency at work in the interaction is recognized by participants as a feature of that interaction,

as a way of making sense of an utterance or an entire series of utterances and responses. The utterances, then, are interpreted by the analyst as constitutive of the obliging character of the interaction (creating it) and also provide the knowledge for the participants to make that determination and act upon it (constrained by it).

Considering the extent to which utterances constrain and are constrained by the interaction, Heritage's (1992) explanation of the indexical and reflexive features of utterances or "descriptions" (and virtually all other utterances) offers a succinct insight:

an actor's treatment of a description will unavoidably address it as contexted, as unavoidably an action which maintains, transforms or, more generally, elaborates its context of occurrence and, hence, as unavoidably a temporarily situated phase of a socially organized activity. (1992, p. 156, emphasis in original).

It is the argument here that a central feature of that organization in interactions at the language school is the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-linguistic-deficiency.

In the following segment of conversation, the native speaker is engaged in an extended telling of seemingly crucial information prompted by the non-native speaker's question. The troublesome nature of the discourse episode

is strikingly revealed at two places of other-repair initiation and their achievements; one at the beginning of the episode which works to initiate the extended informing and the obliging nature of the episode, and one at the end of the episode which casts doubt on the accuracy of either participants' understanding of the various accomplishments of the conversation.

The conversation is achieved through the use of several mechanisms that can be analyzed in turn as devices that work to initiate and display the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-linguistic-deficiency. Some of those devices include change-of-state tokens and continuers used as supportive devices that (1) keep the telling going and display a sense that (2) the non-native speaker understands the extended telling, and the flip-side of that accomplishment--(3) that the native speaker is successfully answering the non-native speakers question. Also, interruptions are used to hold the floor and display an interpretation of the change-of-state tokens as such. It is important to note here that these conversational devices are not particular to native/non-native language speaker encounters. Rather, it is the particular use of these in the following conversational segment that provides clues to the special expectation and obliging nature of the interaction. In the following transcript, "S" represents

the student/non-native English speaker, and "D" signifies the director of the language school/native speaker. (See Appendix A for transcription conventions).

- 1 S: Eh, how about social security number
- 2 D: You: can get one (1.0) or: not (.5) it
- 3 doesnt matter.
- 4 (3.)
- > 5 S: not (1.0) ah ah do you you can can yoiu
- 6 tell me about social security number.
- 7 D: Social security number is required of all
- 8 United States citisens (1.) we all have a
- 9 social security number=
- 10 S: =Im not im not a soc [ah i see
- 11 D: [So you dont hafto
- 12 have one (1.) it does make it easier
- 13 for you: sometimes when you are opening a
- 14 bank account? they will ask for your
- 15 social security number (1.) also when you
- 16 go to the University they will give you
- 17 an ie: de: (1.) if yoiu have a social
- 18 security number (1.) that will be your
- 19 ie: de number (1.)
- > 20 S: oh[::
- > 21 D: [Then if you dont have so many numbers
- 22 hhh to remember (1.) see (.5) its a good

23 idea (.5) but if you (.5) what I would
 24 recommend wait until you enroll at the
 25 university (1.) Then when you have your
 26 I twenty get your social security card
 27 with your I twenty from owe es you (1.)
 28 for one reason (1.)
 29 S: What ts i [hhh
 30 D: [okay, wai:t t[o get your
 31 S: [ya?
 32 D: social security oka[y when your a student
 33 S: [ahuh
 34 D: in an English school? you can not work
 35 (1.) okay so if you get a social security
 36 card now. the back will say: can (.5) not
 37 (.5) work=
 > 38 S: =oh[::
 > 39 D: [okay (1.) if you wait until you are a
 40 university student (1.) you can work a
 41 liddl: (.5) S[o
 42 S: [I:
 43 inside the[
 44 D: [Inside the university (.5) so
 45 they will stamp eligibl to work on
 46 campus (1.) okay and then if
 47 you want to work a liddl bit (.5) you can

- 48 (.5) but if you go to owe es you with a
 49 social security card ((telephone beeps))
 50 says can not work then you never can
 51 (1.) so(.5) I would wait=
 > 52 S: =wa:t=
 > 53 D: =until your ya until you go up there.
 > 54 (2.)
 > 55 S: what (.5) what for?
 56 D: uncase you want to work?
 57 (1.)
 58 S: oh ((downward pitch))

Examination of the discourse episode reveals several analytic components that work as the mechanisms for the achievement of the conversation.

Analytic Components

Although many analytic components could be identified in the present discourse episode, the use of extended tellings or informings, repairs, change-state-tokens, continuers, interruptions, repetition, and pauses will be the focus of this analysis. First, the structure of the extended informing (and the prior and subsequent sequences of talk) in the present case study should exhibit similar features to that of storytelling summarized by Mandelbaum (1989). She pointed out that the structure of storytelling is a modification of the turn-taking system present in many

other forms of discourse--"...the teller takes an extended turn, and recipients offer minimal contributions indicating attention and appreciation" (p. 115). We might add to that description of recipient responses, or modify the understood function of indications of "attention and appreciation," by making note of the various ways in which "understanding" is indicated. The use of change-of-state tokens discussed below is an example of such a device.

Although the recipients' contributions are minimal, both interactants actively co-participate in the storytelling. Similarly, the description of the activity in the extended informing of the present case study indicates that both the teller and the recipient perform in specific ways to allow for the telling to take shape. It is precisely the interactants efforts at this collaboration that aid in marking the episode as one in which the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is operating.

The use of other-initiated repairs by the interactants in this case is important in understanding the marking of the conversational segment as potentially troublesome due to linguistic deficiency, which in turn prompts the special expectancy. Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) argued that "the organization of repair is the self-righting mechanism for the organization of language use in social

interaction" (p. 381). The other-initiated repair sequences witnessed in this discourse episode perform this function as well as direct the extended informing. Also, these repair initiations and their achievements mark the closing of the extended informing. In some sense, the entire extended informing could be viewed as a repair in response to the first other-initiation of repair. In this sense then, the last other-repair initiation sequence is a response to the extended informing as a (failed) repair.

Second, continuers (e.g. oh, yeah, uhuh) work as supportive devices that show agreement/understanding/attention, and keep the informing going smoothly:

"Continuers show their speaker's understanding that a continuing is underway by not taking up an opportunity to take a full turn, and by not requiring a particular turn next from the so-far teller" (Mandelbaum, 1989, p. 117). Continuers occur at possible points that recipients could begin talking and affect these points (Schegloff, 1981).

For the interactants in the present case, change-of-state tokens also accomplish much. Utterances such as "oh" are used to "mark the receipt of the informing delivered in the preceding turn or turns" (Heritage, 1992, p. 301). Change-of-state tokens, in marking the receipt of a subsequent informing, can work to in effect complete that informing if it is treated as such by its recipient or act

to elicit further talk/informing (Heritage, 1992).

Additionally, and perhaps most notably, the use of change-of-state tokens in the conversation segment above display apparent understanding and alignment, and ultimately reveal the apparent lack of an intersubjective understanding of much of the conversational meaning. The change-of-state tokens used by the non-native speaker, understood in this sense, also reveal the apparent gratuitous concurrence offered by him.

Lastly, interruptions appear to be used by the speaker of the extended informing not in an effort to take power from (or gain power over) the recipient of the informing, but rather as a response to continuers (or other kinds of utterances doing the work of continuers). This use of interruptions supports the notion that the extended informing works as an extended repair. All three components can be better understood as working together in creating the orderliness of the discourse episode. Simply, the continuers are acted upon as receipts of partial completion of the repair initiated early in the episode.

Data and Participants

The data described here were drawn from audio-tape recordings of conversations between a director of an English language school and new students. Both participants were

aware that their conversation was being recorded. The tape was transcribed by the author.

The interaction analyzed here is an episode from a conversation between the female director (approximate age 35) and a male student (age, native language, official level of English language fluency, cultural background, unknown). The lack of background knowledge about both participants serves a purpose here. By intentionally bracketing that knowable information and the assumptions regarding the role those potential characteristics might play in the interaction, we are forced to see what the participants make of the interaction, actually. The ascription of the various actions analyzed here to assumptions regarding cultural influences is clearly possible, and may result in bolstering the argument made here, modifying it, negating it, or lead to an entirely different analysis. However, as has been indicated elsewhere, these sorts of endeavors are intentionally avoided, in a effort to clarify our focus on the in situ accomplishments of participants.

The Development of the Contextual Features

The development of the troublesome discourse as an interaction in which the special expectation and obligingness is at work is first revealed as the recipient of the extended informing solicits its telling by initiating a repair of a troublesome answer to a previous question. We

can note that the original question in line 1 and the repair of this first answer then takes the form of an extended informing.

- 1 S: Eh, how about social security number
 2 D: You: can get one (1.0) or: not (.5) it
 3 doesnt matter.
 4 (3.)
 > 5 S: not (1.0) ah ah do you you can can yoiu
 6 tell me about social security number.
 7 D: Social security number is required of all
 8 United States citisens (1.) we all have a
 9 social security number=
 10 S: =Im not im not a soc [ah i see
 11 D: [So you dont hafto
 12 have one (1.) it does make it easier
 13 for you: sometimes when you are opening a
 14 bank account? they will ask for your

The extended informing appears to be punctuated with possible transition relevance points that the teller uses or exaggerates to invoke any possible other-initiations of repair (e.g., lines 2-4, 12, 19, 37, and 51). These points of possible transitions within the extended informing (e.g., lines 4 and 9) are occupied by utterances which are responded to as change-of-state tokens and continuers. When the informing is finalized or completed, the last repair

sequence casts doubt on the previous claims of understanding.

- 51 (1.) so(.5) I would wait=
 > 52 S: =wa:t=
 > 53 D: =until your ya until you go up there.
 > 54 (2.)
 > 55 S: what (.5) what for?
 56 D: uncase you want to work?
 57 (1.)
 58 S: oh (downward pitch)

Overall, a sequence of utterances evolves which takes the shape of an inadequate answer to a question that is then expanded to an apparently adequate one, then, after much ado, that second answer is revealed as inadequate also. This kind of development is made orderly through the use of repairs, continuers, and interruptions. These same devices gain a special significance as ways of establishing, maintaining, and even threatening the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. It is the moral requirement of obligingness that both interactants rely on to sustain the usefulness and rightness of this expectation.

In spite of both participants apparent best efforts, the success of this interaction is suspect. That is,

although the conversation is managed and has an apparent smoothness, the outcome is not likely to be immediately positive for either participant. The teller of the informing did not succeed in adequately answering the recipient's question. Likewise, the recipient did not adequately facilitate the answering of the question. So, while interactive competence was displayed, a truly successful interaction was not achieved. Perhaps one mechanism that is most likely suspect in this apparent failure involved the ambiguous use and receipt of "oh" as a continuer and/or a change-of-state token.

Establishing Interactive Competence and Linguistic Deficiency

At the beginning of the discourse, the student asks the director "about social security number." Although the question is asked in a awkward and ambiguous way, the sense of the question seems to be understood in light of the sequential environment. That sequential environment is one in which the student is asking a series of questions regarding legal documents/procedures related to his educational stay in the United States. The director responds to the initial utterance as a question, offering the second pair part of the question/answer adjacency pair.

- 1 S: Eh, how about social security number
- 2 D: You: can get one (1.0) or: not (.5) it

3 doesn't matter.

Much is accomplished in these two utterances. The orderliness of even just this initial adjacency pair is significant in light of the fact that the student has limited (perhaps minimal) English language skills. Simply, the student has demonstrated that he can ask an intelligible question regarding an important issue. Already, the utterance-by-utterance organization of discourse is demonstrated, in which "some preceding utterance may be said to provide a constraint on the production of some next utterance" (Heritage and Watson, 1980, p. 139). And so, the speaker with even minimal language skills can effectively constrain the production of next utterances. If the answer "you can get one or not, it doesn't matter" was sufficient, then the episode might have been concluded in the next utterance with some sort of response indicating acceptance or perhaps appreciation. However, that was not the case.

We can assume that the director knows the native language status of the student (generally as a non-native speaker with at least minimal English language skills, or specifically in terms of the students official level of English proficiency). English proficiency levels are determined through written and verbal testing at the language school before each one month session begins, for both new and existing students. Regardless, the director

must find out how to manage the conversation, while engaged in it. And the student must do the same.

Lieberman (1995) refers to the "normalizing" of a conversation as the collaborative work of building "local vocabularies and discourse routines... specifically, a local and particular scheme of communication must be worked out among the participants" (p. 121). While Lieberman was making reference to "intercultural" interactions particularly, the building of "schemes of communication" seems equally appropriate for all "types" of interactions. I would add to Lieberman's argument the consideration that the "scheme" or "routine" is not worked out once and for all. The reflexive and indexical nature of all utterances makes this determination. The sense of the conversation is made utterance by utterance. The implication of that consideration for our purposes here is great. The extent to which the success of the interaction rests on linguistic deficiency is continually an issue, assessed and managed moment by moment.

The conversational segment analyzed here is only a part of the whole conversation between the director and the student. The analysis can be aided by some general remarks regarding this segment's place in the overall sequential environment, without taking on the task of analyzing the whole conversation. This segment, initiated by the

student's question "Eh, how about social security number" is essentially the second big issue, of three, brought up by the student. What is apparent in the recording is that the student has a thick accent, which is not the same thing, or necessarily an indication of linguistic deficiency, of the sort that is likely to have the potential of interfering with the success of the interaction. Even though the phrasing is a bit choppy, by itself there is no real indication of linguistic deficiency. Even in light of the fact that the Director knows about the student's native language status (generally or specifically), and in light of the previous few minutes of interaction which likely demonstrate the student's linguistic deficiency (and therefore, marking the interaction as one in which linguistic deficiency must be dealt with somehow), we can not assume that either participant is sure of how the conversation will precede.

"Foreigner" and "Normal" Talk

What is accomplished in the first three lines of the conversation? In lines 2 and 3, the Director offers a direct answer, even though the "about" in line 1 is somewhat ambiguous. One thing that is apparent in the analysis of this interaction, and others involving a native and non-native English speaker at the language school, is that on occasion there is a sporadic and slight use of "foreigner

talk." Different native language speakers at the language school make use of exaggerated sounds or longer pauses between words only occasionally, with some non-native English speakers, in some circumstances. Indeed, the native English speaker's typical "style" is more accurately characterized in terms of normal, unaltered, or what may be understood as "intracultural-like" speech. It is interesting to note that the Director's response to the student's initial question does not display foreigner talk, with the possible exception of the slightly extended sounds in "you:" and "or:" in line 2. This observation, even without further analysis, can point toward evidence that the native language speaker, the Director in this case, expects "normal" speech will be understood by the non-native English speaker.

As mentioned above, we can also understand the use of "normal" speech as a way of enacting the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. It is important to clarify that this enactment is not viewed as intentional or consciously offered. Members of the language school take for granted that they (both native and non-native English speakers) know how to use the rules of interaction in spite of the lack of fluency of one or more participant. This taken for granted knowledge and its consequences for interactions are of central concern here.

In terms of appreciating the sporadic use of foreigner talk, and normal talk, the enactment of this special expectation is not understood here as a once and for all accomplishment for a given interaction. The special expectation for interactive competence is a continual, utterance by utterance, collaborative accomplishment. Thus, foreigner talk should not be viewed as the "cutting off" of this special expectation. Rather, the sporadic and minimized use of foreigner talk may be viewed as one way of displaying obligingness. Conversely, the more preferred use of normal talk, and other conversational devices, by the native English speaker works to display the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. In this present case, if the use of foreigner talk is present in line 2, the overall style of the answer is clearly "normal." Thus, we can also make the determination that the Director, irregardless of the previous exchanges, expects that this answer, in the style presented, will be sufficient.

Other-initiated repair and response

What follows the answer is the absence of a response, that is, an extended pause. One possible explanation for this pause is that the student is thinking (perhaps translating) or is confused. Another explanation is that the student does not know what to say. Either of these

options may be viable, but there is no real evidence, and so it is merely speculation about possible motivations. A better explanation stems from an analysis of its sequential placement after an answer to a question and prior to an other-initiation of repair. Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) pointed out that other-initiations of repair can be preceded by pauses, which are understood as devices used by the speaker of the repair initiation to allow for self-initiated repair. Whether or not the student had in mind to prompt a self-initiated repair, it is clear that the director did not take advantage of the pause.

By examining that pause and the next utterance of the student as one initiating repair, it becomes apparent that the preceding utterance is a trouble source. However, the exact trouble is not pin-pointed, not clearly:

- 1 S: Eh, how about social security number
- 2 D: You: can get one (1.0) or: not (.5) it
- 3 doesnt matter.
- 4 (3.)
- > 5 S: not (1.0) ah ah do you you can can yoiu
- 6 tell me about social security number.
- 7 D: Social security number is required of all
- 8 United States citisens (1.) we all have a
- 9 social security number=

Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks (1977) stated that one type of other-initiation of repair is partial repeats of the trouble-source turn. The "not" in line 5 could be viewed as such an attempt, even though the utterance does not locate the trouble source clearly. It is not clear if the director hears the "not" or understands it to be an initiation of repair. A shorter pause follows which could be occupied by the repair, but is not. Then, the second part and successful attempt at initiating repair is given in lines 5 and 6. This question is equally awkward in phrasing as line 1, but includes a slightly more specific direction, although still vague. Interestingly, the question this time makes reference to the recipient of the question, her expected activity, and himself- "can you tell me... ." This repair initiation seemingly works, and is followed by the activity he is seemingly requesting--a detailed telling "about" social security numbers.

Lines 4 through 6 can also be analyzed in terms of firmly designating the immediately preceding and immediately following interaction as one in which linguistic deficiency is likely to be a problem for the interactants. Specifically, in lines 5 and 6, the student displays three troubles formulating a second attempt at a question related to social security numbers. At the end of line 6 (or the total of 5 and 6), it is still not clear what information

the student is after. It is clear that the student is seeking other or additional information than was offered by the director in lines 2 and 3.

At this point, we can make the following observations regarding the displaying of interactive competence and linguistic deficiency. These two potentially opposing things are accomplished in lines 1 through 6. On the one hand, interactive competence is displayed by the student in his ability to ask a question, respond to an answer to that question as an inadequate one, and ask another, clarifying question. The director also displays interactive competence in her ability to respond to a question, and reformulation of that question. At least some linguistic deficiency is also displayed, with apparent consequences for the conversation. Namely, the student displays linguistic deficiency in not being able to ask specifically and clearly a question regarding his acquiring a social security number. We can make the argument that the displaying of interactive competence here enacts the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. It may be that this special expectation was already enacted and "used" in the previous interaction between the two. In that case, we could view lines 1 through 6 as a re-enactment or maintenance of that expectation. Either way of looking at

it does not weaken the importance of lines 1 through 6 regarding this accomplishment.

We can also argue that the display of at least some linguistic deficiency enacts the requirement of obligingness. That is, because the interaction must go on in light of the interactive competence displayed, the problems that the linguistic deficiency present, and are likely to present, must be overlooked and not made much of by either participant. The reasonableness of this requirement is of course strengthened when we consider that both the student and teacher are faced with similar social circumstances in all of their daily affairs involving native/non-native English speaking pairing.

The cooperative extended telling

The beginnings of specific repairs to the troublesome answer given in lines 2 and 3 can be seen in lines 7 through 9:

- 7 D: Social security number is required of all
 8 United States citisens (1.) we all have a
 9 social security number=
 10 S: =Im not im not a sewsh [ah I see
 11 D: [So you dont hafta
 12 have one (1.) it does make it easier

Because of the quickness with which the student offers an other-initiation of repair (to the assumed mis-

identification of his citizenship status), it is not clear whether the end of the director's utterance, in line 9, marks a transition relevance place (TRP). Although it is not technically an overlap (or interruption), the utterance in line 10 does stop the telling, and indicate that the student does not know "where the director is going" with this line of utterances. It is also likely that the utterance in line 10 displays linguistic deficiency (i.e., repetition and apparently saying "sewsh" for social security instead of saying citizen).

In regard to the confidence with which we can identify an utterance as marking linguistic deficiency, it is important to note that that determination is only made for all practical purposes by the interactants, and access to that determination may not be provided in the transcript. We can also reasonably assume that an utterance produced by a known non-native language speaker, while not necessarily displaying linguistic deficiency, may be considered as displaying linguistic deficiency. Just as a similar utterance produced by a bona fide native language speaker would not constitute linguistic deficiency, but merely a fleeting blunder.

In lines 7 and 8 the director is clarifying what she meant by "you don't have to have one" by opposing "you" to all United States citizens. The student, as evidenced in

the final phrase of the utterance in line 10, apparently recognizes this, and his own misidentification of that utterance with the change-of-state token "ah I see." This change-of-state token, and how it is receipted by the director, marks the first in a series of similar pairs of utterances that contributes greatly to the overall accomplishment of the interaction, and also reveals both speaker's primary orientation to displaying and assessing interactive competence.

The Primary Orientation to Displaying and Assessing Interactive Competence

While the utterance in line 11 essentially overlaps with the students utterance "ah I see," we can still make the determination that the director was (1) clarifying the apparently misunderstanding evidenced in the first part of the utterance "Im not im not a sewsh," and (2) responding to the change-of-state utterance, and also (3) holding the floor. The director's responses to the students utterances as displays of understanding (or the lack of it), and the use of those responses to hold the floor, provides a basis for further determinations about the ways in which the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency and the moral requirement of obligingness depict the interaction. Briefly, it is apparent that both parties are displaying and seeking

verification of the effectiveness and/or rightness of their utterances as demonstrations of their ability to interact competently in spite of linguistic deficiency.

TRP's and displays of understanding

Throughout the subsequent extended telling, the director offers numerous pauses at various times, that could be interpreted as marking or emphasizing transition relevance places; as particular opportunities for the student to display understanding. Clearly some are responded to that way. Specifically, the use of a change-of-state token in line 20, and the use of a question in line 29, are responded to as displays of understanding and continuers (i.e., conversational devices designed to keep the conversation going). As such, that pairing, indications of understanding and response, work to give the appearance of a smooth flowing and informative native/non-native English speaker interaction (i.e., the enactment/maintenance of the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-competence). As the indications of understanding are proffered, further indications are likely to be required. That is, with each apparently successful "exchange," the goodness of the special expectation deepens, and the consequences of its violation grows. As we shall see in this conversational segment, the student's display of the lack of understanding at the end, reflexively re-

interprets the preceding indications of understanding, and the rightness of the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency.

The moral requirement of obligingness is also at work here. The student's utterances that indicate understanding, that may or may not be merely examples of gratuitous concurrence, work to let the other (in this case the native speaker) know that what they are saying makes sense. If, however, those same indications of understanding prove to be feigned, as is likely the case here, they become (for the observer and the native English speaker) displays of obligingness. Both the native and non-native English speaker at the language school are continually aware of their ability to converse effectively with one another—their interactive competence.

Thus, by line 12, we have a collaboratively determined context in which interactive competence, as well as linguistic deficiency, has been determined, however momentarily. In lines 11 through 12, the director begins to clarify what she meant by "...can get one or not" (the option). Then in line 12, she begins to provide reasons why he may want to get a social security number (and card).

Change-of-state tokens

In lines 12 through 19, and lines 21 through 23, the teller of this extended informing is providing a brief

listing of reasons for the acquisition of a social security number. Throughout this listing, the teller pauses several times, emphasizing transition relevance places.³ Based upon the response to the student's utterance in line 20, each of the pauses could be viewed as offers by the teller for any other-initiations of repair. It does not appear to be the case that the speaker withheld further explanations until she received some kind of continuer (although supportive nonverbal activity could have taken place). However, as Schegloff (1981) suggested, it may be the case that "the immediately preceding talk may be such as to invite some sort of 'reaction'" (p. 85).

18 security number (1.) that will be your

19 ie: de number (1.)

> 20 S: oh[::

21 D: [Then if you dont have so many numbers

22 hhh to remember (1.) see (.5) its a good

Schegloff (1981) identified two types of continuers (such as "uhuh"), those that are used as a means of passing up an opportunity to take any kind of turn, and those that are used to pass up an other-initiation of repair. In this present case, there are at least two plausible explanations for the production of the "oh" in line 20 above. First, the utterance could be understood as a receipt of the repair object offered in the previous turn. Heritage (1989) argued

that "the producer of the repair initiation [often] receipts the repair with 'oh,' thereby proposing a change of state of information and, by implication, a resolution of the trouble previously indicated" (p. 316). In this sense, the "oh" is possibly positioned at the completion of a repair.

Another plausible explanation is that the "oh" is used as a continuer that acts in the place of a full turn. In this sense, the "oh" is positioned in the middle of an extended turn. In the present interaction, the "oh" in line 20 does appear to occur at a possible completion point. Also, in this sequential environment, the length (extended sounding) of the "oh" seems to fail "to display understanding of, or respect for, an extended unit still in progress" (Schegloff, 1981, p. 82). However, through the use of interruption, the speaker of the extended informing cuts short the "oh" expressing surprise (change-of-state), and thus acts upon the "oh" as a continuer.

In line 23, the director begins the second part of the extended informing, that of recommending a specific course of action--that the student should wait to get his Social Security number. Then in line 28, the director offers a preliminary to preliminaries. According to Schegloff (1980), preliminaries to preliminaries, or pre-pre's, "serve to exempt what directly follows them from being treated as 'produced in its own right.' They make room for, and mark,

- 35 (1.) okay so if you get a social security
 36 card now. the back will say: can (.5) not
 37 (.5) work=
- > 38 S: =oh[::
- > 39 D: [okay (1.) if you wait until you are a
 40 university student (1.) you can work a
 41 liddl: (.5) S[o

The continuers "ya" and "uhuh" in lines 31 and 33 are used at possible TRPs to express agreement that an extended turn is taking place, and are receipted as such by the director. We can once again note the smoothness with which these utterances are offered and responded to, i.e., demonstrations of interactive competence. The utterance in line 38, "oh," can be understood as working in a similar way to the "oh" uttered in line 20 previously analyzed. Namely, the utterance is offered as a change-of-state token acted upon as a continuer.

- 36 card now. the back will say: can (.5) not
 37 (.5) work=
- > 38 S: =oh[::
- > 39 D: [okay (1.) if you wait until you are a

Final Repair Sequence in Place of Agreement

The point of the second portion of the extended telling that began in line 23 with "what I would do" is offered in lines 48 through 50--"if you go to OSU with a Social

Security card (that) says 'can not work' then you never can." This is followed by a significant pause, perhaps in an attempt to invoke some kind of response, which it does not. What does this withholding of a response, markedly different than the indications of understanding offered earlier, suggest for the director? Following this pause, the speaker adds a final step to the story (and one could argue to the entire topic): "so (.5) I would wait." Here, the "so" works (or is apparently intended) to summarize or focus the previous extended informing. In other words, it does the work (or has the potential to do the work) of a more elaborate phrase like "because all that I have said to you is true, my advice to you regarding Social Security numbers in general, and your acquiring one for yourself in particular is as follows."

What does follow is not what one would expect from a recipient who had asked the question to begin the informing, corrected the initial answer, and provided tokens of agreement throughout the telling. In some sense, "So, I would wait" is an invitation to a specific course of future action, and thus solicits a decision. Perhaps the student is aware of the decisive nature of the utterance that should fill this slot (that is, the range of responses is constrained by the prior utterance that works as a final step). The offer or invitation is neither accepted nor

rejected. Rather, the three part other-initiation of repair unfolds, casting doubt on the claims of agreement/understanding (each "oh" and other continuers) and the very authenticity of the utterance-by-utterance smoothness displayed in the entire discourse episode:

- 51 (1.) so(.5) I would wait=
 > 52 S: =wah:t=
 > 53 D: =until your ya until you go up there.
 > 54 (2.)
 > 55 S: what (.5) what for?
 56 D: uncase you want to work?
 57 (1.)
 58 S: oh

In line 52, the first part of the repair initiation takes the form of a partial completion of the just prior utterance and immediately follows the utterance. So, the students utterance of "wait" (pronounced awkwardly) is acted upon by the director (also immediately) as a repair initiation of the sense of what to wait for (line 53). The second part of the repair initiation, the pause, occurs in the sequential position represented by line 54. The extended pause follows an unsuccessful repair initiation. That is, the student's utterance "wah:t" fails to accurately locate the trouble source. The pause then occupies the position where receipt object of repair would occur if

indeed a successful repair was offered. Since the repair attempt is met with silence (clearly a dispreferred response), the failure of that repair should be obvious to its producer.

Since a self-initiated repair (of the attempted repair) is not offered by the director, a third and stronger part of the repair sequence occurs in line 55. This question, "what, what for?" demonstrates a confusion regarding the reason why a student should wait to get a Social Security number until they enter a University. The reason is found in the sense of the previous extended informing in lines 23 through 50, i.e., most of the discourse episode. And so, the question "what for?" casts doubt on whether the student understood the sense of this informing.

The repair in line 56 is followed by a pause, perhaps invoking or allowing for another repair initiation or receipt of the repair. Then in line 58, the student accepts the repair, though with a weak agreement, the shortened, softer "oh" which is not a clear acceptance of the advice to wait. And so, it is not clear whether this repair too was successful. The director's response in line 56 is delivered in such a way to indicate confusion and/or frustration. While the content of the utterance "uncase you want to work?" is not a question, the question mark indicates the rise in tone at the end of that utterance, apparently

offering the sense that this information should be obvious at this point.

Threats to the Special Expectation and Obligingness

The Director's apparent confusion/frustration, and the student's final weak receipt of repair and change-of-state token form, can be understood in terms of the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency and the moral requirement of obligingness. Specifically, the indications of understanding that accompanied the apparent interactive competence of the episode worked to enact and maintain the wisdom of this special expectation. Ironically, those same indications of understanding, when shown to be merely demonstrations of gratuitous concurrence, cast doubt on this expectation. But we also need to consider the impact of the moral requirement of obligingness.

For the native English speaker, their obliging to the problems that linguistic deficiency cause and may cause, is threatened, but not abandoned. Rather, the obligingness required for the continuation of this particular conversation is broadened. That is, the obligingness offered by the director toward the assumed knowledge and demonstrations of linguistic deficiency, e.g., the awkwardness of some phrases, is proven to be, perhaps, in vain. Yet, the moral requirement to overlook even this immediate problem of apparent linguistic deficiency (which

in this case seems to be revealed through the display of mere interactive competence), is needed to salvage the interaction.

The non-native English speaker's obliging to problems that his linguistic and or the native English speaker's "deficiency" cause or may cause, is revealed as and through the indications of understanding. The native speaker's obliging (the linguistic deficiency of the non-native speaker) also requires the temporary abandonment of the belief that linguistic deficiency also means the lack of understanding. Thus, the native speaker's obliging of the linguistic deficiency and potential lack of understanding is exactly lined up with the non-native speaker's obliging (offering understanding in spite of linguistic and "understanding" deficiency).

Both sorts of obliging are moral requirements in the interactions at the language school, and both are tied to the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency in a reciprocal way. Specifically, the display of interactive competence is usually accompanied by the display of (and always by the assumed knowledge of at least some) linguistic deficiency, which constitutes interactive competence in spite of linguistic deficiency. The moral requirement of obligingness demands that both the native and non-native English speaker enter each interaction

with the expectation of interactive competence, and maintain the fruitfulness of doing so if the wisdom of doing so is threatened.

Summary

If the extended telling was delivered as a monologue, the confusion over the sense of why a student should wait to get a Social Security number would not be as disturbing as what developed in the present case study. It is puzzling precisely because the final sequence of utterances contradict the apparent cooperative sense-making that the participants engaged in throughout the interaction. The utterances of agreement (change-of-state tokens) seem to be feigned or incorrect upon reflection. Also, the form of the extended telling seems to exhibit a speaker style that is perhaps too quick in response to the "oh"s, too eager to add additional information, or perhaps constraining the non-native speaker's choices too narrowly.

In any case, the use of conversation analysis allows researchers to pin-point exactly how native/non-native language conversations are achieved in spite of language/cultural barriers. CA is able to do this because the conversational devices for interactive competence are apparently available to both native and non-native English speakers. It may also be the case that these same devices become the focus of events, over cultural and linguistic

"problems," providing the way to cooperatively be communicatively competent.

In the next chapters, we will examine in what ways and in what diverse kinds of interactions the expectation-of-interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency are central dimensions of the communicative activities at the language school. Specifically, we will examine the range of pedagogical and non-pedagogical activities members of the language school find themselves in. We will probe the morally sanctionable character of this special expectation exhibited in deviant behaviors and in the defense of deviant behaviors. We will also reflect further on the recognizable, accountable nature of the special expectation in both the articulation of it, as well as the seeming lack of awareness of it. The constant friction between obliging, teaching or learning English, and achieving actual comprehension will also be addressed. This is at once a battle between the three, and a necessary cooperation--a negotiation that must be, can only be, worked out in cooperative interaction.

Chapter Endnotes

1. Dr. Eric Kramer noted that the idea of obligingness and the accompanying analysis provides evidence for an orientation to the "other" as presented by Martin Buber (1970), and Emmanuel Levinas (1961, and 1987). While beyond the scope of the present argument, the relationship between interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency and these seminal works is important and needs to be explored.

2. There is a paradoxical aspect to the priority given to interactive competence. Mere interactive competence often clearly displays what it hopes to hide—the lack of actual understanding and linguistic incompetence. "Actual understanding," for the purposes here, refers to that state in which a close to full comprehension of what the other(s) in the interaction is saying or trying to "get across." Given the allusion here to the idea of intersubjectivity, and the complexity with which any discussion of "understanding" demands, our definition is grossly inadequate, and a more adequate discussion is beyond the scope of this study (See Garfinkel, 1967; Gurwitsch, 1964), and Husserl, 1954/1970 for elaborate descriptions). However, we can make use of the common sense distinction between "really understanding" a good deal of what someone is saying, and not understanding much at all, but still proceeding through the interaction as if the other's utterances were comprehended. Both sorts of interactions are cooperatively accomplished by virtue of interactive competence.

A further justification for this common sense distinction is the reference made to actual understanding and "gratuitous concurrence" by Liberman (1995) and both native and non-native language speakers at the language school making reference to those things as well. We can also delineate our use of the term "linguistic competence" as the assumed and interactively displayed fluency in the language(s) used in an interaction. It should be clear that when linguistic competence is used in this study, we are not referring to a "book knowledge" of a language, but a fluency in use. We run the risk here of trading one ambiguous concept, "linguistic competence," for another, "fluency." Riegenbach (1991), in attempting to remedy the lack of a precise definition of fluency, completed a quantitative analysis and offered some tentative descriptions. Hesitation or unfilled pauses, rate of speech, and to a lesser extent restarts were linked to subjects perceived as more or less fluent. Her study suggested that "fluency is a complex, high-order linguistic phenomena and that intuitive judgments about fluency level—such as those made by raters

for this study--may take into account a wide range of linguistic phenomena" (p. 423).

We can also juxtapose linguistic competence to the concept of "linguistic deficiency" which is defined here as the assumed and interactively displayed lack of fluency in the language(s) used in an interaction. Both linguistic competence and deficiency are logically weighed in degrees, and not in either-or terms.

3. More could be made of the teller's use of pauses., Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) describe the envoking of and switching of the "ownership" of pauses. In the case above, the director does seem to present the student with a pause "time" as something he should do something with, and then she quickly reclaims it turning turning his utterance into a continuer.

Chapter 4

Communicative Competence and Intra- and Inter-lingual
Discourse Situations at the Language School

We can make note of three important features of interactive competence as it is displayed and assessed in the social interactions at the language school. First, we can make a distinction between the kind of "communicative competence" members of any speech community are oriented toward and viewed as making efforts to display, and the special kind of interactive competence which necessarily includes an ear toward assumed and displayed linguistic (in)competence at the language school. In making this delineation, we should also point out the ways in which both interactive competence and linguistic competence are part of a Hymesian conceptualization of "communicative competence."

Hymes' (1972) conceptualization of communicative competence, which is inclusive of both specific social and linguistic constraints, represents a remedy to the problem of a purely grammatical or structural (linguistic) approach to understanding the appropriate and effective use of language. Any deemed "competent" social activity in a given speech community that involves the use of language, quite obviously includes both a linguistic element as well as a social interactive dimension. In that sense then, our conceptualization of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-

linguistic-deficiency could be considered as fitting into the category of "communicative competence" (i.e., a specific sort of competence members are expected to know and practice). From an ethnography of communication perspective, what counts as "communicatively competent" social activity varies from speech community to speech community. In our investigation, at least one kind of communicative competence takes the form of displaying and affording others a good chance at interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency.

Second, efforts at displaying interactive competence (which is inclusive of affording others a good chance at it also) is a morally sanctionable activity. That is, the rightness and goodness of these efforts are issues of value for the members of the language school. Given this moral dimension of social activity, and the visibility and public nature of most interactions at the language school, we can observe a pressing and constant orientation toward displaying and assessing interactive competence.

Finally, the constraints of displaying and assessing interactive competence, as well as being obliging to problems caused by linguistic deficiency, can be shown to be "at work," as a set of social rules used but rarely talked about by the members, in the general intra- and interlingual "discourse situations," and in the specific daily

interlingual social encounters outlined in the next chapter. I also argue that this concern with competence in interlingual encounters is somewhat mirrored in the efforts made by students to speak their native language with fellow non-native English speakers. Both of those concerns are discussed in the following pages.

A categorical scheme based on the native language status of both interactants and the actual language used will provide a sketch of some of the communicative constraints and accompanying situations members of the language school find themselves oriented toward. This chapter will be followed by a description of specific interlingual social encounters and how the participants produce and manage the, at times, conflicting demands of interactive and linguistic competence.

The Language School as a Special Kind of Speech Community

According to Gumperz' (1972):

To the extent that speakers share knowledge of the communicative constraints and options governing a significant number of social situations, they can be said to be members of the same speech community. Since such shared knowledge depends on intensity of contact and communication networks, speech community boundaries tend to coincide with wider social units, such as countries, tribes, religious or ethnic groupings. But

this relationship is by no means a one to one relationship... The existence of shared values and of regular communication patterns requires empirical investigation. (p. 16)

There are a significant number of social situations at the language school that are governed by observable communicative constraints. The range of daily activities that are available to the members of the language school is narrow. These activities are limited by the constraints of traditional educational structure (i.e., schedule of classes and breaks throughout the day), the physical setting, and the social/linguistic restraints enacted by the members.

Some social situations appear to be more constrained than others. That is, the range of appropriate behaviors is more narrow in some social interactions than others. Nonetheless, communicative constraints, at least partly unique to this place and its participants, are at work.

Virtually all of the social interactions that the members participate in throughout the day at the language school are visible to other members. That is, most of the social activities are also public activities. While the "causes," such as the "hard" architecture (i.e., the placement and size of rooms, doors and windows), the "soft" design, arrangement and assignment of rooms, and traffic flow (which can be considered both as an influence as well

as a consequence), are briefly considered, our primary interest lies in the directly observable way in which these physical dimensions influence and allow for certain social behaviors. For example, it is apparent that most of the time, students are able to hear other languages being spoken. Complete isolation or privacy is difficult and infrequently achieved (although apparently desirable). Consequently, the speaking of various languages and English as a second language is somewhat of a spectacle—a phenomena that members, new students especially, watch with some amazement. All of these "facts" about the physical environment are viewed as providing for the virtually constant awareness that the student, whether sitting alone or talking with others, is in view for others, often within hearing distance. The English speaking teachers and staff also experience similar circumstances, but with much more recourse for privacy (e.g., to retreat to semi-private offices). Of course, these arrangements and "consequences" are typical of many public and private schools.

Goffman (1963) describes two distinctive features of face-to-face interaction: the embodied transmission of information and the simultaneous receiving and giving of information. This second feature, although more narrowly applicable to interaction in which participants are in each other's immediate (literally face-to-face) presence, also

provides explanation for the less direct interaction that may occur between people that are in the same room but not exactly engaged in an interaction.

Each individual can see that he is being experienced in some way, and he will guide at least some of his conduct according to the perceived identity and initial response of his audience. Further, he can be seen to be seeing this, and can see that he has been seen seeing this. (p. 16).

For various reasons, members of the language school, students during breaks and at lunch in the "lunchroom" in particular, are in view of, and view others, and yet maintain relatively consistent patterns of segregation. The following is an example that may illustrate the recognizableness of this group differentiation, and the deference paid to it. One day at lunch, an Arab student approached a table that included mostly Japanese speaking students that could have had the appearance of an exclusively Japanese speaking group. The first words he said, and virtually the only thing he said for the next several minutes, was "Everyone from Japan?" asking for permission to join them. Several in the group quickly answered "No!" and waived for him to sit with them.

While patterned opportunities for observing and being observed alone do not necessarily constitute a speech

community, the publicness of much activity at the language school does have special consequences for all members. This is especially true when considering English (displaying and assessing interactive competence in English) as the central feature of many activities. The publicness of virtually constant displays of interactive competence provides for the constraints that members adhere to. Those constraints are explained here in terms of the patterned interactions displayed in intra- and inter-lingual discourse situations, the social roles of "teacher" and "learner," and in the next chapter, the achievements of participants in the specific inter-lingual daily encounters. Each discourse situation shares a common feature in that virtually all social activity is influenced by the rules regulating the use of English by the non-native speakers.

Official and Unofficial Rules Regulating the Use of English

Each student is presented with an orientation packet which includes a discussion of the "Keys to Success at ____." Those keys are participation, attendance, tests, homework, and speaking English. Also in the orientation packet, the importance of speaking English is explained this way:

The Level Advancement Test counts as one number in your final Grade Point Average. It is important to score well on this test. The best way to prepare for the test is to use English all the time. Read newspapers,

watch television, listen to the radio and above all speak English with your friends and teachers as much as possible.

Whether the students read this carefully (or listen to the presentation of the "keys") and take it seriously or not, it is apparent that most, if not all, believe that this is an important activity for their success at the language school. This belief is both expressed and apparent in their behaviors. It is also a source of some anxiety, particularly manifested when the students are confronted with their avoidance of speaking English. It is interesting to note here that virtually the only time not speaking English is absolutely permissible is when a student offers a brief translation for another student, when talking to a native English speaker.

The official and unofficial rules regulating when students should speak English present a paradox for students, teachers and staff. Simply, the official, written, and verbally enforced at times, rule is that the students must speak English at all times, or "whenever possible." Yet, for various reasons created and maintained by the students, speaking English when speaking to a fellow non-native language speaker is strictly prohibited and morally sanctionable. The contradictory rules regulating the use of English are valued, and must be managed by the

members (faculty/staff and students) in equally conciliatory ways, both being followed or allowed, while not disavowing the other. To an extent, the rule regarding the use of English at all times is required in order for the rule to not speak English with fellow non-native speakers to have force or importance. And clearly the rule for speaking English at all times is prompted and renewed and mentioned precisely because the need (rule) for not doing it is prevalent. There does seem to be a recognition on either sides of this issue that both rules are needed and justified. Here is the paradox: Despite knowing and espousing that speaking English is good and fulfills their purpose for being there, it is nonetheless prohibited in many circumstances.

And there is another way in which the use of English produces a quandary apparently felt by the students and obvious to an observer. Using their native language to get help from a fellow non-native speaker, or using an example that a fellow non-native speaker would understand and get (and thus help or extend something being discussed in class) is discouraged, at least at times, by the teachers or native English speakers playing the "teacher."

For example, during my observation of one class's activities, students were instructed to work on a writing assignment in groups at their desks. Three Japanese

students that were working together, began to apparently seek and offer help from each other in Japanese, and were quickly and quietly discouraged from speaking Japanese with a barely audible utterance "in English please." The students quickly stopped talking in Japanese, and very quietly seemed to utter a few things in English. Shortly after, the teacher left the room briefly. As soon as the door closed behind her, those same students began speaking Japanese relatively loudly and quite freely, apparently about the assignment, and promptly ceased when the teacher returned.

In another class, five students were engaged in a discussion about the teacher living alone, which led to a discussion of the use of the word "lonely." One Arabic speaking student began singing an Arabic song having something to do with loneliness to another Arabic speaking student. In the transcript below, "S3" and "S1" are the Arabic speaking students. "B" is the non-Arabic, native English speaking teacher. The teacher's corrections, in lines 3 and 5, although marked as "dramatic," are not apparently said in anger.

(Conv. 4)

- 1 S3: (Whatyan be wahon) (singing)
- 2 (2.0)
- 3 B: Thats not English (dramatically)

- 4 S3: hhh the song
- 5 B: I dont care (dramatically) (1.1) I cant understand
it (said quickly)
- 6 S1: Lo:nly:
- 7 S3: he sai:d (1.0) [()]
- 8 B: [are there lots ov lo:nly songs in
English too you [could be singing
- 9 S3: [(I dot agin) I know
- 10 S1: lownly
- 11 S3: Thisa he said
- 12 S1: how do you feel (1.0) lownly
- 13 S3: So[an then I tell call you

(See Appendix B for transcription of the entire conversation segment). Note in line 4, the student's defense of singing the song in Arabic as including laughter "hhh" and pointing out the obvious, that it was a song. It seems that this open breech of the official rule of speaking English at all times would be clearly permissible. Indeed, the addition of a cultural performance as an application of the topic of loneliness could have added to the discussion. It is fair to speculate that the teacher may have been justified if her experiences with this student gave her the impression that he spoke Arabic too often, or just instead of English, and not to add to the discussion with cultural performance.

Whatever the reason, the official rule was invoked, and maintained by the teacher and eventually the student.

The teacher's response, line 5, to the student's defense clearly rejects any reason that the student might be implying (e.g., it is an Arabic song that must be sung in Arabic). Again, in line 7, the student may be offering another defense. If indeed it was accepted as a defense by the teacher, her utterance in line 8 constitutes another rejection. It is also possible that the teacher's utterance in line 8 is an attempt at her own defense, of invoking the speak English only rule. Then in line 9 the student apparently offers some sort of agreement "I dot agin I know." Perhaps he meant to say "I won't do it again" or some similar utterance. In any case, the matter seems to be dropped, and the teacher turns to responding to what the other student (S1) was saying.

We can see from this second example of the speak-English-only rule being invoked, both the defense of momentarily breaking the rule, and a move toward defending the rule, by both student and teacher. The conversation also holds clues to the unofficial rule pertaining to when students should not speak English, but their native language. When we examine these contradictory rules, we can better appreciate the quandary the contradiction in rules presents, for both student and "teacher." Specifically, we

can observe that the Arabic speaking student (S3) is singing the song "to" the other Arabic speaking student (S1). This is evident in the entire recorded conversation. Both students made comments referring to the song before one of them began singing it.

The fact that the student was singing it to the other is also evident in that there was no other designated hearer (i.e., no one requested or agreed to an offer of a singing of a song). In this sense, the song was "meant for" the two (or possibly) three Arabic speaking students in the class, as a cultural performance relevant to the topic of loneliness. Thus, the singing of the song in English would have made no sense or perhaps would have been offensive to those Arabic speaking students. It was a reference to a cultural performance. Also, the ability to translate the song to English, keeping even some semblance of rhythm, rhyme, etc., seems unlikely, for a less than fluent bilingual. The later reason, inability to effectively translate, would also help explain why the Japanese students in the previous example could only effectively seek the help of their peers in Japanese.

More examples of the specific constraints relevant to speaking or not speaking English will be presented in the discussion of the intra- and inter-lingual discourse situations below. However, at this point we can offer an

outline of the nature of the constraints regarding not speaking English.

There are those "purely functional" constraints that prohibit the use of English when speaking with a fellow non-native English speaker or same native language (SNL) student. According to many of the students interviewed, and confirmed by my own observations as far as they would take me, there are topics of conversations that cannot be translated into English by the participants because they do not know the English equivalents. The participants simply do not have the linguistic knowledge or ability to talk about given topics in English.

Less obvious, and perhaps more forceful constraints also operate. In interviews, students' offered responses such as "it is impossible" to speak English to a fellow Japanese or Spanish speaking student. In the case of at least two Spanish speaking students, this impossibility forced them to make a secret pact to only speak English with each other, while maintaining the unofficial rule of speaking Spanish with other Spanish speakers. These pressures could be categorized as "social" constraints. As such, the rewards and punishments for maintaining or threatening the goodness of these constraints are social as well.

The rewards seem straightforward. That is, as indicated by students' responses to questions regarding speaking English (or not) with fellow same language speakers, and observations of numerous encounters, speaking the non-English native language provides a sense of group identity or esprit de corp. There is an immediate impression of camaraderie when these non-English encounters are viewed in comparison to quieter, slower, and at least somewhat strained English speaking encounters. We can begin to clarify this bonding as determined more directly by language use than by cultural background or prior history of friendship. That is, in most cases observed, the "Spanish speaking" or "Japanese speaking" or "Arabic speaking" student groups consist of students from various countries, and likely "cultures," and few knew each prior to arriving at the language school. In fact, in several cases, the students in a group were accustomed to specific, different dialects. Of course, their assumed group identity is likely to be a consequence of other dimensions of their activities as well. Nonetheless, speaking the non-English native language is clearly expected, and in so doing, the students appear to bond with others, in both serious and "fun" discussions.

Because the constraint of not speaking English with fellow same native language (non-English) speakers is rarely

violated for an extended period of time, examples of negative consequences are few. The following instance, however, does illustrate the seriousness of a maintained violation. My wife and I had the opportunity to be host parents to two students, at different times, of the language school. One of the students, "Sue" from Venezuela, lived with us for nine months. Sue quite obviously took her studies at the language school very seriously. During at least a several week period at one point during her stay, Sue related to my wife and me her genuine angst about other Spanish speakers at the school being upset with her because she would only speak English when interacting with them, even outside of the classroom. It was clear through many conversations with Sue, that her fellow Spanish speaking students were quite perturbed, and seemed to threaten to exclude Sue from the group. In her defense, she reminded them, and me, that it was an official rule, and that by following the rule, she was doing quite well in her studies. Interestingly, the solution to the problem seemed to be the other students overlooking her insistence about speaking English. In any case, her friendship with others was seriously threatened, but seemed to be maintained despite her behavior.

Through observations, as well as discussion with the teachers and staff at the language school, the validity of

these unofficial, but recognized, constraints against speaking English, is not in doubt. Nevertheless, there were many examples of attempts to remind, and usually not really enforce, the speak-English-only rule.

A complete exploration of why and when English is not spoken, is needed, but not necessary for our purposes. We can view the rules regarding English use as reinforcing the importance of competent language use. This is the case in non-English interactions (where the use of the native language allows for a different sort of interactive competence, that which is not threatened by linguistic deficiency), and in inter-lingual interactions in English in which the assessment of the student's commitment to learning to speak English, and the "teacher's" commitment to teaching English, is taking place.

A Map of Apparent Language Interaction Scenarios: Potential, Probable, and Veritable Discourse Situations

Several discourse situations (a communication event marked by specific participants and language use) can be used to organize the speaking activities of the members of the language school. Students, faculty, and administrative staff at the language school are faced with a number of distinct communication situations several times each day. A description of the distinctiveness of each of these

discourse situations, in terms of (1) time and place, (2) participants, and (3) general purposes follows.

The following categorical system is derived from ethnographic knowledge of this particular speech community. While the categories of intra- and inter-lingual situations appear logical and could be applied to other similar environments, it is important to note that the distinctiveness and recognizability of the given situations for the participants is made evident in the rules governing their behavior.

Researchers have typically distinguished between types of speaking events involving non-native/non-native speaking interactants in terms of formal or informal settings/content, or have not made any distinction. However, quite expectedly, there is a great distinction made by the students at the language school in terms of non-native speaking interactants who share a common native language and non-native speaking interactants who do not. The distinction is significant for the students, not only in terms of the effect on the structure or content of conversation, but rather, as we mentioned above and shall see later, in terms of how they manage their linguistic group identities.

Speaking English with students with a different native language.

Apart from the classroom, students at the language school are faced with several discourse situations involving other non-native speakers that speak a different native language. The options available to these students are either to speak English (or perhaps another language they share some knowledge of, although this only occurred once during my observations), or not to speak at all.

Interestingly, many students expressed the desirability of engaging in this type of situation, but most avoided it. All of the student informants expressed a desire to "learn English" by speaking English with other students that did not know their language, thus forcing them to converse in this language. This speaking situation, although not uncommon, was avoided by most.

Speaking English with a fellow student with a different native language (DNL students) occurred at various times during classroom discussions and when the students were observed out of the classroom but still on the premises: during the minutes before classes began in the morning, during breaks, during lunch, and after school. This discourse situation occurred in the lounge area (an area about 80 feet by 40 feet encircled by 9 classrooms, the door to the teachers' lounge, and a hallway leading to the

offices of the director, the administrative assistant, and the financial administrator), and downstairs in the parking lot. Interestingly, during my observations, I never witnessed DNL students interacting with each other in the office area. Perhaps being in earshot of English native language speakers during these situations was avoided.

Interactions among DNL students occurred more frequently with some of the students at the language school, and almost not at all with others. In other words, there seemed to be a few students that spent most of their non-classroom time speaking to other students that did not speak their native language. These students wandered around the lunch area going from table to table, or were joined by other students that did not speak their native language. However, these students were the exception, and noticed for it by others. The staff members seemed to categorize these students as socially dynamic, referring to present and past cases. Most of the students interacted with DNL students occasionally, and their conversations were usually confined to greetings or very brief exchanges.

Interactions among DNL students were often marked by laughter. This perhaps is a characteristic of most exchanges in the lounge during much of lunch or breaks. The student lounge typically buzzes with loud talking, laughing, and music played on a portable stereo. As one staff member

remarked while leaving the lounge area as the students returned to their classrooms, the breaks are often "a wild ten minutes." Their exchanges are also characterized by the almost continual use of facial and hand gestures used to supplement their verbal exchanges. In the classroom interactions observed, and reported on by teachers and students, there are a number of occasions when speaking to a DNL student is necessary and encouraged. Both classroom and outside-of-classroom inter-lingual conversations between DNL students will be addressed later in more detail in chapter 5.

Speaking English with DNL students is clearly multifunctional. The students often complete assignments together at school either in class, at breaks before, during, or after school. In these situations and others like them, the students converse in English in order to give and gain practical information. Yet, there is a more fundamental accomplishment--fulfilling their requirement, self- or other-imposed, to learn to speak English. We can contrast this activity to the most infrequently occurring discourse situation that the students participate in, speaking their native language with fellow students who speak the same language.

Speaking English with fellow students with the same native language.

English spoken between students of the same native language (SNL students) is the least frequently occurring discourse situation at the language school. This rarely occurs anywhere at the language school, but can occur anywhere or at anytime.

The use of English by two or more students who speak the same native language does not seem to be restricted in terms of the number of SNL participants. Rather, the two most important constraints are (1) the presence of a native English speaker or DNL student, coupled with (2) the task or purpose of the exchange.

The native English speaker (either a teacher or staff member) does not necessarily need to be participating in the conversation in order to require the use of English by SNL students. However, the mere presence of a teacher or staff member within earshot seems to trigger the awareness of the need (or realization of the requirement) to "speak English all the time." Even my presence near a table during lunch or breaks seemed to encourage the occasional use of English, when, perhaps, it would not have occurred otherwise, and did not occur at other tables farther away. It is important to note that although the presence of a native English speaker

can trigger the use of English, it does not necessarily do so.

The use of English (or the speaking of a language other than English) by SNL students is less restricted by the presence of a DNL student. The reason seems to be clear, fellow DNL students have little power to perform sanctions against fellow students, unlike same native language students that are a part of the student's group. An example may help make this point more obvious. One new student, who began classes only a few days prior, entered the language school, and the at least somewhat established student community. During lunch of the second day, a "new" Korean male and several Spanish speaking males found themselves sitting together. Initially and only briefly, the Spanish speakers included the Korean male in their lunch time conversation asking him about where he was from. Soon after these initial and difficult exchanges, the Korean student was effectively cut out from the group when the students began speaking only in Spanish, and obviously only to each other for extended periods of time. Perhaps recognizing the awkwardness of the situation, one of the Spanish speakers called to a female Korean student to come and talk to the student. All the students involved in this episode expressed an apparent willingness to segregate themselves in terms of language and not to converse in a shared language.

This episode also points toward the keen awareness and interest in who speaks what language (and where they are from) illustrated in their ability and willingness in quickly matching up newcomers with a fellow native language speaker.

So, if there is a native English speaker or DNL student present, the use of English can be initiated, but often is restricted to greetings, or a brief exchange made for the benefit of the native English speaker or DNL student. There are numerous examples of SNL students using English to fulfill the "speaking English all the time" rule, and then quickly reverting back to their native language, and fulfilling the unofficial rule--that of speaking your native language whenever possible with a SNL student. In one case, a Spanish student approached a table occupied by four other Spanish speakers, and one native English speaking faculty member. As the student neared the table, he greeted the whole table, and quite apparently the teacher also, with "good morning" and went past the table to place something in the student refrigerator located twenty feet away. In less than a minute, the faculty member left, and the student returned from the refrigerator and re-greeted the SNL students in Spanish, followed by a brief conversation in Spanish. This example also illustrates that the content or complexity of English spoken between SNL students is often

limited to greetings or brief exchanges given for the benefit of native English speakers or DNL students, and in perhaps in some cases for the benefit of learning English.

Although there was a sense of guilt expressed by the students during interviews, the infrequent use of English by SNL students is understandable when considering the structure of the speaking environment. More specifically, during breaks and lunch, the students and faculty/staff have effectively segmented their time and place in such a way as to create an established exception to the rule or "key to success" of speaking English all the time. During breaks and especially the lunch hour, the break/lunch room is obviously avoided by the staff and faculty. The faculty isolate themselves to their office/break room with the use of a closed door and a sign that reads "Knock Before Entering and Wait Until Someone Comes to the Door" hand written in red lettering. While the students knowledge of privacy rules is obviously doubted by the teachers, their reading comprehension is not. Only one student was observed entering this area during the entire study. Also, the door to the hallway to the staff offices is often closed, although no sign exists on that door restricting entrance. Furthermore, if a staff or faculty member must enter the break area during breaks or lunch, they rarely interact with the students, and clearly present themselves performing some

necessary task, such as buying a soft drink or looking for a specific student, and then quickly leave.

Gumperz (1971) pointed out, a "change in language may change the setting" (p. 314). This seems to apply to the transformation of the lunch room area from a place where learning English is accomplished, to a place where students can relax from that goal. The students displayed certain behaviors that clearly mark this time and place as an exception to the rule of speaking English all the time. For example, the use of a portable stereo at somewhat loud volumes, loud laughing and talking, and the almost exclusive use of the back stairs or student entrance during lunch and breaks. With few exceptions, lunch is always eaten with SNL students in the same location, that is, at the same table day after day.

Considering the various ways in which these times and these places are segmented, it is understandable that the participants can, and feel that they should, speak their native language with fellow students. For several weeks during my observations, three students did not share a common language other than English with any other students. That these students acted misplaced was obvious. One, a French speaking African, seemed to join groups with greater ease, although not speaking much in the encounters. The second, an Arabic speaker, clearly did not know quite what

to do with himself, sitting alone, making brief comments to other students passing by, and watching others converse in their native language. The third, a Russian speaking female student who often listened to Russian music with headphones, spoke with me about this "problem." Briefly, she recognized that she was the only student, at this time, that could not speak her native language, expressed a sincere sadness, and mentioned that she liked to listen to her Russian music.

Native Language/native language interactions (among SNL students).

The preference for this sort of homogeneity has been identified by researchers in the past. Cohen and Manion (1983) summarized much of this research by stating that "as many of our schools, particularly those in urban conurbations, have become increasingly ethnically mixed, research suggests that racial homogeneity has become a salient characteristic of the composition of peer groups within these institutions" (p. 100). The language school is clearly ethnically mixed, and the students clearly exhibit a similar sort of peer group composition. However, as mentioned earlier, the peer group composition seemed to be determined more by linguistic similarity (not exact sameness) than any other factor.

Student responses to questions about their almost exclusive use of their native language with SNL students may

serve here to further elaborate the nature of this speaking activity. Clearly, there may be several functions served in the varied conversations involving any number of SNL students speaking their native language. The purpose here is not to identify each of these, rather it is to identify this discourse situation as a distinct discourse choice regulated by patterned interactions.

I asked a Chinese student what he thought of SNL students who did not speak English during breaks and lunch. He initially responded by saying that was "not good" and that they should speak English. The same student was then asked when he thought it was inappropriate to speak English with SNL students. He answered that at a friend's house (presumably a non-native English speaking friend), or at lunch at the language school, English should not be spoken. This is an expressed contradiction that many students at the language school deal with each day. In fact, every student responded essentially the same way as the Chinese student did to my observation that almost no one spoke English during lunch--that it was "not good."

A Colombian student was asked why he thought so many spoke their native language instead of the expressed preferred English language during breaks and lunch. He responded by saying "it is impossible for me to speak English with my (Spanish speaking) friends." Similarly,

other students expressed the heartfelt "impossibility" of speaking English with SNL students. One student said that he intentionally avoided SNL students so that he would be forced into discourse situations that required the use of English.

There was also another common response to the question of why so many speak their native language instead of English--that it was "relaxing" or "comfortable." Perhaps as a result of, or as a sign of this comfortableness, the native language interactions among SNL students are typically characterized by an increase in rate, loudness, and emotional indicators in comparison to non-native speaker/native speaker interactions. Also characteristic of this discourse situation is that it often occurs in groups of more than two interactants.

The interaction can be understood as involving the displaying or presentation of self as one knowing the given language to a degree that allows that speaker (and often the "knowing" conversational partner) to use the language with little or no effort. In the context of the language school, language fluency becomes markedly significant in terms of ethnic, cultural, or linguistic identity. This significance is obvious by way of contrast to interactions that lack the qualities of fluency, which we can identify as all other inter-lingual interactions involving some significant level

of linguistic deficiency. These observations and also the comments made by more fluent participants at the language school, can be added to the descriptions made by other researchers of similar interactions as further evidence for the importance of native/native language interactions.

Hansell and Ajirotutu (1982) investigated the negotiation of interpretations in interethnic conversations and argued that "mutual intelligibility is not solely contingent upon a shared language base but also upon shared discourse features" such as "contextualization cues" (p. 93). These cues "signal preferred interpretation of a speaker's utterance through the process of conversational inference" (p. 93). Even though the SNL speakers at the language school may use somewhat different dialects (and thus may not share the same exactness or complexity of contextual cues as same dialect native speakers), these interactions still reinforce the participants social identity as (for example) a "Japanese learning English." "Social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language" (Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz, 1982, p. 7). I would argue that it is precisely because the students at the language school are asked to "speak English all the time," their social knowledge and identities communicated through their native language are threatened

and thus need to be reconfirmed through native language discourse.

Not only do the students prefer discourse situations in which their native language is used exclusively, but it seems evident that the faculty and staff also prefer similar speaking situations. Native language conversations involving various languages at the language school should be more thoroughly analyzed in a effort to bolster the observations made here.

Goffman's (1963) discussion of the rules of exclusion can also be of help here. In terms of the teachers office area being off-limits to students, or the lounge area during lunch being off-limits to teachers and staff, the following applies.

It is plain that the individual's mere presence... communicates either that he possesses the entrance qualifications or that he is behaving improperly... Here we find one motive for either wanting to enter a particular place or wanting not to be seen in it (p. 10).

The "categories of persons," (Goffman, 1963), seem to be assigned by virtue of title or official status for the most part (e. g., teachers and staff in office areas, and students in lounge areas during certain times). However, new faculty often do not feel like they "fit in" to the

teachers office area, and consequently spend time with students in the lounge area or outside during times they "should be" in the teachers office area. And some teachers, usually these same newer teachers, are genuinely welcomed in the smoking area in the parking lot. But, students are apparently not welcomed in the teacher office area.

Non-native speaker/native speaker interactions.

Interactions between students and teachers at the language school are confined to the classroom almost exclusively with occasional exchanges before classes and during breaks. As mentioned earlier, students and faculty go to lengths to isolate their expected times of interaction to the classroom. Most interactions, outside of the classroom during school hours, that occur between students and native English speakers involve the administrative staff which include the director, financial assistant, and administrative assistant or office manager. Of these three, the office manager clearly interacts the most frequently with the students. All of the staff's interactions with the students vary in terms of how many students interact and for what purposes. It was very common for two or more SNL students to approach the office manager together, although only one might actually interact or have the need for the office manager to perform some task, such as retrieve a message or sell postage stamps. In contrast, two or more

DNL students were never observed approaching any of the staff together.

Both students and the staff expressed evaluations and expectations regarding their interactions. The staff often jokingly expressed their frustration with the students "not listening." For example, on a Monday after the school sponsored a trip to a local amusement park, the Director and financial assistant had a conversation about how many students did not register at the gate as being with a prearranged party, costing the students additional money. The financial assistant said to the director, "they didn't listen," and the director replied, "the story of my life." The financial assistant responded in agreement, but a thoughtful agreement, "ya (long pause) me too." The frequency of the staff's somewhat lighthearted frustration was evident in this exchange. It is important to point out that by "not listening" the staff is not referring to apparent inattentiveness displayed by the students in a meeting or even face-to-face conversation. Rather, this frustration with "not listening" stems from quite the opposite. The conversation analyzed in the previous chapter in which the student offered many change-of-state tokens and continuers that indicated to the native speaker that the student did understand and was listening quite well, illustrates this point.

Two of the staff members, "Helen" and "Tori", reported that this kind of feigned understanding occurred remarkably often at the language school. Tori explained it this way, "they are saying yes, and nodding, but their faces are blank." To understand the implications that this feigned understanding has for interactions between students and staff, it is necessary to examine the students' and staff's expectations separately. These same expectations help to formulate the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency noted earlier.

From the comments made by the staff mentioned above, it is apparent that they expect this kind of "not listening" behavior to occur "a lot." The staff work with non-native speakers on a daily basis, and one could expect that their ability to formulate expectations is important in their management of daily affairs, and that those expectations influence those same interactions. Clearly, the staff places responsibility for the students' "not listening" behaviors, and the resulting frustration, on the students. The financial assistant explained that for non essential matters or topics of conversation, the fact or perception that the students act like they are understanding, but actually do not, is not really a concern. That is, the staff are willing to "let it go," knowing that the explanation, for example, was less than successful.

However, if the topic is of a more critical nature, such as payment of fees, the staff must often go to great lengths to make sure the students understand, not accepting signs of understanding at face value. The financial assistant reported she infrequently required the assistance of a teacher to translate for the student.

The students' perceptions of these feigned understandings, and their motivations are insightful as well. Several students reported favoring one or more office staff, preferring to interact with them over others. When asked why this was true, the students suggested that some of the staff are hard to understand, that they "talk too fast." When asked how they manage the conversation when they can not understand the native speaker, they offered a description of two methods. The first, used less often, is to ask the speaker to "slow down" or "say it again" or ask for clarification some other way. The second is to act like they understand or "do nothing" as they put it. Clearly, and interestingly, the students place the responsibility for the lack of understanding on the native speaker.

Perhaps obviously so, each member, student, teacher, or staff, at the language school is keenly aware of the distinct nature of the above discourse situations. Each discourse situation occurs at specific times, places, and for unique purposes. Also, each discourse situation

requires the participants to present themselves as competent interactants and thus as competent members of the language school. In the next chapter, we will take a closer look at how interactants in specific inter-lingual encounters achieve interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, and thus display their competence at managing these interactions.

Chapter 5

Interactive Competence in Inter-lingual Encounters

Philipsen (1990) observed that for members of "Teamsterville," place, residence, or the geographical origin of interactants was of primary concern. The consistent orientation to the importance of place was brought to bear on virtually all interactions. At the language school, there is also a feature of interactions that constitutes a similar prevailing relevance for its members. In the case of many interactions at the language school, the singular most important feature of communicative activity, for the participants, is not a knowledge of others', or displaying of one's own, history. Rather, that feature is the practice of using language competently, and displaying that competence (i.e., interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency).

As discussed in the preceding chapter, both the native and non-native English speaking members of the language school recognize specific demands on their use of language, English or other languages. In the case of NS/NNS interactions, the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency facilitates and provides those settings with their distinguishing features.

Before proceeding to a description of these practices in four inter-lingual encounters at the language school, a

more general depiction of the practical circumstances faced by the interactants will be offered to highlight the central concern of interactive competence over and in spite of linguistic deficiency.

"Special Motives"¹ and Noticing the Normally Unnoticed Features of Everyday Interactions

It has been argued that members of the language school, because of the real and assumed threat that linguistic deficiency poses for the success of a given interaction and the participants' status as competent members, are strongly motivated to notice and make efforts to display interactive competence. Because of its import, preference is often given to the displaying of interactive competence over ensuring linguistic correctness or determining actual comprehension of utterances. The special attention paid to interactive competence provides an opportunity for members to notice features of these competencies that are typically "seen but unnoticed" (Garfinkel, 1967). The shift of attention from the external, intersubjective, objective, facts of the interaction (the "what" of the interaction) to "how" those same "facts" are produced by the participants has been documented elsewhere. Most relevant here are Garfinkel's (1967) discussion of the shift and Liberman's (1995) idea of an intercultural interactive competency "monitoring channel."

Working from Schutz's (1959) explication of common sense interpretations of human action, Garfinkel (1967) described the judgmental work of interactants in terms of the "common sense knowledge" that they rely on and trust that others rely on in an interaction. These "common understandings" are the "background expectancies" consisting of any "standardized," "natural facts of life" that "anyone can see" (pp. 66-75, and throughout). In an effort to describe the importance of these features of common understandings, Garfinkel (1967) conducted several "experiments" in which experienced states of affairs were strikingly incongruous with and contradictory to these background expectancies. As a result,

this judgmental work, along with its reliance upon and its reference to common sense knowledge of social structures, forced itself upon our [the observer's and the subjects'] attention . . . because our subjects had exactly their judgmental work and common sense knowledge to contend with as matters which the incongruities presented to them as practical problems (p. 71).

What is normally taken for granted (e.g., that others will stand an appropriate distance from us when interacting, or that others will be able to understand what we "mean" to say, or various other background expectancies) was suddenly

thrown in stark relief when those expectancies were violated. For example, one experiment consisted of asking subjects to stand only a few inches from an unknowing other in an ordinary conversation. Quite expectedly, the "other" participants expressed anxiety and a bewilderment about what was happening and why this was taking place (i.e., they wanted to make sense of it, but were unable to based on their normal way of making sense of things).

In another experiment, subjects were asked to question the simplest utterances of others, responding to statements such as "I had a flat tire" with "what do you mean 'you had a flat tire?'" It is important to note that these "experiments" are deceptively simple, and although not "scientific" in design, offer glimpses of dimensions of communicative activity intensely relied upon but often missed by researchers. Essentially, the incongruities presented here and in the other experiments forced the participants to look closely at their own common sense understandings regarding interaction, and question them. While this refocusing on seen-but-unnoticed interactive competencies was forced, there are also examples elsewhere of a similar shift resulting from naturally occurring circumstances.

The "Intercultural" or inter-lingual circumstance.

At the language school, the interlingual participants' attention is shifted to their normally seen-but-unnoticed common sense understandings relevant to the ways interactants align themselves with each others utterances and otherwise conduct themselves in competent ways. This shift is alluded to by the members in interviews, and made reportable in their interactions. Instances of this shift are presented in chapters 3, 4, and are forthcoming in this chapter. Specifically, it is most apparent in instances in which gratuitous concurrence and other devices indicating a feigned understanding is observed, and in some cases verbally noted by interactants.

Lieberman (1995, 1982, and 1980), described a similar shift. In discussing the "normalizing" of intercultural conversation, Lieberman (1995) argued that "in addition to establishing a vocabulary and ways of formatting the conversation, interlocutors must develop (and train in) a metadiscourse for monitoring the adequacy of the communication" (p. 121). Lieberman noticed that in addition to, and in light of this monitoring, "intercultural communication involves a great deal of gratuitous concurrence, that is, facile agreement with utterances that are not comprehended" (1995, p. 121). What is implied is that in "intercultural" interactions, the participants take

special notice of the production and interpretation of utterances, and of special efforts made in displaying (or merely giving the appearance of) interactive competence. This particular attention is motivated by the interlocutors' determination that the given interaction is an intercultural or NS/NNS interaction. Instances of gratuitous concurrence, and Liberman's reflections on his own interaction, provide evidence for this special attention and effort. Yet, as Liberman (1995) noted, "it is a facility that can run almost on autopilot" (p. 121). Thus, we can conclude that although the shift is a feature of these interactions that the participants orient toward, in large part it is a feature that is barely or only momentarily noticed. I argue that these competencies are less taken for granted (than in NS/NS interactions), but only of momentary interest because of the participants' preoccupation with the matters at hand (i.e., the practical purposes of the interaction).

Practical circumstances and interactive competence in inter-lingual encounters.

There are at least four features of inter-lingual encounters that members at the language school participate in that we can briefly discuss. These features help explain why priority is often given to interactive competence. First, learning or teaching a language cannot keep pace with the requirements of conversation. Second, and relatedly,

immediate actions have immediate consequences. That is, cooperative, smoothly organized and flowing conversation is "at-stake" at every turn and in every utterance, regardless of linguistic deficiency. Third, by not focusing on linguistic (in)competence, or absolute assurances of understanding, actual comprehension and linguistic competence may be enhanced. As Liberman (1995) argued, intercultural or inter-lingual interactants must keep the conversation going in spite of the lack of understanding, realizing that problems may be clarified later in the same conversation. Of course, this technique is used in intra-cultural or intra-lingual interactions as well (see Garfinkel, 1967, chapter 3). Fourth, and most comprehensively, by focusing on interactive competence instead of linguistic (in)competence, both the native and non-native language speaker can provide evidence that each are doing well at "teaching" or "learning" English.

The publicness of inter-lingual encounters.

The constant orientation to these ways of showing language learning and teaching competence are demonstrated for all to see. This is often guaranteed by the open spaces at the language school where multiple languages are simultaneously used and where the official and practical purpose of learning English is made evident. Given these practical circumstances, and the real and imagined

linguistic deficiency interactants must deal with, the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency works to manage the members daily affairs. It is an a priori expectation, as well as one that emerges, and is maintained/threatened in situ.

This expectation (which is inclusive of, but not identical to, the orientation toward all conversational rules or competencies outlined by conversation analysts) constitutes one of the most important "socially standardized and standardizing 'seen but unnoticed,' expected, background features of everyday scenes" for the members of the language school. (Garfinkel, 1967, p.36)

The following typology of recognized kinds of inter-lingual encounters will provide an examination of the accomplishments of the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. More specifically, we find in the analysis of these encounters the ways in which the expectation is enacted, maintained, and used to keep the conversations going, and ultimately its use determines the success of specific interactions.

Four Types Inter-lingual Encounters

There are at least four types of NS/NNS or inter-lingual social encounters at the language school that members may find themselves engaged in on a daily basis, in some cases several times a day. They are:

1. Students asking for help with English (grammar).
2. Classroom discussions (or "formal" conversations).
3. Service encounters (that are recognized non-pedagogical meetings).
4. Interlingual/multilingual informal gatherings (that include casual and task student interactions, and native speaker/student casual conversations).

Although broad, these categories of encounters are not inclusive of every inter-lingual social activity at the language school. Rather, these represent those activities that provide evidence for special attention to be paid to displaying interactive competence and the consequences of that expectation. More specifically, all of these encounters require and work to display the participants' competence at "learning" or "teaching," or an ability to accomplish some other task, such as socializing or buying stamps, relevant to being a competent member of the language school. All of the native/non-native or non-native/non-native language encounters at the language school could be viewed as opportunities (welcomed or not) to display how well participants are doing at "the business" of the language school: learning and teaching English and other relevant "affairs" (e.g., paying fees, sending mail, etc.). Every endeavor to that end, then, requires the production

and assessment of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, and often being obliging to problems that linguistic deficiency actually or potentially creates.

Students Asking for Help with English

Teachers are often "doing being a teacher" and students "doing being a student." Both roles are complicated because the non-native speakers are often attempting to display a competency in producing and interpreting the English language as well as, or at the same time they are, "being" a student regarding the subject at hand, whether that subject is grammar, conversation regarding some current issue, or the sense of a given sentence they are referring to. Both the NS and NNS must use English to teach and learn English, and those two activities are at once separate accomplishments, and also intricately linked. Thus, in each interaction at the language school, the interactive competence (in spite of the linguistic deficiency) of both the NS and NNS is assessed and is at stake as a separate accomplishment, in addition to the achievement (or not) of the task at hand. In Liberman's (1995) language, the "monitoring" and production of communicative competence co-occurs with achievement of the task at hand.

In the following conversations, a teacher is sitting at a table in the lounge area, during class time, apparently grading papers. Students from his class are coming up to

him sporadically asking questions about written work they are doing.

(Conv. D1)

- 1 S1: I hh I dont (2.8) how [th
 2 T: [okay if you have now (.4) I
 3 understand the the expression is by car but thats
 4 always with (.4) car (.4) n[o es
 5 S1: [withs car
 6 T: No
 7 S1: wha no?
 8 T: If you have numbers [and you say in [three cars
 9 S1: [mmhmm [in three car
 10 T: [mmhmm ya
 11 S1: [uhh kay hh
 12 T: Ya

The task-at-hand is the NNS seeking help with a phrase self-identified as problematic: apparently "by cars." Through the collaborative work of both the NS and NNS, the phrase is corrected and replaced with a suitable one. The NS is somewhat thanked for his help, and the interaction ends. Considering those accomplishments, what can be said regarding the setting's features and the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency?

Various conversational devices are used by the participants that work to assure one another that they are

aligned with the other's utterances and general purposes in the interaction. These devices could be explained in terms of "alignment practices" (Nofsinger, 1991). The practices most notably used here can be categorized in terms of appropriate "responses," "repair," and "alignment at conversational boundaries" (see Nofsinger, 1991, pp. 111-143). Employing Nofsinger's language, several kinds of responses are used: "formulations" (or a summary of another's prior utterance--the response "the the expression is by car but thats always with car" in lines 3 and 4 , and the NNS's utterance "withs car" in line 5); "continuers" (the NNS's "mmhmm" in line 9); and "collaborative completions" (the overlapping "in three car" in line 9). Repairs also maintain and display alignment. Specifically, the use of other-initiated repair and the receipt of it in lines 6 ("No") and 7 ("wha no?"). One can also note the ease and interactive competence with which the interaction is opened and closed--the alignment at the conversational boundaries. Notice the rather helpful collaborative completion of the NNS's awkward question "I hh I dont (2.8) how th" by the NS's overlapping "okay if you have now (.4) I understand. . in lines 1 and 2. We can note a similar instance of alignment in the cooperative confirmation of a successful completion of the task by the utterances "uhh kay hh" and "Ya" in lines 11 and 12. Overall, we can appreciate the

recognition and participation in, indeed the creation of, a "tight" sequential environment.

These practices create the unique features of the interaction. Namely, (1) the preference given to interactive competence over a concern with linguistic deficiency, and (2) the obliging of linguistic deficiency.² In various ways, and through similar conversational practices, virtually every inter-lingual encounter at the language school displays these features. These background expectancies work to interpret, for the members, the scenes' life-as-usual character.

In the above transcribed interaction, the NNS displays linguistic deficiency in the first utterance in line 1. The assumed problematic phrase "by cars" is not an overly complicated one, but she apparently has a great deal of difficulty in attempting to ask a question regarding it. Note the long pause in line 1, and the failed (or interrupted) attempt to reformulate the utterance. Nevertheless, the identification of the utterance in line one, not only as a question or elicitation for help but also as the specific identification of the problem phrase, is accomplished. This identification was likely to have been accomplished with the help of the student's, and/or the instructor's, use of some pointing gesture.

Even though the interruption and overlap of speech in line two seems to be sufficient to identify the receipt of the question or to help elicitation, the NS is apparently compelled to offer a quick clarification that he indeed understands the specific request of the NNS and that he is offering an answer or the help that was requested (i.e., the utterance "I understand" offered in line 3). Beginning in line 3, it is not clear whether the NS is attempting to instruct the student regarding the correct use of the phrase "by car," knowing why the NNS used the incorrect plural form, or whether he is trying to solicit some sort of additional information from the NNS. In either case, the NNS responds to the utterance "understand the the expression is by car but thats always with (.4) car (.4) n[o es" in lines 3 and 4 as the beginning of a test-response sequence in which the NS is testing the knowledge or skill of the NNS (See Meyer, 1990, for a similar identification of a NS/NNS interaction sequence).

The NNS's utterance in line 5 "withs car" comes before the NS's answer is completed, marking the receipt of the answer (albeit mistakenly) of the answer or correction. More accurately, the utterance "withs car" as a collaborative completion, offers an indication of understanding that (1) the NS is offering an answer, and (2) that a response is required at this point, a reiteration of

the corrected phrase. The NNS is clearly surprised that her response "withs car" is disconfirmed in line 6. The correction to the utterance "withs car" in line 8 is also responded to as being "in progress" with a continuer "mmhmm" (not a full interruption) and moments later with another interruption "in three car" (which is also an incorrect rendition of the correction the NS is attempting to offer). However, apparently due to the overlapping of the NS's utterance "three cars" and the NNS's utterance "in three car," the error is missed. Not only is the error missed, the NNS's utterance in line 9 "in three car" is confirmed by the NS's utterance "mmhmm ya."

It may be the case that the NS ignored the "s" at the end of the NNS's "withs," and the lack of the "s" at the end of "in three car," knowing that the inclusion and exclusion of the "s" is a pronunciation issue, and will not likely pose a problem when the phrase is corrected in writing. If this is indeed the case, it would help illustrate the extent to which interactive competence, over linguistic competence (including pronunciation), is of primary importance.

Both of the NNS's utterances "withs car" and "in three car" are offered at appropriate times from what we understand as the NNS's perspective. That is, viewing the response to the NS's utterances "the expression is by car but thats always with car" in lines 3 and 4, and "If you

have numbers and you say in three cars" in line 8 as solicitations of the NNS's skill and knowledge, is legitimate. The NNS's utterance does not come at an inappropriate time. Rather, the NNS is displaying her orientation toward interactive competence in a very tight sequential environment. Note that the NNS's utterance "withs car" in line 5 comes essentially right after a brief pause preceded by what could easily be heard as a corrective phrase "with car." Also, the utterances "mmhmm" and "in three car" in line 9 seem to be very well timed. The NNS's utterance "in three car" almost correctly completes the NS's utterance, with only a slight, but critical, morphological difference.

Exit from linguistic deficiency problems.

Jefferson (1984) described some devices used as a transition from troubles-talk. She argued that conversational participants doing "getting off" embarrassing or controversial topics display "a primary orientation to a troubles-telling is that from it, there is nowhere to go; . . . A massively recurrent device for moving out of a troubles-telling is entry into closings" (p. 191). I would argue that in many instances in inter-lingual conversations at the language school, the problems resulting from linguistic deficiency parallel those of trouble-talk in that exit from the actual or potential problems caused by that

deficiency is parallel to the exit from trouble-talk. In this case, the troubles-telling-like exit device is not merely "doing getting off the topic" but doing "acting like the immediately prior interaction went well." Thus, it works as an entry into closing device and sometimes is the closing itself.

In the transcript D1 above, the trouble is only slight, and only a probable indicator exists. The "uhh" located in line 11 occurs in an utterance that overlaps with the confirmation of a grammatically incorrect utterance "in three car." This slight hesitancy indicates to us as native speakers that the NNS is not quite satisfied with the correction to her phrase "by cars" which initiated the interaction.³ The trouble that the "uhh" marks is fairly complicated. The NS apparently recognizes that "three" cars were actually involved in the story the student was presented. What is likely confusing to the NNS is the confirmed use of the singular "car" after "three." Given the fact that her utterance "uhh" overlaps with the NS's confirming "mmhmm," the legitimacy of attempting to seek clarification seems in doubt.

The strongest sequence of turns, in terms of clarity, intonation and volume, in many interactions at the language school, occur in closings. This is likely to be the case because the NNS's command of the language used for closing

is strong. This is perhaps among the first conversational actions learned by a second language learner. The confidence and smoothness of closings can also be viewed as timely devices for displaying communicative competence/understanding; that is, being good at "teaching" and "learning" English. This is especially the case if the preceding talk is "troubling" or potentially so. Indeed, because of the reflexivity of sequential utterances, it may be that at least in some instances, a smooth closing works to "cover" the preceding troubled talk.

Any trouble, noticed or missed by the interactants, resulting from linguistic deficiency apparent in the asking of the original question "I hh I dont" or in other utterances such as "withs car" or "in three car," or any hint of linguistic incompetency displayed in the incorrect utterance "in three car," for all practical purposes is forgotten. The entire interaction is made out to be a successful one by this closing sequence. That "successful" status is the cooperative achievement of the smoothness of interactive competence and most directly because of the interactive competence displayed in the last two utterances (although not particularly "strong" in this case):

11 S1: uhh kay hh

12 T: Ya

Let us review the most prominent features of the above interaction and how those work to constitute not only a successful interaction but a larger competent membership status for the participants. The cooperative effort of the participants displays a preference given to interactive competence, while linguistic deficiency is practically ignored or otherwise gracefully managed. The task at hand, correcting the written phrase "by cars," is smoothly and quickly accomplished, although a new incorrect phrase may have replaced it.

This cooperative effort at achieving interactive competence, and thereby creating a sense that the interaction was successful in accomplishing the task-at-hand, and that the participants are competent members of the language school is also highlighted in the following conversation.

Conv. D2 (Izis just past tense?)

- 1 S2: Izis jus past tense? ((Stammering with each word))
- 2 T: hh ((inhaling for 1.4)) yes mmhmm mmhmm
- 3 S2: Wvee woked
- 4 T: Mmhmm
- 5 (1.6)
- 6 T: hh ((inhaling)) W[el you can use one or the other=
- 7 S2: [(mmhmm)
- 8 T: =but I think that if you use it it its to me it

- 9 sounds[(1.1) strange if you used (.7) past=
- 10 S2: [oh:
- 11 T: =perfect I mean past pr progressive for both of um
- 12 (1.0) I[f (.5) you can use one: past tense here n=
- 13 S2: [pu gi
- 14 T: =past progressive here or you could say we walked
- 15 in the corridor slowly while: we looked around or
- 16 while we were looking around but bec[areful about=
- 17 S2: [when
- 18 T: =using too man[y verbs in the same tense {because=
- 19 S2: [ˈyaː ya [mhm
- 20 T: =then it sou:nds kind of repetitious=
- 21 [(swy I say)mmhmm
- 22 S2: [oh
- 23 T: mmhm in=
- 24 S2: =In?=
 25 T: =in the ˈcorridorˆ or you can also use (1.0) down
- 26 (1.2) wever walking down the corridor it doesnt
- 27 really mean down down [butits its an expression=
- 28 S2: [oh really
- 29 =mmhmm=
- 30 S2: =walking down=
- 31 T: =mmhmm for example you could say that for the
- 32 street I was walking down the street one day
- 33 S2: oh::

34 T: mmhm

35 S2: kay

36 (1.4)

37 T: alright yurwelcome

The linguistic deficiency is evidenced in the stammering tempo and odd phrasing "izis just past tense" in the opening of the interaction. Nevertheless, this linguistic deficiency poses no apparent problem for the NS. On the contrary, the NNS has apparently clearly identified a problem source so well that a simple "yes" and additional confirmatory utterance "mmhmm mmhmm" is potentially sufficient. The ease with which both participants complete this sequence should not be taken for granted. That is, these achievements are significant, the demands of which are not easily met by any NS or NNS. Those requirements at least involve the management of that which is written, and utterances that are not merely imperfect (e. g., "izis just past tense"), but are also plagued with the threat of being misunderstood due to linguistic deficiency. The feats of mutual alignment are accomplished throughout the interaction.

It is interesting to note how sparingly complete phrases or even English words are used by the NNS. Some of the NNS's utterances are cryptic utterances that must be accompanied by a visual stimuli, e.g. pointing to a phrase

or word on paper (lines 1, 24). Many of the NNS's utterances are continuers ("mmhmm" in line 7, "oh" in line 10, "ya ya" in line 19, and the "oh" in line 22) and a newsmarkⁱ that does the work of continuers (the "oh really" in line 28). These and other utterances work, not by themselves, but, in each case, in conjunction with prior and subsequent utterances produced by the NS, that either prompt or receipt the appropriate, timely, and apparently quite sufficient NNS utterances.

Of particular interest are the NNS utterances that are not appropriate or timely. Yet these same utterances do not seem to get in the way of a smooth flowing, interactively competent interaction. Specifically, the "oh:" in line 10, the "pu gi" in line 13, and the utterance "when" in line 17 appear out of place, and the responses to those utterances provides evidence for a lack of alignment, and grounds for potential, although not manifested, disruption.

Again, because preference is given to interactive competence, and linguistic deficiency is obliged to, the task at hand is smoothly accomplished. In so doing, the members cooperatively maintain their status as competent members of the language school, being good at "teaching" and "learning" English. More specifically, in this type of encounter, "students asking for help with English," the members create a setting in which the expectation-of-

interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is enacted, relied upon, and corroborated.

In some instances of this type of encounter, the NS mistakenly focuses on some linguistic deficiency of the NNS, instead of the task at hand (i.e., focusing on the linguistic deficiency in the asking for help, instead of focusing on the English-related problem being asked about). Even in these instances, the attention paid to linguistic deficiency is only slight, fleeting, and essentially obliged to.

The following conversation took place while students were working on a written assignment at their desks. Several students had approached the teacher individually, asking questions about what they were writing.

- 1 S: They (1.1) first (trust company itz) the United States
 2 (1.0) theh first? (.4) no[h? (gazing at T)
 3 T: [noh thee: first ya
 4 S: The first-[(tru]st company in) the United State[s
 5 T: [yes] [mm hmm
 6 mmhmm
 7 S: °Thangkyou°= (gazing at T)
 8 T: =mm hmm?

While the interaction is quite smooth, the successful accomplishment of the task at hand (e.g. confirming the use of "first") is suspect. The NS apparently focuses on the

mispronunciation of "the" in line 1, and misses the NNS's attempt at asking about the correctness of the use of the word "first" in the same line. As it turns out, "first" is somewhat confirmed as the correct word choice, while the corrected pronunciation of "the" is ambiguous. It is precisely because of the interactive competence displayed by the participants, that the interaction appears to be a successful one. It is because of the preference given to interactive competence, although that rule was momentarily broken initially, that problems (whether they are created by linguistic deficiency or some conversational mistake), are overlooked, intentionally or not. In this present case, the participants' attempts at mutual alignment create an essentially smooth flowing, and apparently successful encounter.

In the example (D3) below, we can observe what appears to be an attempt by the NS to correct the pronunciation/tense of the NNS's utterance. The correction is not clearly noticed by the NNS, nor is the issue "pushed" by the NS.

Conv. D3 (I finish)

- 1 S3: I finish
- 2 T: You? Finish:ts?=
3 S3: =uh huh=
- 4 T: =alright ((crisp t))

(See Appendix C for transcription of entire conversation segment). The NS's reply "You? Finish:ts?" in line 2 is marked as an other-repair initiation because of the exaggerated pronunciation of the word "finished." The NS extends the "sh" sound and so crisply sounds the "t" in "finished" that it sounds like "ts." It is unclear whether the NNS receipted this response as a repair initiation. However, the sense of it as an alignment device is apparently recognized, and even anticipated, and is receipted as such immediately before any pause.

Thus, what may have begun as a repair of an utterance marking linguistic deficiency turned quickly into mutual alignment and the display of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. Regardless of the NNS's recognition of the "deficiency" of his utterance "I finish," and/or the probable correction offered by the NS, both speakers have successfully accomplished the business at hand.

Classroom Discussions

As mentioned in the first chapter, at each level of instruction at the language school there are various ways in which students are encouraged to participate in speaking English in the classroom. This often takes the form of somewhat structured "casual conversation" among students and the instructor.

It is important to note that the educational goal is that this activity would be an exercise in English language use. This goal is both enforced and set aside during the activity. Specifically, the instructors and students work together, through their participation in a given conversation, to make it evident that they are really talking about something (often something quite separate from the task of learning English). Sometimes intrusively, the participants also make it plain for all to see that the activity is an exercise. The activity clearly has the form and function of a naturally occurring "everyday" conversation, and yet, on occasion, includes references made to the conversation itself as being about "teaching" or "learning" English.

The expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency plays an interesting role in the achievement of the two goals or functions of these encounters. Here we find students with different native languages interacting. The students are virtually always obliging to the linguistic deficiency of another, and most often interact in such a way that provides evidence that they expect that they will be able to interact successfully, in spite of the other's and their own lack of fluency in English. In these classroom conversations, the instructors, for the most part, are oriented toward interactive

competence in much the same way they are in the previously discussed encounters. However, there is an interesting exception. Because they are talking about real things (as opposed to the mere production of words or sounds), both students and instructors must look toward a mutual understanding of the things they are talking about, and not just the way in which they talk about them. On the other hand, the purpose of the exercise is also evoked, i.e., instructing in English language use.

In a symposium on the place of grammar in second language teaching, Michael Long (1998) noted the obvious: An instructor cannot correct every grammatical problem of a second language learner or nothing could be accomplished. The instructor must pick and choose what to point out and what to let pass. No doubt this fact is apparent to both the instructors and students at the language school. A lot of language learning can occur, perhaps must occur, in spite of uncorrected oral grammatical mistakes. Thus, in these types of encounters, both the instructor and student are put into a position in which they must at once focus on the production of talk, as well as the thing they are talking about. The instructor's job is more complicated in that he or she must notice and decide which problems are worth pointing out and how to correct them.

The analysis of an observed but not recorded conversation "exercise" between an instructor and a single student can begin to reveal the deftness with which the teacher must handle the often competing goals of engaging in a conversation and paying attention to and correcting grammatical problems. During this particular class period, an instructor was engaging in conversation with each of her students individually. One by one, the students came out of the classroom and met her at a table in the lounge area. She asked them questions about various things including what they missed most about their home and what they liked most about the U.S.--questions demanding fairly complex English language use. Upon first glance, the students seemed to be handling the exercise well. Both the instructor and students laughed, smiled, and apparently were having a pleasant and successful conversation. However, after observing the encounters more closely, one could see that the instructor was not letting many, if not most, linguistic problems, as well as instances of gratuitous concurrence, "pass." The native speaker was able to respond to the non-native speakers' answers politely, and receipt them as at once adequate and inadequate. The instructor offered utterances such as "uhuh," and head nods, that indicated the answers had been received. Yet, if the students' answers were not pronounced adequately, and/or did not make solid

sense, she would maintain direct eye contact and ask the question again, indicating that the previous answer was not adequate. This obviously disconcerted the students. Mere interactive competence, or the smooth flow of conversation, in spite of linguistic deficiency, was no longer adequate. Thus, an intent look at the interaction revealed it to be an intensely strained conversation, with only the appearance of smoothness.

The above example was unusual in the extent to which the native speaker disallowed the interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency to be adequate, both in terms of the number of "problems" pointed out and the degree to which she pressed for a corrected response. In these types of encounters, it is more common for only some linguistic problems (e.g., word choice, pronunciation, grammar) and/or instances of mere gratuitous concurrence to be confronted by the instructor. This is likely so simply because the demands of talking (interacting) about real things are given preference over linguistic deficiency, virtually whenever it is possible to do so. As the following transcript illustrates, when linguistic deficiency is addressed, the talking about real things is often disrupted. The conversation occurred in class during the time the instructor and several students were "discussing" various topics. The participants in this episode included two

Arabic speaking students "A" and "O," a Spanish speaking student "P", and the instructor "B". In the immediately preceding conversational segment, "P" just revealed that her younger brother died some years ago. This episode begins with the inquiry about his death.

Conv. B8 (Whats Whats the reason)

- 1 A: Whats whats the reason (.5) yaknow
- 2 P: eh[h
- 3 A: [didizeaze or (.8) or (.9) whats (.9) whats
- 4 goin on
- 5 (1.7)
- 6 A: [(whaki)
- 7 O: [(con [)
- >8 B: [What went on
- 9 (.8)
- 10 A: What? ((Quickly, softly, with emphasis))
- 11 B: What went on h pas tense
- 12 A: What went
- 13 B: Ya [what happened (("p" and "d" said crisply))
- 14 A: [or
- 15 B: What went o[n
- 15 O: [whthapend
- 16 A: ya what [went on
- 17 B: [What happened=
- 18 P: =ehh (.8) in in this co:ld (1.0) ya know di (.7)

- ohr bahl) this poh[r()of
- 19 A: [ya pohr ya
- 20 B: °mhm°
- 21 A: Ya like that
- 22 B: Ya
- 23 P: E he: playin [with her friend no: with her with h=
- >24 A: [yes (.5) good
- 25 P: his [friend
- >26 B: [his friend hh ya
- 27 P: Yes an: (1.4) ehr: (1.1) dehr: (1.0) de girl? De...

(See Appendix D for transcription of entire conversation segment). The trouble sequence, which probably began with the utterances not quite audible as "whaki" and "con" in lines 6 and 7, clearly disrupts the likely emotional tone of the conversation. I would argue that "B," the NS, did not disrupt the conversation by correcting grammar. Rather, she was put in a difficult position of offering help with grammar (the tense of "going" in line 4) and keeping the serious conversation going in-spite of that and other linguistic problems.

"B"'s utterance of "what happened" in line 13 and 17 was probably directed at "P" (who continued with the story in line 18) and not "A," (who made the grammatical mistake in line 16), and thus got the conversation back on track. It is not clear whether "B"'s correction was necessary for

the conversation to have proceeded smoothly. After all, "P"'s utterance "eh" in line 2, did begin the answer to the clearer question of "whats the reason." Given the trouble that both "A" and "O" were having in lines 6 and 7 (e.g., "whaki" and "con" respectfully), and the fact that "P" was not providing a quick answer, "B"'s correction "What went on" could be viewed as providing timely help aimed at keeping the conversation going, although it did not do that initially.

Again toward the end of the transcript, "B" finds herself in a difficult position. In listening to the recorded conversation, she is apparently being called upon by "P" to confirm "P"'s use of English. "B" must also provide the emotional support, that is, receipt the story as a sad one. "B"'s responses, in lines 24 and 26, apparently accomplish both goals. The content of those utterances "good" and "his friend hh ya" are pronounced in a voice that clearly indicates sympathy.

In the following transcript the disruption is caused by the instructor's confirmation of word choice and significantly sidetracks the conversation to such an extent that the original non-native speaker seems at a loss as to when to continue. These sorts of disruptions, although not initiated by the native speaker in this case, provide evidence for the preference given to interactive competence

in spite of linguistic deficiency. Even if the word choice is questionable, or if the native or non-native speaker does not completely understand some utterance, preference is given to letting it pass.

In this conversation, a fellow non-native speaker, "S2," questions the use of "niece" by another, "S1." The native English speaker, "B," confirms the word choice and clarifies the meaning for "S2."

Conv. B3 (segment "I had a dream ya")

- 1 S1: I had a dream ya
- 2 B: You had a dream
- 3 S1: Ya
- 4 B: Whata bout
- 5 S1: About my u nephew and uh (.5) neice
- 6 B: uh huh
- 7 S2: neice?
- 8 S1: nephew and neice
- 9 (1.0)
- 10 S3: no? heedah brother heedabrother? (Daya) [(da...)
- 11 B: [yer
- 12 brother or sisterz children (.5) a nephew is a
- 13 bo:y:[(.5) a niece is girl
- 14 S2: [oh
- 15 S1: hhh sorry about that=
- 16 B: =thats alright? (1.5) thats what were here for

17 nephew is your brother or sisterz sona (.5) and a
 18 neice (.5) is your brother or sisterz daughter
 19 (5.0)
 20 S1: [(b) (2.0) ((clears throat))
 21 S3: [(g)
 22 B: so what did you dream about with yer nephew and
 23 yer neice?

(See Appendix E for transcription of entire conversation segment). It is unclear what "S2" is apologizing for in line 15. Perhaps he feels responsible for the interruption and missed the sense of "B"'s confirmation "a nephew is a boy, a niece is girl." It is more clear that none of the students, including the original speaker, "S2", know quite what to do after "B" completes her clarification of the use of the words "nephew" and "niece" in line 18. It seems that the telling of the dream has been made out to be less important, a topic that can wait, and preference is given to not just the questioning of word choice, but the attention paid to clarifying that word choice. The native speaker must reorient the participants to interacting competently about the dream.

As evidenced in many other classroom discussions, preference is clearly given to maintaining an appearance of a smooth flowing interaction in spite of linguistic deficiency. The following examples occurred in a classroom

discussion in which students were placed into two groups and asked to talk about the role of women in their countries. The instructor moved from group to group engaging in the discussions.

In one group, the instructor used the term "identification" and asked a Japanese student if he understood it. He very slightly nodded and slowly looked away, offering very little response and a vagueness about understanding. This was the same response he gave earlier in another conversation she had with him when she asked him about child care. Because interactive competence was potentially threatened in both cases, both the non-native and native speaker responded in such a way to maintain it--the student's vague looking away and the instructor's letting the vagueness "pass." In these instances, the instructor challenged the students' comprehension of complex English words, but only to the point that interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency was about to be threatened.

Service Encounters

Service encounters at the language school present a unique, although frequent, setting for members. In these encounters, the task, on the one hand, is most often not related to English language issues. In these encounters, the students and staff (typically) are attending to the

paying of fees, legal issues, housing problems, scheduling activities, buying stamps, using the fax machine, etc. However, in each of these encounters, an observer quickly gets the impression that the students want to present themselves as skilled interlocutors, able to interact competently in English, despite their often apparent, and perhaps always assumed, lack of proficiency in English. It is also obvious to an observer that the native English speaking staff attempt to present themselves as able to interact competently with non-native speakers. How, then, does each party achieve this status as competent, inter-lingual participant?

On occasion, a relatively new student will bring a more advanced student (that speaks the same native language) to act as an interpreter. Interestingly, the translator is rarely used, and only momentarily. The more advanced student in the position of translator typically defers to the newer student, letting them "figure it out" or virtually always requiring the student to in some way "do the interacting" in English themselves. These newer students no doubt are aware of the official requirement of "speaking English whenever possible" and quickly work to fulfill that requirement.

In some cases when the student's English proficiency is extremely low, a staff member will ask one of the

instructors (who speaks the student's native language) to act as a translator. But this is only a last resort. According to the staff, this is avoided because the instructors do not want to be involved with the financial issues of the students. I suspect that the staff also avoid requesting a translator because they do not want to appear incompetent at interacting with a NNS. These encounters, for both the NS and NNS, are quite obviously viewed as opportunities to present themselves as competent interactants, in spite of almost any linguistic problem.

The accomplishment of displaying interactive competence, as well as completing the task-at-hand, is achieved by using and relying on the expectation-of-interaction-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. The following segments of conversation between non-native speaking students and native English speaking staff members at the language school, illustrate the diverse ways in which interactive competence in spite of linguistic deficiency is accomplished and relied upon in service encounters.

The conversation extensively analyzed earlier in chapter three is also representative of a service encounter. We can recall the ways in which both NS and NNS skillfully maintained the appearances of a shared understanding through the use of various alignment devices. Those devices, namely continuers (e.g., "what ts i hhh", "ahuh", and "ya?") and

change-of-state tokens (e.g., "oh"), were revealed to be somehow feigned by the NNS or perhaps forced by the NS. Prior to that revelation, and in the continuing conversation between the same participants, a keen orientation to interactive competence worked to more than sustain the interaction. The use and reliance on interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-competence worked to promote both participants as competent members of the language school, with only a momentary setback.

We can add to that analysis here by examining other NS/NNS interactions that occurred with other NS staff at the language school. In the first conversation, "T/S 1," one of the staff members is discussing a financial issue with a new student. The student asked about a hand written "post-it" note that she sees on a form belonging to her. The NS attempts to explain the reason for the note that reads "the mystery is solved." It is interesting to note the extent to which the participants were apparently aligned with the other, and how the interaction progresses rather smoothly in spite of linguistic deficiency. When asked later about the conversation, the NS expressed doubt that the student had understood, although both had acted like she had. Both interactants proceeded, relatively smoothly, even though there is significant evidence that comprehension was lacking.

(Conversation T/S 1)

- 1 S: ah ah(.5) iy hav ohn kesion
- 2 T: shur
- 3 (9.0)
- 4 S: dowyoknow da mysthery iz solvd
- 5 T: [ahh
- 6 S: [what is a mystery=
- 7 T: ah: a mystery is (1.0) when (.7) we: dont know
- 8 (1.1) ah: lets see iy certify my daughter as
- 9 staying (.5) as guaranty to the (payment hol)
- 10 spense, transportation, traveling expenses for her
- 11 ta return home from yuess ofconclusion of her
- 12 study (.5) iye: think what happened was we:: got
- 13 monee:: for you (.5) a wy:r transfer: and we (.2)
- 14 did (.2) not (.2) know (.1) [who (.2) it was for:
- 15 S: [hhmm
- 16 T: an then (.3) H__(.2) got (.2) this letter(.5) this
- 17 (.3) fro:m: (.5) your (.5) father?
- 18 S: yus
- 19 T: an she (.5) an she wrote this note to me (.5) the
- 20 (.3) mystery is so:lved

The beginning exchanges of the conversation segment establish the likely assumed linguistic deficiency that both interactants must deal with. Namely, the question asked in

an awkward way, and mispronunciations made by the student, work to present herself as a less-than-competent native language speaker, and as one able to interact competently in spite of the lack of proficiency in English. Additionally, these utterances, as a conversational action (i.e., asking a question and projecting a sequence of actions, require much of the native language speaker). This NNS presentation is responded to and confirmed in "T"'s response to the question (e.g., "shur" and "ahh"). Later, the NS's speech could be categorized as "foreigner talk," characterized by deliberate pauses between many words and decreased tempo accompanied by emphasis placed on many words in one phrase (Long, 1985). "T," in these ways, presents herself as one who recognizes the linguistic deficiency of the other, and is able to interact competently in spite of that deficiency.

This conversation continued for approximately two minutes and included several attempts by the NS "T" to explain the reason for the "mystery" note. Toward the end of the conversation, the student expressed understanding through the use of change-of-state tokens, "a::," agreements, "yes," completions of the NS's utterance "layder: was coming," and in her effort to summarize the reason for the confusion over the transferred money. At virtually every turn, both the student and staff member

tightly and confidently displayed an alignment with the other.

(Conversation T/S 2)

- 1 T: ...and (1.0) then (.5) um:: (.5) she wrote me that
- 2 note [said the mystery is solved [tshe two=
- 3 S: [a:: [a::
- 4 T: =hundred an niyndy (1.) goes to (.5) mis (.5) C=
- 5 S: =yes=
- 6 T: =so:=
- 7 S: =so muh (.5) money: (.5) was came in at furst (.5)
- 8 [an then
- 9 T: [right
- 10 S: layder: was coming=
- 11 T: =right
- 12 S: ah: okay [so th
- 13 T: [money: came first (.5) then the letter
- 14 S: ah: okay okay

Considering the extent to which both parties aligned themselves with the other throughout the segment, it is puzzling why, when asked, the NS thought that the NNS did not understand the explanation for the note, but merely "acted like it." There are two possible explanations, both rely on the extent to which interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is relied upon. Based on comments made by the NS, it is possible that there is an expectation

that students often merely act like they understand, and this conversation was considered an example of that. It is perhaps more likely that the NS interpreted some of the NNS's behavior not available in the transcript or audio recording as indicating confusion. In either case, both parties apparently succeeded in presenting themselves as being competent members of the language school: the NNS as a student able to interact in English, and the NS as a staff member able to manage the linguistic deficiency of a NNS.

Considering the competent "look" of the interaction, and the NS's doubting the NNS's real comprehension, we can make one more observation relevant to the trust-and-suspicion consequences of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. If the NNS shared the NS's assessment of real comprehension, we could speculate that both parties may reevaluate the goodness of this sort of interactive competence. No matter how determinably this interactive competence is threatened, the members of the language school have no good options. The interactive demands placed on them each time they engage in an interlingual encounter is greater, moment by moment and turn by turn, than any suspicion that threatens the goodness of this interactive competence.

In this transcript, "L/S 1," the native language speaker refrains from foreigner talk, and displays extreme

obligingness to the difficulties caused by linguistic deficiency, to the extent that she proceeds through the encounter "blindly," seemingly very unsure of what the student is asking for.

(L/S 1)

- 1 L: hhh=
- 2 S: =scuse me how do you write pe:yrshn
- 3 L: how do I write person?
- 4 S: peyrshun (1.0) [li
- 5 L: [pershun?=
 6 S: yeaz uhd um: (andias) languj (1.0) idias languj
 7 (.5) ida=
 8 L: =iyeda
- 9 S: ya
- 10 L: uh[uh
- 11 S: [kyada slanguj (1.0) how do you write peyrshun
- 12 L: pershun are you say:ing?
 13 (1.0)
- 14 S: per:shun (1.5) ar: farsee its sa [blda
- 15 L: [uhuh
 16 (2.0)
- 17 L: wll this is how you spell per:shun: but I dont
 18 know that they (.5) use that any more
 19 (6.0) ((L writing))
- 20 L: thats how you spell pershun (2.0) P E R S I A N=

- 21 S: =uhuh
22 L: pershun (1.0) is that what you think you want
23 S: ye
24 L: okay hhh

It is interesting to note here that although the business at hand is English, or could be construed that way, the NS (not an instructor) refrains from treating this interaction as an opportunity to forcefully correct the student's pronunciation. The NS is quite obviously more concerned with getting through the interaction, and supplying the student with what she asked for.

In line 5, "L" offers a reiteration or question ("pershun?"), and not clearly a correction, for the student's pronunciation of Persian. Although the student's response to "L"'s correction is affirmative ("yeaz uhd um:"), the utterance that follows casts doubt on whether L's interpretation is accurate ("andias languj idias languj ida"). The this utterance, the student is attempting to solicit the NS's help with another word. Her response "iyeda" is received affirmatively. Yet, the validity of that utterance, a correction of sorts, is in doubt. The student's attempt at repeating her correction fails, and is followed by the original question "how do you write peyrshun." Interestingly, both the student and the native speaker seemed to have moved through two correction

sequences successfully, but have failed to accomplish the work of correction. More specifically, the native speaker offers two corrections, "pershun?" in line 5 and "iyeda" in line 8, which are received by the non-native speaker with "ya" and "yeaz" in line 6 and 9 as valid or successful corrections. Although not immediately successful, the participants, through the efforts at interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, do accomplish the task.

Inter-lingual/Multilingual Informal Gatherings

As mentioned in the previous chapter, some students with different native languages somewhat frequently interact with one another during breaks. Even if the students are working on homework together, these encounters appear to be casual in terms of topic, mannerisms, comings and goings of participants, and side-involvements. However, these same "casual" encounters are often strained due to the difficulties of interacting in a second language in which no or few members are very proficient. The ways in which the participants manage these seemingly conflicting features of the encounters are creative and successful. Laughter, silence, eliciting help from others, side-involvements, and quick remarks are used by the participants in these encounters to create and maintain the casual, "interactively competent" character. There is also a parallel feature of these encounters characterized by inappropriate responses to

others (e.g., not answering a question, laughing at seemingly inappropriate times, etc.), silence, and the frequent lack of understanding of what another said is evidenced in these and other ways.

In the following transcript, two native Spanish speakers, "C" and "F," two native Japanese speakers, "J" and "J2," and another student with an unknown native language (and who only participated in the laughter) engaged in conversation while eating lunch at a round table. This was "J"'s first or second day at the language school. "J2" apparently knew the student well enough to know that he was from Japan (and possibly what city he was from).

Conv. S/S 1

- 1 C: Itsa itsa big ci:ty (.4) your city
- 2 (1.4)
- 3 J: My my steef
- 4 J2: B[ig (s)
- 5 C: [yes
- 6 J: (shicon shicon shicon[s)
- 7 C: [your city in Japin
- 8 (1.1)
- 9 J: Yes
- 10 J2: Wherz your city hhh hhh ((others laughing also for
(4.0)))
- 11 (4.5)

- 12 C: [Yes
- 13 J2: [Is it uh like
- 14 J: (Pick up)
- 15 (1.1)
- 16 J2: Shiconski
- 17 J: Itsin Japan
- 18 J2: Second biggest cit[y (stammering)
- 19 C: [secont [biggest city
- 20 J: [(isbidia)
- 21 (1.0)
- 22 C: Mmm (1.7) great ((said with food in mouth))
- 23 J: hhh
- 24 F: Do you live near Toytowyama?
- 25 C: Now now are you living with a host family?
- 27 (6.5)
- 28 J: No (.5) ya
- 29 J2: Yah ya live in: hos family ovr you have an:
- 30 apartme[n:
- 30 J: [no: host family hya
- 31 C: An you like it?
- 32 (2.8) ((J making facial gesture of disgust))
- 33 ((several laughing))
- 34 J: soh soh hhh
- 35 C: that so so

We can make note of several features in this conversation alone to illustrate the casual/fun character as well as the strained nature of virtually all inter-lingual student encounters at the language school. All that is accomplished here is done in spite of the linguistic deficiency of the participants, and through a persistent reliance on the expectation of interactive competence.

The casualness of the encounter is clearly evident in a first hand observation of posture, gestures, and facial expressions. However, the topics here could be characterized as small talk. There is also evidence that the participants are oriented to the interaction as one in which they can relax and even have fun. That is most notably illustrated in "J2"'s perturbed sounding utterance "Wherz your city hhh hhh" in line 10 and the accompanying laughter by all the participants. "J2" and the others apparently interpret "J"'s "yes" in line 9 as an inappropriate answer to the prior ambiguous question "Ista itsa big city your city" and the follow up "your city in Japin." "J2" reformulates "C"'s question and says it somewhat emphatically, "Wherz your city hhh." While this utterance also marks an uncomfortableness, I believe that "J2" and the others find this humorous not just because it is pointed out as inappropriate by "J2", but also in light of the frequency with which inappropriate utterances are

made by second language learners, including themselves. The use of similar responses, including gratuitous concurrence, continuers, change-of-state-tokens, and other utterances indicating understanding or alignment when they are likely lacking, is motivated and reinforced by the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. Other indicators of the casual nature of the interaction include "C"'s utterance "Mmm great" said with food in his mouth, and "J"'s facial gesture in line 31 responded to with laughter (the others laughing with and not at "J" here). These utterances and responses create an interactional atmosphere in which the participants, although struggling with linguistic deficiency, can relax and have fun using English.

The strained nature of the interaction is evidenced in the relatively long pauses in lines 2, 8, 11, 15, and 26, as well as the general difficulty "J" has in correctly responding to "C"'s questions. It is interesting to note the extent to which "J2" helps "J" with his comprehension of English through the use of seemingly harsh corrections. Schwartz (1980) studied other-correction by conversational partners who were both second language learners of English. She identified the use of other-correction by a speaker as taking "the role of 'teacher'" (p. 151). She also noted that the interactants shared this role, taking turns at

"teaching" and learning. This kind of correction occurs often at the language school, but is almost always restricted to other same-native-language-speakers. Just as "J2" makes fun of "J"'s apparent lack of understanding, much of the corrections in informal settings, whether elicited or not from the one being corrected, are given and taken as somewhat humorous.

It is interesting to note the way in which "J2" "teaches" "J". "J2" avoids just answering for "J". Rather, the utterances "Big s____" in line 4, "Wherz your city" in line 10, "Is it uh like" in line 13, and "Yah ya live in hos family ovr you have an apartmen" in line 29, "J2" is attempting to rephrase the question in a way that "J" might understand, and at least initially allows him to respond. This is clearly the preferred method of translating for a fellow non-native speaker at the language school--rephrase in English and let the other do the work of interacting competently in English.

In terms of side-involvements, we are referring to Goffman's (1967, pp. 113-136.)⁵ description of involvement obligations. He described situations in which those present are obligated to spontaneously participate in the conversation as a main involvement as opposed to another situation in which those present are doing some other activity and conversation is a side-involvement. The lunch-

time routine at the language school can not be clearly defined as one or the other type of situation. It is clear, however, that slipping in and out of the conversation is allowable. Furthermore, in the just analyzed conversation, the eating of lunch worked to give the participants something to do while they waited for responses, and even to provide the setting with its casual features. In other cases, the use of side-involvements such as working on schoolwork, talking to someone else briefly, walking around, and singing, were used by participants in inter-lingual student encounters to manage difficulties resulting from linguistic deficiency. For example, in response to a question or comment they apparently do not understand, I observed that students get visibly more involved in the side-involvement, providing an excuse for not quickly responding, or not responding at all. In any case, the difficulties resulting from linguistic deficiency virtually never hold up the progression of the conversation for very long.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined the various types of inter-lingual encounters categorized as (1) students asking for help with English, (2) classroom discussions, (3) service encounters, and (4) interlingual/multilingual informal gatherings. The practice and consequences of

interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency in these encounters has been described, providing an examination of some of the central features of the various social activities that members orient themselves toward.

These findings provide evidence for the argument that all of the members, both native and non-native English speakers at the language school, in virtually all of their daily affairs, relentlessly pursue interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency.

Chapter Endnotes

1. As discussed in Garfinkel (1967), Schutz (1932, 1962, 1964, 1966) argued that for background expectancies to be noticed, the researcher or interactant must become "a stranger to the 'life as usual' character of everyday scenes, or become estranged from them... a 'special motive' is required to make them problematic" (p. 37). The implication here is that the expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency provides that motivation.

2. A note on determining linguistic deficiency from a transcript is appropriate here. Although native English speakers produce seemingly incoherent utterances, we must place a given utterance in context. In this case, the utterance is produced by an ESL student to an ESL teacher. While there is evidence that the participants interpret the utterance as having at least some characteristics of linguistic deficiency, the author acknowledges that there are some assumptions being added to that evidence. Those assumptions are based on observations, participation in similar encounters, and to some degree insights made by participants engaged in similar interactions.

3. Through the hesitancy "uhh," the NNS displays that she doesn't quite understand, but is also able to go along with the not quite good enough correction. Thus, to the NS, the hesitancy is a display of that reluctance but also the NNS's willingness and ability to move on in spite of that reluctance. The native speaker's recognition and the NNS's capacity to accountably-project her hesitancy are strong clues to the further analysis of the phenomena of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. There are implications here suggesting that this sort of interactive competence, like basic conversational structures, transcends specific cultures.

4. Newsmarks refer to a class of utterances that indicate or "mark" the prior utterance as being especially news worthy, or "news for the recipient rather than merely informative" (Heritage, 1984a, p. 340n). Nofsinger (1991) refers to newsmarks as displaying an orientation toward the "surprise value" of an preceding turn (p. 115). Heritage also points out the distinction between freestanding "oh"s that merely indicate a prior utterance's informative value, and objects such as "oh really?," "wow" and others that "treat a prior utterance as news for [the] recipient" (p. 339, *italics added*).

5. Goffman (1967) described at length the context of involvement obligations. A segment of that description will suffice for the application discussed above.

Involvement obligations are in fact defined in terms of the total context in which the individual finds himself. Thus, there will be some situations where the main involvement of those present is supposed to be invested in a physical task; conversation, if carried on at all, will have to be treated as a side-involvement to be picked up or dropped, depending upon the current demands of the task at hand. (p. 130)

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study examined the ways in which members of a multilingual English as a second language school manage the various activities involved in the teaching and learning of English in light of linguistic barriers. Based on an investigation of the language school as a special kind of speech community, the descriptions offered in this study are placed in the context of the various NNS/NNS, NS/NNS, and NS/NS encounters that members construct in their daily affairs. The variations in participants, purposes, and places are taken into account, and also framed together, as community-based activities that members orient themselves toward. These interactions are conceived of as consisting of related practices because they determinably happen at the same place, have to do with similar things, and are characterized by similar, particular arrangements.

One central feature of the range of inter-lingual activities is the participants' orientation to the "special motive" to display interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency. The nature of that activity, including how it is similar to and differs from other conceptualizations of communicative competence, its cooperative achievement, and its consequences for the members, has been described. The inter-lingual, or NS/NNS,

NNS/NNS interactions can be characterized in terms of the following:

1. An expectation of the need for the "negotiation of meaning" (i.e., that linguistic deficiency provides for the opportunity to make or avoid corrections). The preference is to avoid making corrections of the other's speech, or to be obliging to the linguistic deficiency of oneself or the other (essentially the linguistic deficiency of the interaction).

2. There is an expectation that in spite of linguistic deficiency, both the NS and NNS (or both NNSs) can interact competently (generally indicated by a smooth flowing and apparently successfully encounter). This is the oriented-to expectation of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency.

3. There is special attention paid to noticing the production of interactive competence. The normally taken for granted competencies are less taken for granted, or "monitored" (in Liberman's 1995 terms).

These features represent the competencies that members of the language school must orient themselves toward and display. These may also outline the features that researchers investigating second language acquisition and inter-language often take for granted themselves,

attributing their importance to the interaction, without studying their significance.

At this point, we can offer a summary of how these competencies are oriented toward and some of the consequences of that orientation at the language school. These competencies are viewed as accountable and observable practices, produced by and for the participants. In every case of the expectation being displayed and recognized, it is a cooperative achievement. Thus, through each of the following practices, interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is made accountable and observable.

Foreigner Talk

Although "foreigner talk" (stammering, overpronounced NS speech) is rarely used, at least in any sort of especially noticed form, there are occasions in a given interaction that it is likely to produce evidence of a displayed recognition of an assumed or actual linguistic deficiency. However, the lack of foreigner talk, which is clearly the preferred speech style for native English participants (and likely a noticed effort from the NNS perspective), is a better indicator of an expectation for interactive competence (an interaction lacking signs of trouble).

Alignment

Various conversational devices that display alignment with the other's utterances, and thus with the interaction itself, are used extensively by both NS and NNS at the language school (e.g., change-of-state tokens, continuers, laughter, second-part pairing of utterances, etc.) In some instances, these alignment devices are apparently "feigned." It is also the case that a vagueness regarding alignment (e.g., in the case of silence) is preferred over a display of incompetence.

Helping a Fellow NNS

With some frequency, a newer student will be aided by a more English-competent NNS with various NNS/NS interactions. In virtually every instance, the more competent NNS will force the newer NNS to interact competently in spite of his or her linguistic deficiency. This forcing is accomplished either by translating a word(s) from English, or simply by saying the English word(s) again, more forcefully, to the fellow NNS.

"Letting It Pass"¹

The many instances of NNSs and NSs letting a less than understood utterance "pass" without correcting or requesting clarification, or overlooking an apparent "feigned" understanding are indications of an orientation toward interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency.

This is not only displayed in the interaction, but recognized and articulated by members after the fact as a reoccurring dimension of NS/NNS interaction at the language school.

Not "Letting It Pass"

In some instances, a recognized feigned understanding is not overlooked, and the demands of actual comprehension are placed on the other, typically the NNS. This occurred in conversations involving student fees, or other specific actions that are expected of the NNS. Pressing for assurances of actual comprehension also occurred in formal conversations between teachers and students. Relatively speaking, there are few instances where this sort of exacting interaction is enacted.

Making Fun of Feigned Understanding

There are cases in which another NNS will notice and "make fun of" a NNS's attempt at interacting competently at the expense of understanding the other's utterance. Perhaps for NNSs more than NSs, this action is easily recognized and, in some instances, it is permissible to laugh at the attempt.

We can also outline here the consequences for the members, beyond those actions just reviewed, of this orientation toward interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency in terms of the following:

Missed Success of the Interaction Task

As we have seen, the primary concern with interactive competence in spite of and over linguistic correctness can lead to the lack of actual comprehension of the "task-at-hand." This could result in missing the point of the interaction/topic altogether, or some important dimension of it.

Ultimate Success of the Interaction Task

It is also the case that the displaying of interactive competence in spite of linguistic deficiency and in spite of actual competence or comprehension can lead to the ultimate success of the task at hand. Specifically, by keeping the conversation going, conversational devices indicating understanding (even though none or only partial understanding exists) can allow for more information to be shared and result in a later, fuller comprehension.

Displaying Being-a-Competent-Member

Lastly, this orientation toward and cooperative effort at interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency works to present the member as being good at teaching or learning English. This accomplishment provides evidence for an efficiency in acquiring a second language, helping another acquire a second language, and being able to interact as and with a NNS in various settings. These

accomplishments, and the settings in which they occur, make up the range of everyday activities at the language school.

Implications of Study

There are several ways in which this study, and its methods and findings, introduces challenges and new directions for the investigation of language use in ESL and similar environments.

The relationship between various conceptualizations of communicative competence

This study presents a problem relating to the relationship between the concepts of linguistic competence, a Hymesian conceptualization of competence and the speech community, Garfinkel's interaction competence, and my conceptualization of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-competence. As discussed in the previous chapters, this special interaction competence both relies on and varies from these conceptualizations.

As discussed earlier, a Hymesian (speech community-specific) conceptualization of communicative competence is clearly distinct from a pure linguistic approach, and a reaction to, a Chompskian conceptualization which implies linguistic competence to be a universal property of mind (see Chompsky, 1965 in particular). Hymes (1974) urged that a "new mode of description of language" for which "one needs fresh kinds of data, one needs to investigate directly the

use of language in contexts of situation. . . one must take as context a community, or network of persons, investigating its communicative activities as a whole" (pp. 3-4).

Linguistic theory begins with language. Sociolinguistic theory "looks in toward language, as it were, from its social matrix" (Hymes, 1974, p. 75).

The concept of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is treated as having features similar to any community-specific competence that members orient their actions toward. Generally speaking, this special interactive competence is oriented to and performed as a way of displaying competent membership at the language school, which is cooperatively accomplished through the various interaction practices summarized above. This description of interactive competence is an attempt to "discover and explicate the competence that enables members of [this] community to conduct and interpret speech" (Hymes, 1974, p. 43.).

My use of the term "linguistic deficiency," we should note, simply refers to the common conceptualization of language (dys)fluency, as it is imagined or manifested in a given inter-lingual interaction. Thus, when we use "linguistic deficiency" as part of the larger concept of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency, we are not attempting to specify one or more speaker as a

"dysfluent speaker" in Hymes' sense (i.e. the opposite of an "ideal speaker," 1974, p. 46). On the contrary, the accomplishment of interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency works to provide both the native and nonnative speaker a kind of "fluent speaker" status. Language fluency is an extremely complex matter at the language school and for this analysis. Therefore, these explanations should be taken as preliminary and unfinished. However, viewed within the speech community framework, this special kind of interactive competence is clearly distinct from a universal linguistic competence.

With that said, it is not simply the case that this special kind of interactive competence is merely another community-specific "competency." That is, this study presents interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency as a unique application of Garfinkel's interaction competence, which is obviously not synonymous with a Hymesian conceptualization. Rather, ethnomethodologists, and conversation analysts in particular, seek to explicate those competencies that are features of virtually all communicative activity (e.g., the essential reflexivity of organized activities). This study and its findings can be similarly categorized, not only because apparently universal conversational techniques are applicable to these inter-lingual interactions, but also

because the unique use and function of these practices are likely to operate in other (most) inter-lingual interactions. Given that classification, the special interactive competence described in this study has qualities marking it as both a subset of speech community-specific competency and as a distinct kind of culture-general interaction competence. The implications of this relationship need to be explored theoretically, as well as in similar and different settings.

Specifically, the extent to which interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is inclusive of or distinct from Hymes' and Garfinkel's conceptualizations needs to be further explored and defined. Relatedly, the ways in which the special interaction competence presented here accords with the idea of cultural relativism should be examined. Future work should also explore the features of this special interaction competence as being distinct from properties of the mind (an interior concept), but descriptive of vulgar embodied competence (Garfinkel, 1988, Garfinkel and Wieder, 1992).

Additionally, an application in similar and different social settings is likely to reveal variance in terms of the provisions for this special interactive competence. For example, the language school may be a place in which interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency is

given the greatest priority. Whereas interactions in some restaurants, like in the example provided earlier, may not allow for it at all. Other variations in setting and participants should clarify and extend an understanding of the phenomena. For example, variations attributable to the individual's background "culture," or the larger cultural setting (e.g., something like a "Japanese" or "Malaysian" culture) would likely provide unique forms and functions of this special interactive competence.

Implications for CA

The methods and findings of this study are also relevant to a debate regarding the use of CA to investigate intercultural and/or inter-lingual conversation (e. g., see Wagner, 1996, 1998, and Seedhouse, 1998). Firth (1996) summarized the most critical features of this discussion:

If we begin to examine the data types analysed in studies of "casual" conversation or institutionally-anchored talk, a picture emerges of an enterprise that has shown a remarkably consistent though restricted interest in the talk of "normal" adults who are members of the same culture and who share and use the same native language--in the majority of cases the English language. (p. 238).

Firth (1996) also stated that CA methodology relies on the assumption that the analyst and participants in an

interaction share "access to culturally-based knowledge of such things as 'everyday' scenes and social roles." Thus, it is the analysts' "co-membership of the participants' linguistic-cultural community" that is the critical resource (p. 238). In an attempt to challenge this assumption, Firth argued that "lingua franca" talk (non-native speakers interacting in a form of English marked by various dysfluencies) represents a unique form of interaction, nevertheless analyzable using CA methodology. Based on his descriptions of these NNS/NNS interactions (those not sharing a linguistic-cultural commonality), Firth suggested that their talk is "made 'normal' and 'ordinary'". . . . "in the face of sometimes 'abnormal' and 'extra-ordinary' linguistic behaviour." (p. 242). Thus, Firth claimed that co-membership (of the analyst or participants) need not exist in order to conduct a conversation analysis. In contrast, one could interpret Firth's analysis as evidence for another (different) linguistic-cultural-like co-orientation on the part of both participants and analyst. Briefly, these and similar encounters could be viewed as representing a somewhat unique way of speaking that interlingual interactants recognize and orient toward.

While the findings presented in this present study provide evidence for such "normalizing" of NNS/NNS, as well as NS/NNS, interactions, I would also argue that performing

some sort of ethnographic investigation can provide an entrance into a special and narrow co-membership with the interlocutors. Thus, investigating the nature of the talk, its participants, setting, and purposes, provides the analyst with some foundation with which to conduct an analysis. This is especially relevant for studies of foreign (to the investigator) interactions. While the debate regarding the blending of CA and ethnography will no doubt persist (see Moerman, 1988, and Hopper, 1991 for a discussion of some of the issues), so will insightful analyses resulting from its use.

In support of existing conceptualizations of intercultural communication competence

As we reviewed in chapter two, conceptualizations of intercultural communication competence proffered by more "mainstream" approaches to the focal phenomena share similar features with both ethnographic and ethnomethodological uses of the idea of communicative competence. While similarities exist, it is also the case that the framing of the concepts vary significantly. By and large, the mainstream approaches to ICC place the greatest priority on determining individual subject's knowledge, attitudes, or behavior as being more or less "competent." As Kim (1991) noted, "By far the most frequent goal of ICC research has been the identification of variables that could be used as 'predictors' of effective

intercultural performance" (p. 260). An assumed ideal intercultural interactant works as a standard for describing and measuring others against.

In contrast, an ethnographic approach attempts to understand competence as it occurs in specific encounters constrained by a given speech community. Also, both an ethnographic and ethnomethodological perspective of competence places the specific, actual, interaction as the object of investigation. Nonetheless, some similarities between the mainstream approaches and interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency are worth mentioning. In particular, conceptualizations of "culture general" competence share some features with the special interactive competence described in this study. Kim (1991) articulated the distinction between culture-specific communication competence and culture-general (intercultural) communication competence. While a culture-specific definition refers to competencies one must know or possess to interact effectively in a given culture (similar to but not identical with a Hymesian conceptualization), culture-general (universal) competence could be generally described as the "capacity to manage the varied contexts of the intercultural encounter regardless of the specific culture involved" (Kim, 1991, p. 265). The special interactive competence described in this study is apparently universal,

but the ways in which it is manifested are not. Kim specified the key challenges that the intercultural interactant must "manage" as "cultural difference/unfamiliarity, intergroup posture, and the accompanying stress" (p. 265). Although not explicitly argued for in this study, interactive-competence-in-spite-of-linguistic-deficiency could be viewed as a way of managing these key challenges. However, these ways of managing are embodied practices,² not something the individual possesses or performs.

These and other lines of convergence, including an accord between various theories of language use, should be investigated further, potentially enlarging a shared repertoire between scholars representing a wide spectrum of perspectives and methods. The relationships linking and distinguishing the lines of research briefly presented here are ill defined and clearly the subject of some controversy. However, the usefulness of exploring the fit of the puzzle pieces seems obvious as well.

Chapter Endnotes

1. The phrase originated in Garfinkel's (1967) analysis of the coding of psychiatric clinic folders. Several ad hoc considerations, such as "let it pass," "et cetera," and "unless," were used by the coders "in order to recognize the relevance of coding instructions to the organized activities of the clinic" (p. 20-21).
2. Clues to a further analysis of such embodied practices may be found in Garfinkel, 1988, Garfinkel and Wieder 1992, and Lynch, 1996. Also useful here would be Dreyfus' discussion of the variety of embodied skills.

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Appendix A

Transcribing Conventions

Wha[t did [You	Overlapping square brackets between two lines of talk indicate overlapping speech.
(1.3)	Numbers in parenthesis indicate the time interval between utterances. Time intervals of less than .4 seconds are typically not indicated. In some cases in the transcription here, smaller intervals were indicated to demonstrate the stammering style of the speaker.
end of line= =start of line	Equal signs are latching symbols. These are used to indicate both same speaker continuation that has been divided to accommodate another speaker's overlapping speech, and also next speaker utterances that occur without any hesitation after the current speaker.
a <u>marked</u> word	Underlining a word, phrase, or letter(s) indicates an utterance said with emphasis.
Oh:	Colon(s) after a letter indicate an extended sound. More colons indicate a longer sound.
(Whaki)	Parenthesis around an utterance indicate that the exact word or sounds were not quite distinguishable on the tape, or the transcription is in doubt.
((laughing))	Double parenthesis around a description indicate transcriber comments.
hhh	Indicates laughter, or in some instances an audible exhaling.
?	Indicates an increase in pitch at the end of the word.
°yes°	Degree signs around utterances indicate it was said more softly than the surrounding utterances.

Appendix B

All of Transcribed "Whatyan be wahn" Conversation Segment

1 S3: (Whatyan be wahn) ((singing))
 2 (2.0)
 3 B: Thats not English ((dramatically))
 4 S3: hhh the song
 5 B: I dont care ((dramatically)) (1.1) I cant
 6 understand it ((said quickly))
 7 S1: Lo:nly:
 8 S3: he sai:d (1.0) [()]
 9 B: [are there lots ov lo:nly songs in
 10 English too you [could be singing
 11 S3: [(I dot agin) I know
 12 S1: lownly
 13 S3: Thisa he said
 14 S1: [how do you feel (1.0) lownly
 15 S3: So[an then I tell call you
 16 B: [ya: ithow sa:d
 17 S1: This is a sad or happy or=
 18 B: ya: well sad is when your lonly [when your lonely=
 19 S1: [ya
 20 B: you feel [sad
 21 S1: [when your lonely or sad
 22 B: [sure (.5) usually
 23 S2: [(wh)]
 24 B: ya
 25 S1: usually sad
 26 B: No one is with you (1.0) and you feel sad (said
 27 sadly)

Appendix C

All of Transcribed "I finish" Conversation Segment

Conv. D3 (I finish)

1 S3: I finish

2 T: You? Finish:ts?=
 3 S3: =uh huh=

4 T: =alright ((crisp t)) you dont have any homework
 5 this week now did you have I need I need both of
 6 those copie[s the first copy too okay=

7 S3: [oh hyes

8 S3: =yes

((student presumably walks away, then asks question from
 some distance))

9 (6.4)

10 S3: and I need to: (togara ahta no [batsa)

11 T: [uh: ya you can do
 12 it or I can do it later[it doesnt=

13 S3: [no I donwant

14 T: =make any difference=

15 S3: =I can do it=

16 T: kay

((student presumably walks away or does what the they were
 referring to, e.g., putting paper together))

17 (9.8)

18 S3: Thank you

19 T: Thank you? (1.0) have a good weekend

20 S3: Thank you you too ((from a distance))

21 T: Okay?

Appendix D

All of Transcribed "Whats the reason" Conversation Segment

Conv. B8 (Whats the reason)

- 1 A: Whats whats the reason (.5) yaknow
 2 P: eh[h
 3 A: [didizeaze or (.8) or (.9) whats (.9) whats goin
 4 on
 5 (1.7)
 6 A: [(whaki)
 7 O: [(con [)
 8 B: [What went on
 9 (.8)
 10 A: What? ((Quickly, softly, with emphasis))
 11 B: What went on h pas tense
 12 A: What went
 13 B: Ya [what happened (("p" and "d" said crisply))
 14 A: [or
 15 A: What went o[n
 16 O: [whthapend
 17 A: ya what [went on
 18 B: [What happened=
 19 P: =ehh (.8) in in this co:ld (1.0) ya know di (.7)
 20 ohr (bahl) this poh[r()of
 21 A: [ya pohr ya
 22 B: °mhm°
 23 A: Ya like that
 24 B: Ya
 25 P: E he: playin [with her friend no: with her with h=
 26 A: [yes (.5) good
 27 P: =his [friend
 28 B: [his friend hh ya
 29 P: Yes an: (1.4) ehr: (1.1) dehr: (1.0) de girl? De
 30 (1.0) she prac she: °practiced°?

- 31 A: Ya
32 B: Thre[w?
33 A: [She played
34 P: Yaes=
35 B: =You mean threw?
36 P: Ye[s
37 A: [Threw the buhl of (hetchy)=
38 P: =practy threw: an: an: he walkn an eh [eh de bahl=
39 B: [uh huh
40 go:sh ((said sympathetically))
41 P: =(yes) (or "hits") (°he dead°)
42 A: de ball it hurt
43 B: I'm sorry: ((said softly))
44 (3.7)

Appendix E

All of Transcribed "I had a dream" Conversation Segment

Conv. B3 (Suprize day)

- 1 B: Oh I was going to tape a television show for you
- 2 guys and I forgot
- 3 (2.0)
- 4 S1: Yaknow [it surprize day
- 5 B: [thee
- 6 (1.5)
- 7 S1: Also also yesterda also yesterday night (.5) also
- 8 last night (.5) [they have
- 9 B: [Its what surprize day?
- 10 S1: I had a dream ya
- 11 B: You had a dream
- 12 S1: Ya
- 13 B: Whata bout
- 14 S1: About my u nephew and uh (.5) neice
- 15 B: uh huh
- 16 S2: neice?
- 17 S1: nephew and neice
- 18 (1.0)
- 19 S3: no? heedah brother heedabrother? (Daya) [(da...)
- 20 B: [yer
- 21 brother or sisterz children (.5) a nephew is a
- 22 bo:y: [(5) a neice is girl
- 23 S2: [oh
- 24 S1: hhh sorry about that=
- 25 B: =thats alright? (1.5) thats what were here for
- 26 nephew is your brother or sisterz sona (.5) and a
- 27 neice (.5) is your brother or sisterz daughter
- 28 (5.0)
- 29 S1: [(b) (2.0) ((clears throat))
- 30 S3: [(g)

- 31 B: so what did you dream about with yer nephew and
 32 yer neice?
- 33 S1: I dreamed I ((cough)) I logged my country and I
 34 hugged dthem yah because because I loved them (.5)
 35 too much
- 36 S1: Becaus[e everyday
- 37 B: [(very (.5) very much)
- 38 S1: Thank you because every day afternoon when I'm
 39 (.5) back my (1.0) (sport) I take him to
 40 supermarket and buy everything for him (.5) sweets
 42 choclates many things y'know hhh (.5) I like him
- 43 B: they're gonna be fat
- 44 S1: no: just because they're children (.5) very y'know
 45 (.5) stu: too uh they move everytime
- 46 B: uh [huh
- 47 S3: [yah ()
- 48 B: They do move a lot
- 49 S1: What?
- 50 B: Children do move a lot [(5) especially if you
- 51 S1: [yah theh do move a lot
- 52 B: feed them lots of sugar
- 53 S3: Lots owf sugar hhh
- 54 S1: hhh
- 55 B: Then they move a lot a lot
- 56 S1: sure
- 57 B: They dont know[(5) They dont know what they want
- 58 S1: [()
- 59 (1.0)
- 60 S1: Whhat? ((High pitch, quiet))
- 61 B: They dont know what they want (.5) butja[ya ga=
- 62 S1: [Ya
- 63 B: =(5) [yahavta (1.0)
- 64 S1: [justa:

- 65 B: Was it good that you dreamed about them (.5) or:=
66 S1: No good dream=
67 B: =good dream=
68 S1: =ya good dream
69 B: okay

Appendix F



The University of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

October 20, 1997

Mr. Michael S. Fairley
2104 Four Seasons
Durant, Oklahoma 74701

Dear Mr. Fairley:

Your research proposal, "Native/Non-Native English Speaking Conversations," has been reviewed by Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, and found to be exempt from the requirements for full board review and approval under the regulations of the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Activities.

Should you wish to deviate from the described protocol, you must notify me and obtain prior approval from the Board for the changes. If the research is to extend beyond twelve months, you must contact this office, in writing, noting any changes or revisions in the protocol and/or informed consent form, and request an extension of this ruling.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

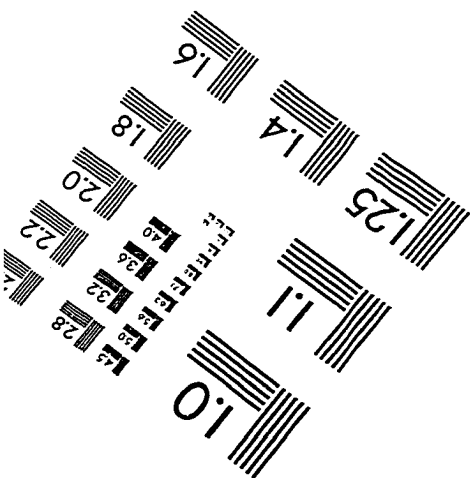
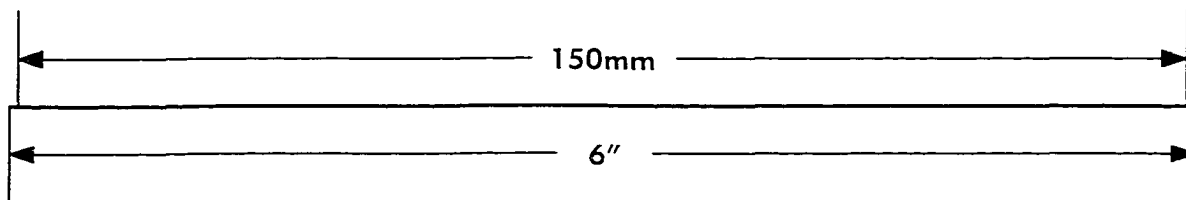
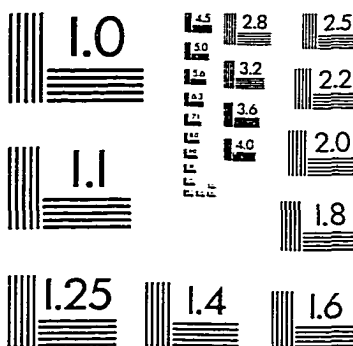
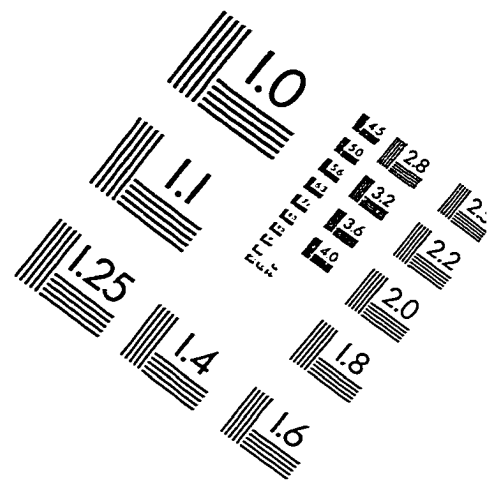
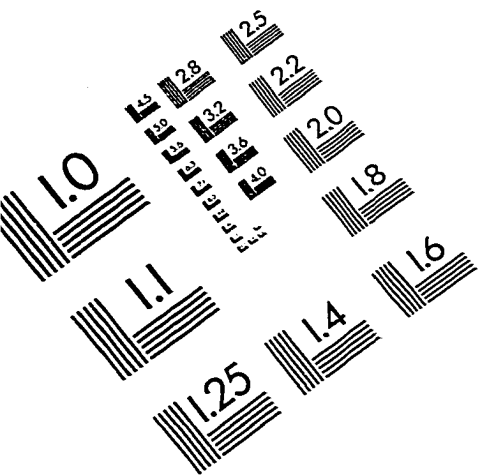
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Karen M. Petry".

Karen M. Petry
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board

KMP:pw
98-050

cc: Dr. E. Laurette Taylor, Chair, IRB
Dr. D. L. Wieder, Faculty Sponsor, Communication

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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