

**NEGOTATING CULTURES:
A CASE STUDY OF COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS
BETWEEN JAPANESE STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH
PAIRED WITH AMERICAN STUDENTS LEARNING JAPANESE**

by

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ABSTRACT

Negotiated interaction among language learners has been well researched to identify learner strategies which surface in collaborative conversational interaction. However, most studies have been confined to populations who are learning English as a second language working with native English speakers or other nonnative speakers. This fails to take into account the scope of possibilities a more linguistically and culturally balanced perspective could reveal about negotiated interaction.

This study explored negotiated interaction and language use between four American college students learning Japanese paired with four Japanese students learning English. Performing simultaneously as teacher and student in an informal conversational activity, each participant was equally responsible to attempt target forms and to present model forms of communication as cultural similarities and differences were explored together.

Significant findings from the present study fell into three basic categories. First, the data revealed the actual distribution of English and Japanese in each dyad and determined the percentages of first or second language utterances for each participant, thus giving a clear

representation of the amount and type of language being generated in the informal dialogs, and also revealing glaring imbalances both in quantities of input per participant and in language distribution between English and Japanese. The Japanese participants spoke considerably less than their American partners, and English far outweighed Japanese in its usage.

Regarding negotiated interaction, comprehension checks, feedback requests, confirmation checks, and clarification requests, as well as language modification in the form of self-correction, other-correction, completion requests, and other-completion utterances were tallied and compared, revealing an unexpectedly large number of self- and other-corrections in both languages, dominance of the American students in initiating conversations, and a large number of language specific feedback requests discussing grammar, pronunciation, and lexical gaps.

Participants also shared their own perceptions of the learning and teaching experiences that took place in the dyads and expressed positive and enthusiastic responses, indicative of the intrinsic motivation this learning environment evoked and the value conversation partner programs may hold in second language acquisition.

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- CHAPTER ONE -

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of this Study

This study explored negotiated interaction in dyads whose participants were at relative linguistic and cultural parity to each other, in an effort to assess how such partners would initiate negotiation sequences and modify output in unstructured conversational situations.

Additionally, the balance of language usage (Japanese and English) was examined, and instances of negotiation and modification sequences were compared in each language group and for each individual in an effort to determine what, if any, significant negotiation patterns emerged. Lastly, participants were asked to discuss and evaluate their own experiences and opinions concerning this type of unstructured collaborative language learning activity.

Native Japanese speakers learning English were paired with native English speakers learning Japanese to discuss their respective cultures and collaboratively take turns steering their way through the intricacies of conversational interaction in both their first and second languages. Performing simultaneously as teacher and student, each participant was equally responsible to

attempt target forms and to present model forms of communication as cultural similarities and differences were explored together. Informal dialogs between the four pairs of conversation partners, were recorded, coded, and analyzed for examples of negotiation in informal, non-structured interaction in both languages.

Personal experience and observations of similar pairings of students in conversation programs over the years, along with anecdotal evidence and scores of program evaluations touting the benefits of such interactions prompted me to take a closer look at the actual learning and teaching these partnerships are capable of, as well as the shortcomings such arrangements may have. However, despite a wealth of research exploring negotiated interaction in its various native speaker (NS) - non-native speaker (NNS) or NNS-NNS arrangements, very few studies have looked into negotiation as it pertains to this particular situation or population of language learners.

Such information would be very significant in helping language programs, facilitators, and second language learners to achieve the maximum benefits from one-on-one interaction in a balanced and positive manner. More relevant activities could be arranged, protocols or curricula could be better developed, and the educational

legitimacy of programs which are often viewed as extracurricular or one-sided in favor of ESL students could be reevaluated and further promoted to benefit both participants to a greater degree. As it stands now, many conversation partner or community interaction programs may be missing an opportunity to improve the success of their activities because few studies have been conducted to date to provide recommendations or proven guidelines for success.

Significant findings from the present study fell into three basic categories. First, the data revealed the actual distribution of English and Japanese in each dyad and determined the percentages of first or second language utterances for each participant, thus giving a clear representation of the amount and type of language being generated in the informal dialogs, and also revealing glaring imbalances both in quantities of input per participant and in language distribution between English and Japanese. Without this data, it would be very difficult to ascertain the true level of participation and balance occurring in pair work, and the benefits or shortcomings individuals may have been experiencing.

The second relevant contribution this study offers is a careful look at negotiated interaction as it occurred in

initiation of negotiation sequences through comprehension checks, feedback requests, confirmation checks, and clarification requests, as well as language modification in the form of self-correction, other-correction, completion requests, and other-completion. Again, the actual number of these utterances were further broken down into categories representing Japanese and English in both first and second languages. It was hoped that by using fairly standard and widely accepted categories for negotiation (Doughty & Pica, 1986; Shi, 1998) this data might contribute to the greater understanding of particular instances of negotiated interaction.

Distinct patterns emerged in the performance of self- and other corrections which showed an unusually high proportion of corrections when compared with the results presented in a study by Chun, Day, Chenoweth, and Luppescu (1982) of informal conversations between NSs and NNSs. That study concluded that error corrections made by the NSs were relatively rare, and usually occurred when there was a factual error. Many of the corrections I observed were explicit self- or other-corrections in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. The results of the present research may be due in part to the collaborative aspect of these dyads and the resultant reduction in concern for

"face". Concern for etiquette and ego may have been replaced by a mutual desire to benefit from the other's status as expert while commiserating with one another's struggles as second language learners.

Lastly, the third, and perhaps most important group of findings in this study came directly from the participants themselves as they related their unique and highly relevant perspectives on the conversational activity and the experiences and perceptions they remembered through the stimulated recall sessions afterwards. There were many constructive suggestions to improve the conversation partner process, and many positive comments about the experience.

1.2 Synopsis of the Remaining Chapters

The following is a brief synopsis of the remaining chapters and their organization. Chapter 2 will present a review of empirical studies divided into two categories: negotiated interaction, which is further divided into NNS-NNS and NNS-NS groupings; then informal conversational activities will be compared to structured conversational activities. The chapter will end with an overview of broader sociocultural considerations, as well as an argument for the relevance of the present study.

Chapter 3 presents the current study, first by outlining gaps in previous research, followed by the three main research questions which form the basis of this study. Next, the following items are addressed: the methodology, including information on the site, participants, investigator, and procedures for data collection. The data analysis will then be introduced along with definitions of coding markers, interrater reliability, and examples of transcriptions with coding. Findings and discussion follow in Chapter 4 for each of the research questions. Chapter 5 presents a final summary of the results, tables, and implications for future research and pedagogical applications.

- CHAPTER TWO -

2.0 Review of Empirical Literature

The goal of this study is to explore negotiated interaction and language use between American students learning Japanese paired with Japanese students learning English when they are placed in an informal setting and encouraged to assist each other in acquiring language and cultural knowledge while interacting in unstructured conversations of their own making using whichever languages they prefer. This chapter will examine the many definitions of negotiation, then will discuss various aspects of group or pair work in formal and informal conversational situations. A review of relevant research on negotiated interaction among NNS-NNS and NNS-NS, and conversational activities, both formal and informal, will be presented. Lastly, the effects of groups or pairs on findings will be considered.

2.1 Negotiation: Broadly Defined

The original term 'negotiation', by definition has assorted lay interpretations which add depth and relevance when reflected in the interpretations assigned to

'negotiation' in Applied Linguistics. According to Webster's dictionary, the verb 'negotiate' means:

to communicate or confer with another so as
to arrive at a settlement of some matter:
meet with another so as to arrive through
discussion at some kind of agreement or
compromise about something: come to terms...
to deal with (some matter or affair that
requires ability for its successful
handling): manage, handle, conduct: to
arrange for or bring about through
conference and discussion: work out or
arrive at or settle upon by meetings and
agreements and compromise: to influence
successfully in a desired way by discussions
and agreements and compromise: to transfer
or assign to another by delivery or
endorsement or both in return for equivalent
value... to successfully get over or across (as
a road) or up or down (as a hill) or through
(as an obstacle): to encounter and dispose
of (as problem, challenge) with completeness
and satisfaction: tackle successfully:
complete, accomplish... (Gove, 1986).

As the term 'negotiation' pertains to second language acquisition, there are many additional nuances and interpretations to consider, but the tangible personal rewards associated with successfully overcoming a challenge, whether small or large, in second language communication, should not be forgotten when the linguistic vernacular applies the word to a speech act or grammar point.

2.1.1 Negotiation: in Language Learning

Starting from a broad, macrolevel perspective, negotiation occurs within conversational situations pragmatically regarding speakers' beliefs and background attitudes, understanding of context, and familiarity with how language can be manipulated and applied. Semantically speaking, negotiation of content and meaning has been identified through the use of specific patterns of requests and validations. Syntax comes into play when speakers negotiate or exchange grammar rules either implicitly or explicitly, while morphological negotiation is evident when speakers discuss and repair language at the level involving word formation and interpretation. A closer look at language negotiation reveals processes in

which phonetics and phonology are adapted or corrected, including pronunciation and patterns of speech sounds. Taken as a whole, negotiation in SLA offers a broad range of investigative opportunities (Nakahama, Tyler, & van Lier, 2001).

2.2 Introduction to Research in Negotiated Interaction

Research in both formal and informal learning environments has shown negotiated interaction to have a significant, though varied, influence on language acquisition (Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Nakahama et al., 2001; Shi, 1998). Negotiation in second language interaction has broad relevance and can be viewed with a wide spectrum of interpretations ranging from the microscopic end of the scale with specifics to do with pronunciation to a wider, macroscopic position involving general steering of conversational topics, tone, and turn taking (Nakahama et al., 2001). The following is a review of the literature pertaining to negotiated interaction divided in to NNS-NS and NNS-NNS categories based on the arrangement and backgrounds of participants in each study. Section 2.3 will look at research in formal and informal conversational settings.

2.2.1 Research Involving NNS-NS & NNS-NNS Participants

A broad 'global' approach to categorizing content and discourse sequences was one of several tactics quantitatively documented in a recent comparative analysis of information gap activities and conversational interaction, which separated, identified, and tallied specific 'triggers' for repair negotiations. "Global triggers involved elements such as anaphoric reference, deixis, interpretation of an entire utterance, and elements that can cause a reanalysis of more than one turn" (Nakahama et al., 2001, pp. 384-385).

Far removed from the effects of global and repair negotiation, negotiation of the finer points of pronunciation can also be examined. The following is an example of a pronunciation trigger and repair from the Nakahama et al. study (2001, p.385):

Sumiko (NNS): Preschool...? [prEskul]

Rita (NS): Pre-school...? [priskul]

Sumiko: Pre-school. [priskul]

Even in a NS-NNS combination, one can assume that the pressure is considerably less than a student would feel if singled out by a teacher in front of the class for correction.

The results of the Nakahama et al. study revealed that

in conversational activities, an average of 76% of all repair negotiations employed global triggers, versus more specific indicators such as pronunciation, morphosyntactic, and lexical triggers. However, this percentage dropped to 25.6% in the information gap activities, ostensibly due to dominant need of that activity to compare and gather specific and co-relational data, as represented by a 55% average of lexical triggers.

NSs and NNSs interaction was examined by Chun, Day, Chenoweth, and Luppescu (1982) the conclusion was made that error corrections by the NSs were relatively rare, and usually occurred when there was a factual error, then discourse and vocabulary were revised, though grammar was rarely corrected.

Data was gathered from a variety of adult subjects with varying degrees of English fluency as they conducted informal recorded conversations with native English speaking friends outside of the classroom. There were no restrictions on the topics for discussion, and the NNS were responsible for conducting the taping. Twenty pairs were recorded twice, for about twenty minutes each time, then the 15 hours of discourse was analyzed to determine the number of NNS errors and the percentage of error corrections NSs made when speaking with their NNS friends.

The findings showed that only 8.9% of NNSs' errors were corrected. It is also significant to note that the percentage of errors that were corrected decreased from 13.4% for beginning level students to only 3.0% for students with advanced ESL abilities, and that most error corrections were related to factual information and that this could be due to the possible constraints of social etiquette regarding the impropriety of correcting a relative stranger's mistakes.

However, a comparison study between NNS-NNS peer group and NS(teacher)-NNS by Shi (1998) examined negotiated interaction features such as comprehension checks, feedback requests, clarification requests, and confirmation checks, as well as instances of speech modification, including error correction, to ascertain the levels and types of negotiated interaction and their frequencies.

Three NS(teacher)-NNS groups and NNS-NNS peer group discussions were audio taped, transcribed, analyzed, and compared. The results indicated that while NS(teacher)-NNS instances of negotiation were not as frequent as in the peer groups, the teacher-led interactions provided more accurate language modeling of English than the NNS-NNS groups and also provided more in depth and extended instances of negotiation. Student feedback indicated that

value was placed on both methods of interaction, and that students perceived both activities to be meaningful and productive for learning languages.

Based on these findings, the next question that begs to be explored is whether NSs who are not teachers, but have a vested interest in sharing languages with NNSs, would achieve similar types of negotiated interaction as the teacher led groups in Shi's study (1998), or whether they would fall into the pattern of NS-NNS interaction that Chun et al. (1982) observed.

2.3 Informal Conversation

Spontaneous collaborative conversational interaction provides an opportunity for second language development and cultural exchange in a more natural environment with reduced affective factors and greater individual autonomy (Richards, 1980). The following sections will examine research which has taken a closer look at informal and formal conversational interaction and the resultant effects on negotiation.

2.3.1 Conversation: A Means to an End

The significance of the verbal activity identified as negotiated interaction is fundamentally derived from the

belief that language, whether native or non-native, is a humanistic, socially driven tool for communication (Di Pietro, 1987). The need to exchange information is a catalyst for human conversation; however, communication in the form of conversational interaction is not only a benefit derived from learning languages but is purported to be a significant influence on the language development itself. Vygotsky asserts that second language learners actually develop specific cognitive processes, or *regulation*, through conversing with other individuals, thus directly affecting development and performance in the target language (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). Additional studies by Carroll and Swain (1992, 1993), and van Lier (1988) have explored this concept further to assess corrective feedback and collaboration processes between novices and experts in the target language (Lantolf, 2000). Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) identified this sociocultural approach to language development as "the study of how mediational means are appropriated by the individual as a result of dialogic interaction with other individuals (p.467)." The authors then went on to conclude that such mediation is critical for feedback to be relevant as a form of regulation (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994, p. 480), validating the importance of small group or pair work, as the following

research points out.

2.3.2 Naturalistic Learning through Group and Pair work

Pedagogically speaking, Brown (1994) defines group or pair work as a "multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language" (p.173).

Numerous studies tout the benefits of group or pair work in the classroom as an opportunity for increased production and participation on the part of individual students (Long & Porter, 1985). In an effort to achieve a natural linguistic environment, Brumfit maintains that "the use of pair and group work is the only available basis for naturalistic behavior in conversational interaction in class..." (1984, p.87). Furthermore, in order to develop truly natural language, such conversations must occur outside of the classroom through opportunities for community and social involvement, which nourish target language exposure and development in an informal setting (Rivers, 1983).

Klein (1986) argues that further research in naturalistic language learning is essential to fully understand second language acquisition. Studies of spontaneous learning may reveal processes spared the

inherent side effects of contrived linguistic situations found in typical classroom activities. Furthermore, Klein suggests the possibility that learners may even harbor an underlying resistance to formalized instruction which further research in naturalistic language settings could reveal.

However, reality dictates that many learners of a second language may not have the opportunity to engage in spontaneous and natural conversations with native speakers due to geographical and cultural isolation, in which case the formal classroom setting may be the only realistic avenue of learning available (Johnson, 1992). Johnson goes on to posit:

... because naturalistic and tutored learning are not completely distinguishable, and because both kinds of learning occur inside and outside of classrooms and schools, there is little reason that research conducted in informal environments should be valued as more basic and thus more important than research conducted in formal situations (p. 12).

2.3.3 Benefits of Unstructured Conversations

While the statement by Johnson in the previous section

reflects a position that has been fairly standard in SLA research, the study by Nakahama et al. (2001) also revealed compelling evidence to indicate that both the quality and quantity of negotiation sequences and opportunities for language use were greater in unstructured conversations. Their discourse analysis compared the conversational activities of NS-NNS dyads both qualitatively and quantitatively as they negotiated meaning in both a structured information gap activity and a relatively unstructured conversational activity. The dialogs were designed to approximate natural conversation in an attempt to ascertain the types of learning opportunities available and the means by which negotiation may take place within such activities. The conversation gap activity was a typical problem solving task involving two pictures containing similarities and differences that participants were asked to verbally compare. The findings not only support the value of further research of naturalistic conversation, but also maintain that controlled activities, such as the information gap presented, result in shorter and less complete utterances when compared to the richer, more complex discourses obtained from unfettered conversations (Nakahama, Tyler, & van Lier, 2001).

Such research not only points to the benefits of

informal conversation in second language education, but validates the need for language learners and educators to seek access to authentic interaction and extracurricular exposure in the target language, in addition to expounding on opportunities for spontaneous learning in the classroom.

2.3.4 Criticism of Unstructured Conversations

Another perspective on informal conversations between NSs and NNSs can be found in the aforementioned research by Chun et al. (1982) in which the authors conclude that error corrections by the NSs were relatively rare, and usually occurred when there was a factual error, then discourse and vocabulary were revised, though grammar was rarely corrected.

The researchers went on to point out the possible constraints of social etiquette regarding the impropriety of correcting a relative stranger's mistakes and cautioned researchers to take care with laboratory formed dyads used solely for the purpose of generating data, as the language obtained may not be "natural" in the sense desired. The question also remains, what do the NNSs actually learn from these corrections?

2.3.5 A Positive Affective Climate

Besides promoting increased individual student output and interaction, studies have shown that group or pair work significantly reduces the negative affective factors which can impede learning and self-expression (Long & Porter, 1985, p. 211). This more intimate environment is less intimidating than performing in front of a class full of students with the authority figure, the teacher, measuring and judging every utterance. In a dyad composed of NS/NNS-NNS/NS, neither has the upper hand or is more of an expert than the other. Both have comparable strengths and weaknesses, and the stigma of speaking out and possibly faltering is usually less frightening. In addition to ready access to comprehensible input and interaction, motivation has been shown to be greater, and more language practice opportunities are available in pair or small group work (Long & Porter, 1985; Stevick, 1996).

2.4 Broader Sociocultural Considerations

Universities and colleges throughout the United States attract and recruit international students in an effort to provide greater educational opportunities, to promote globalization and diversity of ideas, and to generate revenue. Most schools provide or arrange for the ESL

instruction necessary to bring students up to a level of proficiency that will allow them to function effectively in mainstream courses. Until such proficiency is attained, international students often find themselves sequestered in ESL classroom isolation with the burden of assimilation resting on their shoulders. In the meantime, regular students go on about their college life, missing the chance to interact with and learn from these students next door.

2.4.1 Language Socialization Through Cooperative Multicultural Learning

Culture and language are intertwined in a symbiotic balance of power. To remove the cultural component from a language study eliminates the very fiber which creates the texture and depth of communication. Without cultural contexts, words become mere links in a chain, mechanical and impersonal. Brown states,

"A single sentence can seldom be fully analyzed without considering its context. We use language as stretches of discourse. We string many sentences together in cohesive units such that sentences bear interrelationship..." (p. 189).

Without context, he goes on to say, it would be difficult to communicate clearly due to potential ambiguity, whether

in speech or in writing.

Context is crucial. It is more than simply a causal variable. Sociocultural studies have highlighted this point by focusing on task and activity settings; on content and meaning; on task accomplishment; on social precursors to individual cognition; and on enculturation (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984, Duff, 1995). Furthermore, greater appreciation is now being given to multicultural settings as valuable environments for successful language socialization (Barron, 1991). Collin Barron questions, "...if it is felt worthwhile to include the culture of the target language, is it not just as worthwhile to include the (L2) students' culture (Barron, 1991, p. 174)?"

As for the benefits of multicultural environments for non-native speakers' language acquisition, Harklau states:

The evaluation of mainstream classrooms as spoken language acquisition environments rests not only on input received, but on opportunities for output and the entire process of interaction. The productive use of an L2 and feedback from native speakers is also a major component in the process of second language acquisition (Harklau, 1994, p.249).

Cooperative activities provide the ideal environment

for mutually beneficial learning to take place. According to McGroarty, "Research on cooperative learning in settings of linguistic diversity corroborates the advantages of cooperative instruction shown in settings where all students speak the same language (1992, p. 59)." McGroarty goes on to state that, "... repair sequences, where learners negotiate meaning between themselves, were frequent ..." (p. 62), and that a study with Spanish speaking students showed that "... academic use of the primary language helps students master English (p. 63)."

Additional research by Delpit (1988) and De la luz Reyes (1992) reminds us that in order for cooperative learning to flourish, teachers and facilitators must possess a commitment to diversity, as well as thorough training in appropriate theory and techniques in order to achieve the desired results for all students.

Studies by Albrechtsen et al., (1980), have measured native speaker reaction to nonnative speech and have demonstrated the irritating effects of certain L2 communication strategies, including interlanguage and accent. Hadley (1993) insists that many American students simply are not well conditioned to deal with foreign people or cultures. Ethnocentricity breeds ignorance, and for that very reason, cross-cultural exchange and discussion is

critical for broadening awareness and providing a much needed opportunity for intercultural interaction.

- CHAPTER THREE -

3.0 Rationale of the Present Study

Few studies have explored the benefits and challenges of a more balanced, two-way approach to second language negotiation in which partners are at approximately equal stages of development in each other's language and cultural exposure, thus being capable of performing dual roles, both as experts and as learners (Kachru, 1994). With this goal in mind, I will now present the underpinnings of the current study starting with gaps in current research pertaining to this topic, followed by the three main research questions I chose to explore, an explanation of their relevance, the methodology employed, followed by the data analysis, findings, tables, and discussion.

The purpose of this study is to explore beyond the typical ESL bias that exists in most second language studies by focusing on negotiated interaction in dyads whose participants are at relative linguistic and cultural parity to each other. Informal one hour long dialogs between four pairs of conversation partners, each studying the other's language and culture, have been recorded, coded, and analyzed for examples of cross-linguistic

negotiation and interaction.

Native Japanese speakers learning English were teamed with native English speakers learning Japanese to discuss their respective cultures and collaboratively take turns steering their way through the intricacies of conversational interaction in both their first and second languages. Performing simultaneously as teacher and student, each participant was equally responsible to attempt target forms and to present model forms of communication as cultural similarities and differences were explored together.

Students' input, perceptions, and feedback were an integral part of this research and were included in the process from start to finish, resulting in an activity with intrinsically motivated participants sharing in contextualized and personally relevant language exchange. Screening participants for second language competencies was intended to provide a more level playing field with less of an affective filter to interfere with natural communication. However, once this study was underway, it became obvious that a more thorough evaluation of participants actual language abilities was needed to achieve the desired balance of language skills.

3.1 Negotiated Interaction: Gaps in Research

Research continues to examine various aspects of negotiated interaction among language learners to identify commonalties and relevant learner strategies which surface specifically in collaborative conversational interaction. Tactics which have been identified and studied include the use of repetition, feedback requests, confirmation checks, and corrections, to name a few. However, most research has been confined to populations who are learning English as a second language. Often these participants come from diverse and disparate linguistic and cultural origins. Such diversity, while beneficial in its own right, fails to take into account the scope of possibilities a more linguistically and culturally balanced perspective could reveal about negotiated interaction.

Scholarly evidence supports the premise that second language learners derive multiple benefits from conversational exposure to and negotiated interaction with "experts", or native speakers, in the target language (Ellis, 1994; Gass & Veronis, 1984; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara, & Fearnow, 1999; Long, 1983, 1985, 1996; Pica, 1988; Ohta, 2001; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Swain, 1985; Young, 1984). Despite these discoveries, that fundamental essence of language,

communication of meaning, is often overlooked or undervalued, whether in research or in classroom instruction (Chun, Chenoweth, & Luppescu, 1982; Kachru, 1994; Klein, 1986). Studies continue to lean toward the mechanics of language acquisition, particularly in somewhat artificial classroom settings, rather than naturally occurring speech acts in casual, less controlled situations (Nakahama et al., 2001).

3.2 Research Questions

Despite many articles and studies exploring pair work, informal conversations and negotiation in SLA, very few studies went beyond the NS-NNS or NNS-NNS combinations to include mutually compatible language exchange. It is the aim of this study to examine the instances of negotiated interaction in dyads with somewhat comparable language skills to determine the balance between the two languages as well as the speakers, how this is negotiated, and also what linguistic and sociocultural exchanges are evident as expressed during the stimulated recall sessions. The following three research questions form the basis of this thesis and will be examined to determine their significance in language learning applications. The questions are as follows:

- 1) How do conversation partners familiar with each other's languages initiate negotiation sequences and modify their own, or the other's language output in informal conversation?
- 2) What is the balance of Japanese and English being spoken, and how is this reflected in the negotiation and modification sequences?
- 3) What were the participants' perspectives on this conversational activity and how did they remember and describe their experiences and perceptions of learning and teaching through the stimulated recall sessions afterward?

3.2.1 Research Question #1

How do conversation partners familiar with each other's languages initiate negotiation sequences and modify their own, or the other's language output in informal conversation?

Conversational situations can vary considerably depending on the participants and their backgrounds, the setting, and the motivations prompting verbal interactions. Knowing what to say and how to say it

can at times be difficult for speakers in a first language. Add to this the complexities associated with second language use and the myriad of intricacies involved in negotiating non-native cultural, social, and behavioral patterns; and the importance of collaborative efforts toward successful communication between NS and NNS is profoundly evident. According to Ramirez,

Developing oral proficiency in a second language involves a broad range of competencies associated with different conversational situations, topics, and rules for talking. Oral communication includes both transactional uses of language related to the exchange of information and interactional purposes connected with the social functions of speech. Conversations are governed by a number of discourse rules enabling speakers to shift topics, repair problems associated with miscommunication, and maintain interactional sequences (Ramirez, 1995, p. 232).

3.2.2 Research Question #2

What is the balance of Japanese and English being spoken, and how is this reflected in the negotiation and modification sequences?

3.2.3 Research Question #3

What were the participants' perspectives on this conversational activity and how did they remember and describe their experiences and perceptions of learning and teaching through the stimulated recall sessions afterward?

In every dyad, the language production at the end of each hour the conversational interactions were longer, more complex, and more free flowing, as the partners began to get to know each other a bit more and felt more comfortable. Six out of eight of the participants admitted to feeling quite apprehensive before taping the dialogs, but all commented during the debriefing sessions that they enjoyed the exchange and would like to do it again. Three displayed new knowledge that they had gained and retained since their initial conversation partner meeting.

Several valuable suggestions were made by the participants. For example, it was recommended that partners begin getting to know each other in an informal,

social gathering first in order to seek each other out for pairing and to break the ice with less pressure to perform. Also, three participants suggested that some specific topics be provided for discussion to help move the conversations along. All eight participants voiced a strong appreciation for the opportunity to share languages and cultures and all expressed a strong desire continue in a conversation partner arrangement.

3.3 Methodology

The following sections describe the location and environment where this study was conducted, its participants and how they were determined, the investigator's perspectives, and the data collection procedures and how they were applied.

3.3.1 The Site:

In Partnership to Promote Cultural Exchange

The language school at this American community college has long recognized the value of informal conversational opportunities, both in regards to its ESL student population, as well as to the community at large in an effort to cultivate cultural diversity, dialog, and understanding. The language school has developed numerous

successful activities and programs to provide its students opportunities for informal interaction with native English speakers, and the Conversation Partner Program, which has been actively promoted on campus for more than eight years, exemplifies this approach to learning.

Along similar lines, This college describes its mission in the following words: "To meet the diverse, lifelong educational needs of our community and develop the potential of our students ... Fostering and development of values which promote open-mindedness, awareness, sensitivity and respect for differences are encouraged and will be supported (College Catalog, 2001-2)."

In addition to meeting the needs of the community, this college has been actively promoting and recruiting international students and international programs for more than twenty years. The current full-time student population is over 6000, with 180 international students enrolled from 86 countries.

The current conversation partner program promotes the value of diversity at all levels of language ability and recognizes the benefits to both first- and second-language speakers as they negotiate meaning and compare cultures through cooperative learning. CC students learn to work through the many struggles inherent in linguistic and

cross-cultural communication difficulties, while gaining greater appreciation for diversity and the challenges facing their international counterparts. Whenever possible, efforts are made to pair students who are studying each other's languages and cultures, as well as to take care in matching personalities and goals to the best of our ability.

3.3.2 Participants

The participants in this research belonged to the following categories and demographics:

- All were beginning level or high beginning level second language students, with limited experience traveling or living in the country of the target language
- Four were Japanese nationals currently living in the U.S. and learning English as a second language (ESL) at a college based intensive language institute
- Four were native English speakers learning Japanese as a foreign language (JFL)
- An equal number of males and females in each language set was sought in order to form gender diverse pairing; however, the eligible respondents were predominately male in the JFL group and predominately female in the ESL group.

The make up of the pairs was as follows:

Male JFL + Male ESL

Male JFL + Female ESL

Male JFL + Female ESL

Male JFL + female ESL

While gender bias or effect may have influenced the data, it was not intended to be a focus of this study. However, further research comparing the effects of gender on negotiated interaction among second language learners is needed and should be explored further. Likewise, age and economic status was not given consideration at this time. As anticipated given the current makeup of conversation partners at the host institution, the applicants who volunteered to participate in this study fell within the range of 18 to 27 years of age and had skills and experience comparable to at least one year of successful college study in the target language. Participants also had at least some limited cultural experience or knowledge of Japan and the U.S. Applicants with more than one year immersion in the target language country were considered over-qualified and were not included in the study. Applicants were screened for the minimum language requirements mentioned above, then were randomly matched.

PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION

NAME (PSEUDONYM)	COUNTRY	AGE & SEX		LANG. EDUC.		TIME ABROAD TARGET LANG.
IN DYADS:	NATIONALITY		M/F	1-12	TERC.	TOTAL:
'SACHI'	JAPAN	18	F	6 YR.	3 MO.	3 MONTHS
'BRETT'	USA	20	M	0	1 YR.	4 WEEKS
'YASU'	JAPAN	20	M	6 YR.	6 MO.	6 MONTHS
'PETE'	USA	23	M	1 YR.	1 YR.	0
'RIE'	JAPAN	25	F	6 YR.	3 MO.	3 MONTHS
'SAM'	USA	23	M	0	2 YR.	5 WEEKS
'ASUKA'	JAPAN	21	F	6 YR.	6 MO.	10 MONTHS
'TIM'	USA	21	M	0	1 YR.	4 WEEKS

3.3.3 The Investigator

It is important to clarify my roles at the language school and the college, as well as to explain the perspective I have taken in this research. At the time of this writing I am the director of the language school, as well as the Japanese language instructor for the college, though none of the participants were students of mine at the time of this study. With over twelve years' experience teaching ESL and JFL, I have long pondered and explored the opportunities available for the two student populations I work most closely with to team up and learn from each other.

By administering the conversation partner program, I have had many opportunities to observe student pairs teaching and learning from each other, and have witnessed firsthand the enthusiasm and dynamic learning that can take place. In addition, I have reviewed the quarterly participant evaluations of the conversation partner program for many years and have consistently been impressed by the numbers of and types of positive responses. A common challenge I face every quarter is finding enough volunteers to replace the many who stay with their partners quarter after quarter, sometimes over several years.

Personally, I have also been fortunate to have had a wide variety of learning environments in which to study Japanese myself, and found the most rewarding and productive means of obtaining language and culture by far to be through a very balanced and mutual exchange with a Japanese friend who was equally motivated to learn English. Our language abilities were comparable, and our many interests similar, so we consciously devoted ourselves to helping each other with our second languages and focused on actively learning whenever we were together.

For all of these reasons I have chosen to conduct the following research in the hopes that it might encourage like studies and greater understanding of this relatively untapped resource, as well as provide much needed data to determine the true extent of learning and exchange that takes place.

3.3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The goals and perspectives of the participants were significant, given that the participants were already striving to learn and understand each other's languages and cultures. Therefore, the participants were involved in the research from beginning to end through the use of self-generated conversation topics and stimulated reflection

based on reviewing and discussing the video with the researcher individually, in addition to observations, audio, and video recordings. Each dyad met once for a one hour conversation, then each participant spent approximately one and a half hours alone with the researcher in stimulated recall reviewing the video. None of the participants had met their dyad partners prior the video taped interaction.

Audio recordings were part of every meeting, whether with conversation partners or individual interviews. However, only the conversation partner tapes were completely transcribed and coded.

Video recordings were made once for each set of partners in order to document body language, gestures, and any written cues. Physical gestures are a significant factor in communication and to rely purely on audio transcriptions for evidence of negotiated meaning, comprehension, and error correction is tantamount to trying to fully understand a movie with eyes closed. The focus of this study was not gestures, but the visual record of their interactions provided sociolinguistically richer data. Videotapes were compared to the audio transcriptions and gestures or actions were noted on the transcripts.

3.4 Data Analysis

The following are the eight coding inscriptions utilized in this study, there definitions, and sample utterances based on the research and coding applied by Shi (1998).

Example 1Coding Abbreviations & Terminology

(Note: examples and terminology taken from Shi, 1998, pp. 60-68)

Initiating Negotiation:

CC = Comprehension Checks

("Do you understand me?")

FB = Feedback Requests

("Is this your idea, Kim?")

CF = Confirmation Checks

("Lower?")

(Often repeats info. in question form...)

CR = Clarification Requests

("What's that?")

Modification:

sc = Self-correction

(Makes adjustments to own output)

oc = Other-correction

(Makes adjustments to another's output)

pr = Completion Requests

("and in some...")

*(Incomplete sentence with the expectation
that another will 'fill in the blanks')*

op = Other-completion

(Fills in the blanks, or gaps, for another)

Prior to commencing the coding, a section was chosen at random from the complete transcriptions and an intercoder reliability of 89% was attained with another researcher in the SLA field.

3.4.1 Audio & Video Recordings

Four audio recordings of conversation partner meetings, each one hour in length, comprised the bulk of the data for transcription. Japanese segments were transcribed into romanized alphabet to allow access to more readers. The translations of the Japanese portions of the dialogs are shown in brackets.

Four video segments (one per pair) were visually transcribed for gestures and body language, and those activities that pertained to code switching and negotiation, and specific teaching or learning activities were noted on the audio transcripts. Japanese first and second language utterances and English first and second language utterances were tallied from the audio tape transcription to determine what amounts of the languages were being spoken and by whom. Coding of negotiated sequences was based upon the number and type of comprehension checks, feedback requests, confirmation checks, and clarification requests, and language

modification was coded by self-correction, other-correction, completion requests, and other completion (see Example #1) uttered by either partner, in either language, comprising negotiated interaction and collaborative discourse. These were then compared - first language Japanese, versus first language English - to determine if any patterns emerged.

There was a total of eight individual meetings with participants, one apiece, to view and discuss the videotapes. Participants were asked to stop the tape at any time to comment, and also to note any specific teaching or learning activities they identified. I would also stop the tape periodically to question the participants about certain situations. The participants were also asked to reflect on the activity and share their thoughts. These sessions were audio taped and stimulated recall techniques were employed to attempt to assess the participants' perception of learning. All names have been changed to afford privacy to the participants.

- CHAPTER FOUR -

4.0 Results and Discussions of the Research Questions:

- 1) *How do conversation partners familiar with each other's languages initiate negotiation sequences and modify their own, or the other's language output in informal conversation?*
- 2) *What is the balance of Japanese and English being spoken, and how is this reflected in the negotiation and modification sequences?*
- 3) *What were the participants' perspectives on this conversational activity and how did they remember and describe their experiences and perceptions of learning and teaching through the stimulated recall sessions afterward?*

4.1 Examples Found in the Data

Alterations from second language to first language or back again, termed code switching, was first identified in the transcriptions, then the circumstance around each instance was assessed to determine if and what type of

negotiation was taking place (Shi, 1998).

For example, in the following excerpt, both speakers switch from English to Japanese in an effort to clarify a lexical gap. The translation of the Japanese appears in brackets and is denoted by the [*]:

Example 2: Discussion about writing one's own music

(Please refer to Example #1 for explanations of coding abbreviations and terminology.)

	250	Rie:	Or, ... my words.
CF	251	Sam:	My words...?
cr	252	Rie:	I write...
	253	Sam:	Oh!
FB	254*	Rie:	How do you say... <i>Kashi?</i> <i>Uta no</i> <i>Kashi?</i> [Lyrics? Song's lyrics?]
	255*	Sam:	Uhhh, <i>Wakarimasen</i> . [I don't know.]
cr	256	Rie:	(Gestures writing with hand) Shhh..
op	257	Sam:	Write- Handwriting! Compose, compose.
CF	258	Rie:	Com-compose?
sc/oc	259	Sam/Rie	Compose (Compose...)Compose.
CF	260	Rie:	My compose. No?
oc	261	Sam:	Yeah, you compose.
sc	262	Rie:	My compose... Myself
oc	263	Sam:	Yeah, YOU compose. Um I compose...

As can be seen from the example above, a major breakdown in communication was being experienced at this point. During the stimulated recall session, Rie stopped the tape and shared that in an effort to gain access to the information as quickly as possible, she had tried switching to Japanese in the hopes her partner might be familiar with the vocabulary and understand her. Unfortunately, Sam did not know the Japanese word, but chose to respond in Japanese with *wakarimasen* [I don't know]. The negotiation continued on in English until through the use of gestures and repetition the point was finally understood.

Rather than embarrassment, both participants claimed to have enjoyed the process of figuring out what the other was trying to say. This leads me to believe that contrary to the claims by Hadley (1993), neither participant was seriously annoyed or hindered by the communication breakdown. In fact, it was seen as an opportunity by Sam, who claimed he remembered things better when he and his partner had to stop and "figure things out".

Negotiation relating to pronunciation also comes into play as the "fine tuning" of the language. While errors in pronunciation can cause a complete breakdown in communication, and at times be frustrating to both speaker and listener, often the error in pronunciation is difficult

for the second language learner to detect, even with intentional efforts toward self-monitoring (Yule, Hoffman, & Damico, 1987), as the following short excerpt from Yasu and Pete's conversation will illuminate. In these types of situations, having one-on-one collaborative interaction with a native speaker is invaluable.

Example 3: Discussion about casual greetings.

(Please refer to Example #1 for explanations of coding abbreviations and terminology.)

- FB** 192 Yasu: How about 'fwine'
- CF** 193 Pete: Why?
- CF** 194 Yasu: Fwine... (Wine?) Fwine... I'm fine...
- oc** 195 Pete: Oh, FINE! Fine, fine, ffffine.
- sc** 196 Yasu: Fine!
- oc** 197 Pete: Yeah. I know 'F's are, F's and R's are hard for Japanese... F's... How are you? Fine. It's usually polite, if they ask you something, like, "How are you?" you say, "Fine, how 'bout you?" Does that make sense? (Yeah)
- sc** 198 Yasu: Fine, what's up, what up, (laughs)

Another example, this one taken from Sachi and Brett's discussion, shows both lexical and pronunciation corrections occurring simultaneously in the modification

negotiation regarding the Japanese word *nannen* [how many years] (lines 334-339):

Example 4: Discussion about length of time in the US.

(Please refer to Example #1 for explanations of coding abbreviations and terminology.)

- 333 Brett: Same? Yeah. It gets easier, I think.
- FB** So how long... Nan sen*... eetou,
benkyou shimasu ka. [What (sen)? Umm, do you study?]
- oc** 334 Sachi: *Nannen.* [How many years.]
- sc** 335 Brett: *Nannen... Nansai...* [How many years... How old...]
- CF** 336 Sachi: Nanse?
- CF** 337 Brett: How many years?
- oc** 338 Sachi: *Nannnen*
- sc** 339 Brett: *Nannen? Nannen. Okay. Nannen...*

Working together with a native speaker who may also be struggling with the complementary second language is an ideal opportunity for both partners to learn from each other and develop listening skills capable of determining the L2's sound distinctions. According to Yule et al., (1987), these must first be recognized for proper pronunciation to develop.

Correcting and experimenting with pronunciation in and

of itself is a challenging, and at times, embarrassing, self-conscious endeavor wrought with feelings of foolishness as second language learners fumble to find awkward sounds. As reflected in the examples above, with lowered affective filters, the process may even become fun, with the right conversation partner and language combination.

4.1.1 Additional Communication Strategies

Other communication strategies which were often employed, though not specifically coded in this study included paraphrasing and approximation, in which an incorrect form was intentionally employed as a hint to explain the desired vocabulary item, word coinage, and circumlocution (Tarone, 1981). Tarone goes on to identify the strategy of "borrowing" from one's first language either in direct word for word translation, or in a language switch. Rie attempted such a switch in Example #2 of my data on page 44 in line 254 when she inserted the Japanese word *kashi* into her English sentence when she could not remember the word 'lyric'. In Example #4, line 333, Brett attempted a word for word switch mid sentence from English to Japanese. In most cases, the switches were not abrupt and premeditated utterances, but rather seemed

to be almost accidental or unconscious borrowing from either language when convenient or opportune.

4.1.2 The Dominance of English in Discussions and the Perceptions of Language Abilities

In all but one recorded conversation, English dominated the discussions. In the one conversation that was weighted more heavily toward Japanese with sixty-three percent, it seemed to be more a matter of personalities dictating the balance rather than language skill. A quite shy Japanese female, Yoshie, was randomly matched with Brett, a very outgoing young American male with good Japanese language skills. When Yoshie met to go over the video tape, she commented before the tape was started that her partner had "perfect Japanese!" When I asked her if she had had to slow down or use simple language to assist Brett in his understanding, she adamantly said no, she had not.

However, after viewing the tape, Yoshie was surprised to observe that she had indeed adjusted her language significantly to accommodate her partner, and that his language, though good, was not perfect.

This situation reveals the possible pitfalls of pair work if one or the other partner is extremely shy or outgoing, and the importance of carefully matching partners

for common interests and personalities, if possible.

In the other three dyads, despite efforts to screen for language skill, there was still a large disparity between the capabilities of the JFL students when compared to the ESL students. As could be seen in Example #2 above, English was the medium of exchange, with Japanese sprinkled in here or there. A placement test or language interview would be a helpful way to more accurately establish the JFL and ESL skill levels and find better matches for language exchange.

The following excerpt reflects an interesting mix of English and Japanese lessons in which both partners are acting explicitly as teachers of their first language. In this example, rather than limiting the samples to short excerpts with abstract utterances of negotiation, in an effort to represent the actual context and flow of the discussion, a longer, continuous segment of conversation has been provided. Coding appears along the left margin in bold text. Additional comments and discussion follow this dialog and refer to the line numbers shown on the left. In longer utterances, the specific area relating to the coding has been underlined for clear identification.

Example 5: Tim (B) and Asuka (A) discuss travel & music

(Please refer to Example #1 for explanations of coding abbreviations and terminology.)

- FB** 19B So, is this your first time in America?
- 20A I forgot, when I was, when I was a child... I don't know what age, but maybe three or four, I had, I had ...Hawaii.
- 21 B Oh, wow!
- sc** 22 A *Hawai ni ikimashita, ne. Un. [(I) went to Hawaii, yeah.]*
- 23 B *Wakarimashita. [Got it.] Hawaii ah, has takusan Nihonjin. [many Japanese]*
- sc** 24A Ah, *unn. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Actually, I had a*
pr *two time, I had a go... to Hawaii two times and the*
 second times is really eh, nani... saikin? [What? Lately?]
- op** 25 B Lately
- 26 A Yeah, yeah, yeah. *So desu yo. [That's right!]*
 I was surprised about a lot of American can speak Japanese.
- CF** 27 B Oh, in in Hawaii?
- 28 A Yeah...
- FB** 29 B Oh, wow. Um, soooo Amerika ni nani ga... benkyou...
 [In America what... study...?]
- oc** 30 A Ah, Amerika de nani wo benkyou shi ni kiteiru ka?
 [What did I come to study in America?]
- 31 B *Hai. [Yes.]*
- 32 A Ah, I see, soo, actually, I wanna be a singer...
 but I can sing a song in English...
- CF** 33 B You want to sing in English?

- 34 A Yeah, so I want to know English's all of mean,
sc and uh, I have I wanna get knowledge of English,
 or something.
- 35 B But I think singing English is different than
 speaking English.
- 36 A Oh, really! Oh.
- FB** 37 B Yeah. Well, the same with Japanese, right? You
 know. Like the pace, and how you hold things up..
Umm. What kind of kind of Japanese music do you
like?
- 38 A R & B,
- CF** 39 B R & B? Yeah
- 40 A Yeah. I like.
- 41 B Do you like ah Draganash? Dragonash?
- pr** 42 A Hmmm? I don't know but...
- CF** 43 B You don't know Dragonash?
- CR** 44 A Onegai... [Please (tell me)!]
- 45 B They're, they're kinda like hip hop. Japanese,
 they used to play rock n roll, but now hip hop.
 I don't know, I've only heard them a couple of
 times. Umm, soo, how would you.. If I was to
 like speak Japanese... Um, I guess I want to brush
 up some of my skills. It's been a while since I've
FB studied, so, um, how would I,
FB how would I like, uh, if I was staying
 somewhere, like, are you staying at a host
pr family, or..
- 46 A Right now?
- CF** Uh, me? At dorm.
- CF** 47 B Uh, you're staying at the dorms. Say, like, I
 visited Japan, and I went to your house, this is
 just a hypothetical situation, like, how would I
 thank you fer letting me stay at your house?
 Like, like, say you live with a host family, you
 know, like for one month, just visiting, and you

- FB** would say, 'Thank you for letting me stay at your house, you know, how would you say that in Japanese?
- 48 A Eetoo, [Umm]
- pr** 49 B Or like 'thank you for your, ah, kindness, or taking care of me, kind of...
- pr/CR** 50 A Ahhhh, ahh, I don't know that many...
- CR** 51 B Would you just say *Doomo arigatou*? [Thank you?]
- sc** 52 A Yeah, *un, Domo arigatou gozaimasu, So! Taihen osewa ni narimashita.* Yeas, yeah, thank you very much. Right! You've taken good care of me.]
- CR** 53 B *Taihen...* [Very...] Say that more slowly.
- 54 A *Taihen...*
- sc** 55 B *Taihen...*
- 56 A *Osewa ni* [...cared for...]
- CR** 57 B *Osewan...* Can you write that down? "Cause, it's it'd be easier if I could see it. You could write it in *hiragana*. I can read *hiragana*.
- CF** 58 A Hiragana? Okay. (writes) Yeah. This is thank you for your, everything.
- pr** 59 B So, *taihen*, that's like a like a,
- CC** 60 A You know?
- 61 B 'So much', or or like, yeah just kinda like, 'overwhelming', so it's kinda like saying *osewa ni what's osewa?*
- CR**
- 62 A Yeah, yeah, yeah! 'Take care'.
- CC** 63 B And then *narimashita* is 'become'? Kind of.
- op** 64 A Yeah, yeah, kind of ummm. Yeah, 'become'. Um. This is very polite. Yeah, yeah, yeah. (writing)

In Tim and Asuka's conversation, line 22 gives an interesting example of self correction through code switching. Asuka was unsure of her English, so to be safe she gave the statement again in Japanese. This was acceptable and actually desirable from her partner's perspective given his own interest in learning and using Japanese, as his Japanese reply in line 23 exhibits.

Perhaps encouraged by his partner's willingness to falter and struggle, Tim then attempts a more difficult construction in Japanese, and though he failed to generate a grammatically complete sentence, his meaning was clearly understood by Asuka. There was less shame in using both languages and the chance of being understood was doubled with the acceptability of using either English or Japanese. This cross-linguistic collaboration was evident again in lines 24 & 25, 29 & 30, and in the longer exchange from lines 47-64.

In addition to code switching, the above examples also highlight the explicit language teaching and learning that was taking place. Specific language questions were posed regarding both Japanese language usage (lines 47, 57, 61) and English (line 24). Though neither participants are language teachers, both are fully capable of explaining and conveying the requested information satisfactorily.

Example 6: Discussion about music & language

(Please refer to Example #1 for explanations of coding abbreviations and terminology.)

- 99 Pete: Okay, okay, I gotcha, gotcha. A lot of Japanese singers, are starting to use a lot of English, like Japanese singers, rap-pop-whatever, (rapper) they're using English, like, in the songs.
- FB** 100 Yasu: Yes. Do you understand?
- 101 Pete: A little bit. Yeah, yeah, some parts, um... like Tada Hikako, I listen to that a lot so I, like, know when she's speakin' English a whole lot, so.
- FB** 102 Yasu: Why... don't... don't you understand?
- CF/pr** 103 Pete: Why don't I understand...?
- op** 104 Yasu: Japanese rappers' Ddddzzzddd
- 105 Pete: Too fast sometimes.
- 106 Yasu: Not good pronunciation...
- 107 Pete: Yeah... No, the English is easy to understand, sometimes (laughs) but sometimes they go too fast and there are other parts, Japanese I guess.
So, what else do you do? Just...
- FB/pr**
- FB** 108 Yasu: I like Japanese song. Do you like Japanese song? (Pete nods 'yes')
What kind of...? ...Can you sing?
- 109 Pete: I've only listened ta A small amount.
Like, small ... (Small?) Yeah, small, instead of like...
- 110 Pete: Can I sing (laughs) Oh, no! Oh, no. I'm white. No, um, I can't sing.
- FB** 111 Yasu: Do you remember that?

- CR** 112 Pete: Do I remember what?
- 113 Yasu: The ... ss you listened song.
- CF** 114 Pete: Listened song? No. (No?) No.
(laughs) Just pretty much old songs,
like aaa remember "Sukiyaki"? That's
about it!
- FB** 115 Yasu: Ahh, "Sukiyaki"! Can you sing?
- 116* Pete: Uh, I don't want to! (laughs)
"Sukiyaki", yeah, that's about it...
It's, like, one I know fairly well.
Yeah. Sensei used to play it a lot...
- FB** 117 Yasu: Do you know who ss, who sings some
song? "Sukiyaki"...
- 117 Pete: Yeah, Hiro Sakamura!
- 118 Yasu: Oh!!! Yeah! (laughs)

This is an example of a conversation that does not exhibit explicit Japanese or English language instruction, but there is a lively cultural exchange taking place in which both partners demonstrate an interest in each other and a desire to learn more about each other through a prolonged conversation (lines 100, 108, 111), as well as explicit questions pertaining to language in general (lines 106 & 111).

When a stimulating topic was discussed, in each dyad the inhibitions seemed to lessen and intrinsic motivation would take over. There was less care or concern given to

grammatical accuracy and a more typical native speaker type of exchange taking place with rapid turn taking and exuberance. Conversations also extended over longer periods of time (Swain, 1985).

- CHAPTER FIVE -

5.0 Significant Findings

The tables presented at the end of this chapter are representative of the types and terms of negotiation sequences. Table #2 illustrates the distribution of English and Japanese usage, and reflects who was speaking and to what degree. Table #3 shows the instances of initiated negotiation (please refer back to coding examples in Chapter 3, page 41). Table #4 represents the numbers and types of speech modification that were documented, and also shows the number of utterances in each language. Samples of dialogs from each dyad are also included in the appendixes for reference.

5.1 Summary of Results

As a preliminary look into linguistic and cultural negotiated interaction in dyads paired with an effort to balance language abilities and cultural interests, the results of this study support the basic assumptions put forth by Nakahama et al., (2001), and Swain, (1985), that in conversational activities of this type, the focus is on "overall discourse, or textual coherence, the creation of shared schema and frame, the maintaining of face and the building of rapport, and the exchange of information

(Nakahama et al., 2001, p.388)."

It is a challenge to find balanced abilities across different languages and cultures and my strongest critique of this research would be that despite attempting to conduct a non-ESL biased study (Kachru, 1994), ESL remained the predominant language and influence in three out of four dyads. More complete screening of abilities and personalities is needed to achieve the desired balance, as well as a more extensive population of participants.

Switching languages most frequently occurred when there was a breakdown in communication that required concerted negotiating efforts, or, occasionally, familiar words were slipped in and "borrowed" (Tarone, 1981).

Affective factors appeared to be reduced, based on participants' comments, once the dialogs got underway, and all participants stated that they felt they had had a worthwhile and positive learning experience. There was particular interest in continuing the partnerships beyond this study informally.

Spontaneous collaborative conversational interaction provides an opportunity for second language development and cultural exchange in a more natural environment with reduced affective factors and greater individual autonomy (Richards, 1980), provided the participants are at

comparable stages of language ability. Unfortunately, as seen in the review of literature, many studies pair NS with NNS in a one-way exchange that may inadvertently intimidate the second language learner. Likewise, NNS are often paired with NNS of either the same or different language backgrounds, with neither being fluent in the target language, thus reducing the role of "expert" to an unknown level of expertise and accuracy (Gass & Veronis, 1985; Doughty & Pica, 1986).

All these configurations can lead to a disconcerting degree of bias, whether it be ESL dominating consideration of other second languages, or in an unbalanced distribution of power/knowledge with regard to participants themselves (Kachru, 1994). In addition, a tremendous resource and opportunity for dual exchange is often overlooked, especially in the United States, where studies have revealed a serious deficiency in foreign language skills and world knowledge among American students (Hadley, 1993; Stewart, 1985).

Participants in conversation dyads that balance linguistic and cultural knowledge have an added dimension of communication available to them. NS-NNS pairings are relatively limited in scope, comparatively (Chun et al., 1982). This is particularly true as it pertains to native

English speakers in the United States. According to Hadley, "American students' inadequate knowledge of the world is reflected not only in their lack of foreign language skills, but in their general ignorance of basic information about other nations and peoples (p. 355)."

NNSS of English are able to gain valuable language skills and knowledge of American culture through conversational interaction. Through cross-cultural discussions and negotiation of bilingual conversations, native speakers from both sides are given a unique opportunity to learn about another culture. "Other people's views, values, traditions, feelings, cultures, are as valuable as our own" (Brown, 1990, p. 14).

5.2 Implications for Future Research

Given the popularity of these conversation partner programs, and the many studies which support the value of informal conversational interaction, more studies are needed to provide tangible incentives for schools, communities, and institutions to actively promote and provide these opportunities, not just to ESL learners, but to native English speakers as well, as a way to improve our exposure to other cultures and languages (Hadley, 1993).

Future research is needed to examine and compare the

types of negotiated interaction across a broader range of participants, to include groups and pairs who are capable of utilizing both languages and cultural knowledge to determine conclusively, if indeed, there is a significant difference in language learning outcomes based on language backgrounds and combinations.

An ethnographic study of this topic would also provide important information in the case of long term conversation partner interaction and the associated cultural and linguistic implications over time and would be a valuable addition to this growing body of knowledge.

More studies with more participants and more language combinations at all skill levels are needed to truly understand all the intricacies of negotiated interaction in language acquisition.

5.3 Implications for Teaching and Learning Languages

Studies of negotiation, both pedagogically and outside the classroom, have much to offer the field second language acquisition, multicultural arenas, and students themselves, who would greatly benefit from hearing the results of such studies in a medium that would be more accessible to them. Such research would provide much needed data about what types of learning are really available through informal

negotiated conversation in small groups or pairs; and it can contribute to the development of teaching practices which can more successfully capture and represent the real world around us and our students.

If research legitimizes and publicizes the benefits of conversation programs like the one presented in this study, more schools and programs will find ways to allocate the necessary funding, support, and staffing to make collaborative conversational opportunities available to more students. American students will have more opportunities to interact with populations from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and interest in foreign language study and cross-cultural experiences here in the US could be nurtured and developed.

Pedagogically speaking, facilitators of conversation programs need to have practical, proven tactics and tools to put to use in their programs in order to help students successfully and comfortably access each other's linguistic and cultural gifts. Informal conversation, as this study demonstrated, is fraught with variables. A guided, yet still relatively unstructured protocol for partners could be established to help balance the language exchange opportunities so one partner is not being taken advantage of or being left out of the interaction. Scheduled or

timed opportunities for each language to be used could relieve some of the pressure students felt and expressed regarding skill comparisons and perceptions or potential problems in balancing shy versus outgoing personality types.

Use of audio and video recording devices are also another way to extend the learning opportunities. The students in this study expressed a strong interest in viewing their own performances on video tape, as well as appreciating the opportunity to review the items they had discussed with their partners. Yasu actually requested a copy of the tape because he said he wanted to "take it home and practice"! This is a student who has struggled in his ESL classes and has exhibited very few outward signs of interest in learning English in the classroom environment, yet was very engaged and initiated numerous feedback requests when given the chance to speak with a peer informally.

In conclusion, before embarking on a conversation partner program, teachers and administrators should be aware of the risks as well as the time commitment. Schools must take care to protect their students and provide safe and supervised meeting areas, as well as to guard against language exploitation. Though this study presented data

collected from mixed gender dyads, in practice, the language school and college campus where this research took place does not mix genders when matching conversation partners. There are ample opportunities for male and female students to interact socially on or off campus if they wish. Experience and information shared by other conversation program facilitators has been the basis for this decision at the language school. However, once again more research is needed to assess the risks, liabilities, and benefits before educated decisions can be made.

JAPANESE - ENGLISH DATA ANALYSIS:

'NAME'	TOTAL UTTERANCES BY DYAD	TOTAL UTTERANCES (INDIVIDUAL)		TOTAL UTTERANCES (JAPANESE)		TOTAL J. UTTERANCES (INDIVIDUAL)		TOTAL UTTERANCES (ENGLISH)		TOTAL E. UTTERANCES (INDIVIDUAL)	
IN DYADS:	IN BOTH J & E	#	%	BY DYAD		#	%	BY DYAD		#	%
'SACHI' (F) (JAPAN)	5124	1423	27.8%	3233	63.1%	2013	62.3%	1891	36.9%	590	31.2%
'BRETT' (M) (USA)		3701	72.2%			1220	37.7%			1301	68.8%
'YASU' (M) (JAPAN)	4467	1599	35.8%	220	4.9%	112	50.9%	4247	95.1%	1487	35.0%
'PETE' (M) (USA)		2868	64.2%			108	49.1%			2760	65.0%
'RIE' (F) (JAPAN)	4615	1667	36.1%	383	8.3%	271	70.8%	4232	91.7%	1396	33.0%
'SAM' (M) (USA)		2948	63.9%			112	29.2%			2836	67.0%
'ASUKA' (F) (JAPAN)	5529	2152	38.9%	802	14.5%	481	60.0%	4727	85.5%	1671	35.4%
'TIM' (M) (USA)		3377	61.1%			321	40.0%			3056	64.6%

INITIATING NEGOTIATION - DATA ANALYSIS:

'NAME'	INITIATING UTTERANCES BY DYAD IN BOTH J & E		TOTAL UTTERANCES COMPREHENSION CHECKS		TOTAL UTTERANCES FEEDBACK REQUESTS		TOTAL UTTERANCES CONFIRMATION CHECKS		TOTAL UTTERANCES CLARIFICATION REQUESTS	
	#		#	J - E	#	J - E	#	J - E	#	J - E
IN DYADS:										
'SACHI' (F) (JAPAN)	24	35.8%	2	0 - 2	3	1 - 2	14	2 - 12	15	6 - 9
'BRETT' (M) (USA)	43	64.2%	7	3 - 4	11	0 - 11	17	6 - 11	9	3 - 6
'YASU' (M) (JAPAN)	39	40.2%	2	0 - 2	13	0 - 13	13	3 - 10	11	1 - 10
'PETE' (M) (USA)	58	59.8%	6	2 - 4	15	1 - 14	19	5 - 14	18	5 - 13
'RIE' (F) (JAPAN)	24	34.3%	3	0 - 3	5	1 - 4	9	3 - 6	7	2 - 5
'SAM' (M) (USA)	46	65.7%	5	3 - 2	14	2 - 12	16	3 - 13	11	3 - 8
'ASUKA' (F) (JAPAN)	42	30.4%	10	4 - 6	9	3 - 6	15	5 - 10	8	3 - 5
'TIM' (M) (USA)	96	69.6%	15	5 - 10	39	9 - 30	24	8 - 16	18	6 - 12

MODIFICATION - DATA ANALYSIS:

'NAME'	MODIFYING UTTERANCES BY DYAD IN BOTH J & E		TOTAL UTTERANCES SELF- CORRECTION		TOTAL UTTERANCES OTHER- CORRECTION		TOTAL UTTERANCES COMPLETION REQUESTS		TOTAL UTTERANCES OTHER- COMPLETION	
	#		#	J - E	#	J - E	#	J - E	#	J - E
IN DYADS:										
'SACHI' (F) (JAPAN)	26	33.8%	5	0 - 5	4	4 - 0	8	1 - 7	9	9 - 0
'BRETT' (M) (USA)	51	66.2%	15	13 - 2	7	0 - 7	16	4 - 12	13	1 - 12
'YASU' (M) (JAPAN)	53	50.0%	17	1 - 16	8	8 - 0	14	3 - 11	14	11 - 3
'PETE' (M) (USA)	53	50.0%	9	6 - 3	21	0 - 21	11	4 - 7	12	0 - 12
'RIE' (F) (JAPAN)	27	37.0%	16	0 - 16	3	3 - 0	7	0 - 7	1	1 - 0
'SAM' (M) (USA)	46	63.0%	7	7 - 0	10	0 - 10	11	2 - 9	18	0 - 18
'ASUKA' (F) (JAPAN)	87	42.2%	54	3 - 51	15	15 - 0	8	1 - 7	10	9 - 1
'TIM' (M) (USA)	119	57.8%	37	34 - 3	21	0 - 21	49	15 - 34	12	0 - 12

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APPENDIXES

Coding Abbreviations & Terminology

(Note: All examples and terminology taken from Shi, 1998, pp. 60-68)

Initiating Negotiation:

CC= Comprehension Checks

("Do you understand me?")

FB = Feedback Requests

("Is this your idea, Kim?")

CF= Confirmation Checks

("Lower?")

(Often repeats info. in question form...)

CR= Clarification Requests

("What's that?")

Modification:

sc = Self-correction

(Makes adjustments to own output)

oc = Other-correction

(Makes adjustments to another's output)

pr = Completion Requests

("and in some...")

(Incomplete sentence with the expectation that another will 'fill in the blanks')

op = Other-completion

(Fills in the blanks, or gaps, for another)

FB 66 BRETT Do you have a conversation partner right now?
Someone you speak English with regularly?

67 SACHI Yeah, but I didn't I didn't met her.
Because I, actually I I don't like the,
pr like a *nani*, feel like...

op 68 BRETT Kind of, not not personal?

CR 69 SACHI *Nan to iu ka naa.*

op 70 BRETT It's kind of almost, you're not friends, maybe? Or it's not like a real conversation?

71 SACHI Yes, but I like with friends. Um.

72 BRETT Yeah

sc 73 SACHI *So, nanka, yakusoku?* *Yakusoku* means promise

CF 74 BRETT Promise.

sc 75 SACHI *Yakusoku koto ga sugoi...* I don't like.

76 BRETT Ah, okay.

77 SACHI Sooo, *nanka...* I have a pressure.

78 BRETT Yeah, like you have to be there at a certain time. Um, so what would make it easier for you to um have more English conversation?
FB

79 SACHI I don't know.

80 BRETT Maybe becoming friends with...

81 SACHI Yes, maybe...

82 BRETT Like making it not not an educational thing, but kind of like a social thing,

83 SACHI Yes. Good.

292 SAM I haven't spoken Japanese in so long,

293 RIE Ah, But you can speak good Japanese!

FB 294 SAM So, What do you like to eat?

295 RIE Ummmm, I like Japanese snack.

CF 296 SAM Yeah? Like sembei?

297 RIE Not *sembei*. *Unn*. *Ofu*? You know, *Ofu*?
CC And black sugar. You know black sugar?

CF 298 SAM Ahh, *Kuro-kuro kurozato*?

299 RIE Black sugar... *Soo, so so! Kurozato!*

op 300 SAM *Kurozato ami!*

301 RIE *Kurozato no naka ni white ofu?*

CR 302 SAM *Ofu?*

303 RIE *Ofu. Hai.*

CF 304 SAM *Madam*?*

305 RIE No, dry...

CF 306 SAM *Kaki?*

307 RIE Nooo, um I don't know, I don't know how to explain, but very, very good!

308 SAM Yeah, I love *ku-kurozato ami!*

309 RIE Really? Really? Really? I *mo!*

FB 310 SAM What about like real food, though?

311 RIE I don't know... *Un. Yappa ah...*

pr 312 SAM *Tabemono...*

313 RIE Japanese foodo. Mmmm. I miss very much!