FOREIGNER TALK IN THE ESL CLASSROOM: INTERACTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS TO ADULT STUDENTS AT TWO LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

by

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Abstract

While native speakers adjust their speech to accommodate non-native speakers on syntactic and prosodic levels, they also make adjustments on the level of discourse. It has been argued that these interactional adjustments are crucial to the promotion of language learning. A quasi-experimental, factorial study compared the frequencies of nine interactional features used in the speech of four ESL teachers as they taught beginner and advanced level adult classes. It was expected that teachers would change their use of each feature accordingly as students neared native proficiency. Nine two-way analyses of variance were employed to capture three sources of variation in the use of the interactional features: proficiency level, teacher and proficiency level by teacher interaction. As predicted, display questions and self-repetitions were used significantly less often with advanced students than with beginners. High variability in teacher behaviour was discovered, and seemed to be primarily an artifact of lesson content. In fact, discourse usage seemed to vary as a function of lesson content, as well as proficiency level of the students. One result, the marked reduction in use of display questions at the advanced level, was discussed in light of prevailing ESL goals. As research addresses the question of whether and which adjustments do promote language acquisition, there will be implications for teacher training.
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CHAPTER ONE
THE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER'S LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Until recently, much of the research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) has focused on the learner's production, and attempted to document the stages of development in the acquisition process. Contemporary studies have shifted the focus to an examination of the learner's linguistic environment.

It was discovered that native speakers (NSs) adjust their speech in conversation with non-native speakers (NNSs) on many linguistic levels - phonological, prosodic, syntactic and lexical (Ferguson 1971, 1975, Hatch, Shapira & Gough 1975, Snow, van Eeden & Muysken 1981, Freed 1981). These studies examined NS-NNS conversations outside classrooms. Adjustments to speech input in the classroom were also investigated (Henzl 1973, 1979, Gaies 1977, Chaudron 1979). While several of the studies mentioned discourse techniques such as repetition and confirmation checks (e.g. Do you mean ...?) (Hatch, Shapira & Gough 1975, Chaudron 1979, Freed 1981), none of these features were quantified.

The focus of research shifted once again when Long (1981a, p.259) made an important distinction between input modifications to the linguistic forms used, and interactional modifications to the functions served by those
forms, such as repetition or confirmation checking. Research then began to address and quantify NSs' discourse modifications to NNSs outside classrooms (Long 1981a, 1981b, Scarcella & Higa 1981, Gaies 1982), and within classrooms (Long & Sato 1983, Long 1983c, Pica & Long 1982, Early in press).

The present study explores teachers' language usage in the classroom. It looks at some interactional features of discourse which have been investigated in NS-NNS conversations, in most cases both in and out of classrooms. However, no study has as yet addressed the question of the extent to which the use of these particular interactional features differs across language proficiency levels of the students. (For differences in use of input features across proficiency levels see Gaies 1977, Chaudron 1979). This study attempts to do that. In particular, it seeks to discover the relationship between adult ESL students' language proficiency level in beginner and advanced classes and their teachers' adjustments to conversational interaction in formal classroom discussion.

Interactional (or conversational) adjustments were chosen for study as opposed to input adjustments in part because the former have not been been as widely studied as the latter, and, in part, in the light of Long's claim as to their importance in providing comprehensible target language to the learner (Long 1983a, p.1).
The aim of assessing teachers' conversational adjustments at different proficiency levels was addressed in a quasi-experimental study in which four teachers were recorded in teacher-fronted interaction of their own choosing with ESL classes at both the beginner and advanced levels. The proportions of nine interactional features of discourse were assessed at the two language proficiency levels for each teacher, and the differential between proficiency levels compared across teachers. This was accomplished by a 2 X 4 factorial design in which, besides proficiency level, teacher was also considered an independent variable. This study is unique in that regard. In other studies NSs have been considered equally good representatives of a common behaviour construct. The nine interactional features are also examined for the appropriateness of a single level taxonomy in which the only commonality between any of the features is their interactional nature.

The importance of the study lies in its contribution to our knowledge of the learners' linguistic environment in the second language classroom. A characterization of NS-NNS discourse for various contexts, tasks and addressees is a necessary prerequisite to the study of which modifications, if any, actually do facilitate second language acquisition. When the field advances to a point where we are armed with the knowledge of what teachers actually do, we can hope to be in a position to make recommendations for more effective
teaching and teacher training.

The report has the following structure. The next section of Chapter 1 presents an overview of research into adult-adult NS-NNS ('foreigner talk') registers in and out of classrooms. A justification for the study follows, and then the research question and hypotheses are formulated.

Chapter 2 describes the study, its experiment and design, subjects, data collection, transcription and coding, and analytical procedures. Limitations of the study are pointed out.

Chapter 3 presents results and discussion of the statistical analyses of the frequencies of the nine interactional features.

Conclusions and implications are presented in Chapter 4, whereby some additional research, which is in a sense 'ahead' of this study, is highlighted.

1.2 FOREIGNER TALK OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Foreigner talk (FT) is a term coined by Ferguson (1971,p.1) to refer to

A register of simplified speech ... used by speakers of a language to outsiders who are felt to have very limited command of the language or no knowledge of it at all.

His pioneering study (Ferguson 1975) set the tone for much of the subsequent research by highlighting phonological, lexical and grammatical adjustments. University students
were asked to rewrite ten English sentences as they would address them to illiterate non-Europeans and comment on other features of the communication. These data, along with some literary material, were the basis for his extensive catalogue of FT features. Among them are:

- slow rate of delivery
- loudness
- cleaner articulation
- exaggerated pronunciation
- more pauses
- more emphatic stress
- use of loan words and pidginized forms
- omission of articles, copula and do-support
- multiple negation
- uninverted questions.

Other researchers began recording speech in various natural settings such as a NS in casual conversation with a NNS friend, an ESL teacher in casual conversation with his students, service personnel during calls from NNSs (Hatch, Shapira & Gough 1975), and municipal employees addressing foreign workers (Snow, van Eeden & Muysken 1981). Adjustments seemed to be pervasive in all these NS-NNS conversations. There were variations in the findings across different conditions, but some commonalities began to emerge. NS speech to NNSs was found to contain shorter utterances, lower syntactic complexity and more avoidance of low frequency lexical items and idiomatic expressions than
NS-NS speech.

The evidence on the matter of grammaticality is conflicting, because some studies (e.g. the studies cited above) reported widespread use of ungrammatical speech, while others found none at all. For example, Freed (1981) found no instances of ungrammatical usage in the speech of students in conversation with NNS students. Long (1983a) suggests that ungrammaticality occurs only if two or more of the following conditions are met: 1) the NNS has low target language proficiency, 2) the NS considers himself of higher social status, 3) the NS has considerable foreigner talk experience, and 4) the conversation is spontaneous. Elsewhere he maintains that factors 1, 2 and 4 seem to be necessary for ungrammaticality to occur (Long 1983b). Factor 4 would not as a rule pertain to a formal classroom setting, providing an explanation for the absence of ungrammatical speech in teachers' speech to second language learners in the studies reviewed in the following section.

A parallel has been drawn between FT and adult speech to young children, called caretaker speech or baby talk (Snow & Ferguson 1977). It is not surprising that they have similarities given that both are specialized registers for language learners of limited proficiency (albeit of differing types - adult versus child, second versus first language). Aside from the ungrammatical adjustments, most of the FT features mentioned above have been reported in baby talk (Freed 1981, Hatch 1983). However, Freed (1981) claims
there is a functional difference in the two kinds of speech: baby talk is generally aimed at directing behaviour, whereas foreigner talk is aimed at facilitating an exchange of information.

These earlier studies focused attention on adjustments at the phonological, prosodic, lexical, and, mainly, syntactic levels of linguistic analysis. More recently, Long (1981a) has made a distinction between modifications in the linguistic form of speech acts, forming input to the NNS, and modifications in the functions of those acts, which determine the character of interaction with the NNS. Form modifications are phonological, prosodic, syntactic or lexical, while interaction modifications take place at the level of discourse. The following examples (Long 1983a, p.4) serve to illustrate both what is meant by this distinction, and the fact that input and the fact that input and interaction modifications can occur independently.

(1) **NS-NS speech**


(2) **Foreigner Talk** - modification in form only


(3) **Foreigner Talk** - modification in function only

NS: When did you finish?  NNS: Um?


NS: Ten o'clock?  NNS: Yeah.
Exchanges like example (2) are often found in conversations between NS factory foremen and migrant workers. The input modifications (uninverted WH-question, do deletion and lack of verb inflection) allowed the NNS to understand readily and the result in interactional terms is a normal two-turn exchange. Example (3) is typical of exchanges in studies between speakers of similar social status. The utterance form has not deviated from the NS-NS norms, but the interactional structure of the conversation has. The NS added a self-repetition and a confirmation check, resulting in a six-turn exchange to accomplish what the NS-NS exchange does in two. As is apparent from this example, examining interaction involves utterances in context, that is, takes into account the surrounding utterances of both speakers. For instance, the confirmation check in (3) can only be recognized as such in light of the NNS' preceding utterance. It should also be noted that interactional aspects of foreigner talk are all phenomena found in NS-NS speech. The greater frequency of use of these features in FT is what distinguishes it from NS-NS speech.

In subsequent work, Long (1983c) has argued that a comprehensible target language environment is necessary for language acquisition. He points out that it was widely assumed, as reflected in the focus of earlier studies, that modifications to speech input such as shorter, less syntactically complex utterances were solely responsible for comprehensibility (Long 1983a, p.1). He refutes this stance
based on the logical impossibility of learners ever advancing if input is consistently modified to match their competence. Learners are exposed to forms beyond their competence, he argues, but in order to process and eventually acquire them, the speech must somehow be made comprehensible. He suggests that this is done through change at the level of discourse, i.e., modification of the interactional structure of conversation through devices such as self- and other-repetition, confirmation checks (e.g. Do you mean ... ?), comprehension checks (e.g. Do you understand?) and clarification requests (e.g. I don't understand) (Long 1983c, p.211).

Evidence for the pervasiveness of interactional modifications is found in Long's comparison of the speech of NSs to NNSs in conversation generated by six different tasks (1981a). There were no significant differences in the two types of NS speech on 4 out of 5 measures of input modification. NSs used significantly shorter utterances in addressing the NNSs, but measures of syntactic complexity, and lexical density and frequency were not significantly different in the two groups. However, frequencies of 10 out of 11 interactional measures were significantly different. NS speech to foreigners as compared to that of other NSs contained

- more orientation to the "here and now"
- more questions than statements or imperatives (probably to be taken in the pragmatic sense of question,
statement and order, rather than the syntactic one of declarative, interrogative and imperative)

- more WH-questions than other types
- more confirmation checks
- more comprehension checks
- more clarification requests
- more self-repetitions
- more other-repetitions
- more other expansions
- more of all of the above combined.

But the differences on interactional measures were, in general, greater for the three tasks requiring a two-way exchange of information (conversation and game-playing). These results suggest that it is some aspect of the verbal feedback provided by learners that prompts NSs to adjust their speech, and that this feedback specifically encourages adjustments of the interactional type.

Long (1981b) extends evidence of interactional modification to other measures and kinds of interlocutors in another laboratory study. The data consists of 36 informal NS-NNS conversations between college educated NSs (12 of whom were ESL teachers and 12 other types of teachers), and beginner level Japanese NNSs from a college ESL program. The participants, who were previously unacquainted, were asked to have a five-minute conversation on any topic. Contrary to previous findings, present tense verbs were not used significantly more often than nonpresent time reference.
Topics were dealt with more briefly, and significantly more yes/no questions were used to generate them. Over all types of moves, there were more uninverted questions, fewer WH-questions, more questions in general, and more or-choice questions in FT than in NS-NS conversation.

Gaies (1982) partially replicated this study. His pairs were familiar with one another, enjoyed academic peer status through which they had a body of shared knowledge, and his NNSs were considerably proficient in English. In general the findings corroborate the discourse features found to be characteristic of NS-NNS conversation in Long's studies (1981a, 1981b). There are some variations which Gaies attributes to the NNSs' higher English proficiency and the interlocutors' shared knowledge: the topics were not treated as briefly here as in other NS-NNS conversations and more topic-nominations took the form of non-interrogatives.

NS-NNS and NS-NS conversations differ in several other ways (Long 1983b). Among them are:

- more acceptance of topic switches
- more left-dislocation of topic words
- more question and answer pairs
- more decomposition of questions.

Long (1983a) proposes a preliminary classification of this array of diverse features through recognition of two main purposes in employing interactional adjustments. The first is to avoid conversational trouble (these devices are called strategies), and the second is to repair trouble when
conversational breakdown does occur (called tactics). Strategies generally result from long-term planning on the part of the NS. They affect both what and how topics are talked about, and include relinquishing topic control through or-choice questions, treating topics briefly, and use of comprehension checks. Tactics reflect a reaction in the short term. They affect how a topic is handled, and include clarification requests and confirmation checks. Some devices can be used to avoid or repair trouble. They include both self- and other-repetitions, and pauses and emphatic stress. This taxonomy is clearly not intended to be exhaustive, but it seems to me that expansions would fit into the third category as another type of repetition which can serve to avoid or repair conversational breakdown.

1.3 FOREIGNER TALK IN THE CLASSROOM

Early classroom studies focused on adjustments to linguistic input made by second language teachers. The comparison was usually made to NS-NS discourse outside classrooms. It was found that SL teachers use shorter utterances, simpler syntactic structures and more frequent lexical items (Henzl 1973, 1979, Gaies 1977). Gaies (1977) carried out a syntactic comparison of eight ESL teacher-trainees' speech to their students in the classroom and to NSs outside the classroom. He found that ESL teachers' speech was syntactically less complex on six measures. Furthermore, these modifications were closely tied to the proficiency
level of the students. That is, they were most pronounced for teachers of beginners and became less so as the proficiency level of the students approached that of native speakers.

Chaudron's findings (1979) corroborated Gaies', but noted individual differences in level of syntactic complexity among teachers with the same level of students. He also reported trends similar to Gaies' across different levels of proficiency, although these teachers simplified less with low level beginners than did Gaies' trainees. The difference is perhaps attributable to Chaudron's teachers' greater teaching experience.

The first study to quantify interactional data of classroom FT was Long & Sato (1983). They compared ESL teachers' speech with NS-NNS conversations outside the classroom. They chose NS-NNS rather than NS-NS speech as baseline data in order to compare the two types of acquisition, second language teaching in the classroom and immersion in a naturalistic setting. But more important, this choice of baseline data avoided the confounding of contextual and addressee factors present in other studies (e.g. Gaies 1977). Six teachers were audiotaped teaching their regular beginner level adult students a 50-minute lesson not especially prepared for the experiment. The NS-NNS data outside the classroom were 36 informal five-minute conversations on any topic between college-educated NSs (many of whom were teachers) and beginner-level Japanese
The ESL teachers' speech was found to be vastly different on several measures from that of NSs in conversation with NNSs. Two points are of interest here. Whereas display questions were virtually unknown outside the classroom, they constituted half of all questions posed in the ESL instruction, and were twice as plentiful as referential questions. On the other hand, it is referential questions which predominate outside the classroom. Based on this evidence, Long and Sato pronounce the ESL classroom to be sadly lacking in communicative use of language, and specifically not fulfilling its goal of preparing students linguistically for life outside the classroom.

Long (1983c), using the same two corpora, discovered that the ESL teachers employed greater numbers of comprehension checks, but fewer confirmation checks and clarification requests. From the perspective of direction of information flow, these results are not unexpected. Long maintained that if information flow is largely from teacher to student, which is likely at beginner levels, then comprehension checks will abound, whereas there will be little need to inquire further as to what a student said using confirmation checks or clarification requests.

These findings were corroborated in the first part of a study by Pica and Long (1982). They also discovered that ESL teachers' classroom speech did not differ significantly in length or syntactic complexity from NS-NNS speech outside
classrooms. The second part of the study compared the adjustments of experienced and inexperienced teachers. In light of the finding in the first part, it is not surprising that input measures did not show significant differences. On interactive measures, however, they report that experienced teachers used more statements and imperatives and fewer questions than inexperienced ones. They also used more WH-questions, fewer yes/no questions, and more other-repetitions.

In investigating FT in the classroom it is necessary to recognize the fact that language teachers make adjustments by virtue of the role itself - giving rise to a register called teacher talk - in addition to those made in response to the limited language proficiency of their students. Early (in press) compared ESL and regular teachers' speech to beginner and intermediate level NNSs and classes of native and proficient non-native speakers, respectively, in social studies classes at the high school level. The extent to which they differ indicates dimensions of FT present in the ESL teachers' speech. Their linguistic input contained shorter, less syntactically complex utterances. With respect to conversational interaction, ESL teachers' employed questions, statements, and imperatives in different proportions. They also used more expansions, more self- and other-repetitions, more comprehension checks and more conversational frames than regular teachers.
Teacher talk characteristics were investigated in that study by comparing teachers' adjustments with NNSs to those made by NSs in dyad conversations outside the classroom (using the study reported in Long 1981a). The extent to which adjustments differ indicates aspects of teachers' foreigner talk. Teachers seldom used clarification requests or confirmation checks, whereas they are both employed significantly more often in FT as opposed to native talk outside classrooms (Long 1981a). Teachers employed WH-, yes/no, intonation and tag questions in similar proportions whether addressing NSs or NNSs, whereas NSs outside classrooms differed substantially in proportional use of these question types (WH-questions predominate in ESL instruction, whereas yes/no questions are the most frequent type of question in NS-NNS conversations outside classrooms).

One of the purposes of Early's study was to tease out which adjustments are features of teacher talk and which of FT. The results suggest that use of clarification requests and confirmation checks, and the distribution of WH-, yes/no, intonation and tag questions are not influenced by the limited proficiency of the students, but by the setting and role of the classroom and teacher. On the other hand, the use of expansions, self- and other-repetitions, comprehension checks, conversational frames, and the distribution of questions, imperatives and statements seem to be aspects of foreigner talk, i.e., to be influenced by
the limited linguistic proficiency of the students. It remains for Early's larger study to determine whether each of the presumed FT or teacher talk features is not actually a feature of a more specialized FT of teachers or a feature of a more specialized teacher talk register of second language teachers (see Reference Note 1).

1.4 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY
In recent years researchers have turned their attention from the product of acquisition to the process of acquisition. Integral to the acquisition process is investigation of the language learners' linguistic environment, because target language input and interaction are critical data on which learners base and test hypotheses about use of the new language. Studies have shown that target language to second language learners differs in many ways from speech directed to NSs. While various modifications to the forms of linguistic input are evident, it has been argued that it is modifications to the linguistic interaction which are indispensable to the acquisition process (Long 1981a). In the researcher's opinion, however, this statement should be more carefully qualified. Input modifications are also necessary and important, and can be viewed as a first step in the simplification process. It is the remaining incomprehensible forms (which need to appear in input-adjusted speech to some extent for progress to be possible) which necessitate adjustments at the level of discourse.
These adjustments allow access to meaning and the meaning is the link the learner needs to acquire the new forms. Therefore, I would suggest that both input and interactional modifications are indispensable to the acquisition process.

Parallel to developments in acquisition theory, there has been a growing interest in classroom process research (for a review see Gaies 1983) with a view to describing and determining the effectiveness of the second language classroom experience as opposed to acquisition in other settings.

Empirical studies which have addressed the interactional quality of ESL teachers' speech are few (Long & Sato 1983, Pica & Long 1982, Early in press). While the phenomenon of individual variability in FT behaviour among NSs in the classroom has been recognized (Long 1983b, Chaudron 1979), there is a need to address these impressions more explicitly.

Several studies have investigated the differences in input modifications across proficiency levels. At higher levels of ESL proficiency, syntactic complexity appears to be greater (Gaies 1977, Henzl 1979, Chaudron 1979, Freed 1981). A few interactional modifications have been studied across proficiency levels. For some teaching strategies including the use of WH-questions and exact and semantic repetition, Hamayan and Tucker (1980) report no significant differences in usage in comparing French classroom speech to NSs and second language learners, nor were there any
differences between grade levels three and five. In addition, Freed (1981) found that surface sentence type did not vary between beginner and advanced levels. Gaies (1982) found evidence that interactional modifications are affected by proficiency level for some measures and not for others. Topics were treated less briefly with advanced students, and the latter made more of the topic nominations. On the other hand, there was, for instance, no effect of proficiency level on question types in topic nominations. Many of the interactional features investigated in Long's and other recent research have not been examined across proficiency levels, however. This study attempts to fill that gap. The interactional features chosen will be described in Chapter 2.

Investigation of this topic will, first, shed some light on the theoretical question of which features should be attributed to FT. Interactional features that change significantly across levels are more likely FT features (i.e., features affected by the limited proficiency of the learner), than they are teacher talk features (i.e., modifications due to the teacher role and classroom setting), or native talk features. Second, if ESL teachers' speech more nearly approximates native talk at advanced levels of instruction than at beginner levels (i.e., if the numbers of those features which have been shown to be characteristic of FT decrease), there is some evidence to counter the charges of artificiality of second language
classroom discourse. Third, this study will add to our knowledge of how and when ESL teachers modify their interaction with students. Knowledge of this type is a logical first step before addressing the question: Which modifications, if any, facilitate second language learning?

Once the form of language input has been described, it becomes essential to study its function in second language learning. (Hamayan & Tucker 1980, p.453)

There will be eventual repercussions for teacher training to the extent that teachers do not naturally adjust in ways which prove to be beneficial to language learning, and to the extent that they do not behave consistently from individual to individual and across time.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESES

Based on these considerations, the central purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between students' language proficiency level and use of interactional features by four teachers in adult ESL classrooms.

The research question to be addressed is:

Do the frequencies of interactional features characteristic of foreigner talk differ in ESL teachers' speech to students of different English proficiency levels?

In particular, do they differ in those teachers' speech to beginner and advanced ESL classes?

The research hypotheses derived from the research question
are:

1. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer or-choice questions.

2. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer expansions.

3. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer self-repetitions.

4. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer other-repetitions.

5. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer display questions.

6. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly more referential questions.

7. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer comprehension checks.

8. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain significantly fewer confirmation checks.

9. The ESL teachers' speech to advanced students, as compared to beginner students, will contain
significantly fewer clarification requests. These hypotheses considered together mean that teachers are expected to approach a NS-NS teacher talk register as their students approach NS proficiency.
CHAPTER TWO

A STUDY OF TEACHERS' DISCOURSE ADJUSTMENTS IN ESL CLASSROOMS

2.1 DESIGN

A quasi-experimental study was conducted in which naturalistic data were collected of four teachers' classroom speech as they carried out formal, teacher-centred instruction of adults at the beginner and advanced level of a community college ESL program.

Independent variables were:

1. student English proficiency level, at two points: beginner and advanced.

2. teacher at four points: teacher 1, teacher 2, teacher 3 and teacher 4.

While other studies of foreigner talk have treated subjects as equally good representatives of a common NS behaviour construct, here that assumption was tested in the treatment of teacher as a separate variable. Further technical discussion on the use of teacher as an independent variable is to be found in the analysis section.

Dependent variables were:

1. Or-choice questions

These include a choice of two or more possible answers in the questioning move. For example,

---

1 The unit of analysis for each variable was the utterance. The 'Transcription and Coding' section contains an explicit definition.

2 In the examples to follow, the first number after 'T' designates which teacher is speaking, and the second bracketed number designates the number of an utterance in a
T1(1): Did the rest of you read this article too?

S: No.

T1(2): Or you heard it on the radio or TV?

2. Expansions

The NS repeats all or part of their own or the NNS's preceding utterance and includes grammatical function(s) not supplied previously. For example,

S: By bus.

T3: You came by bus?

3. Self-repetitions

NSs repeat their own utterances, either partially or completely, with an exact or semantic repetition (i.e. paraphrase) within 5 conversational turns of the original utterance. For example,

T1(1): Does that look familiar to you?

T1(2): The picture looks pretty familiar, doesn't it?

4. Other-repetitions

The definition is identical to that for self-repetition except that the NS repeats the NNS' utterance. For example,

-----------

2(cont'd) sequence of discourse. Examples are separated by a series of asterisks.
T4(1): And he is -- ? S: Hungry.

5. Display questions

These are test or known information questions to which the speaker knows the answer or in which he is not interested from the point of view of content. Some examples are,

T1: When do you come to school every day?
   (the aim being to practise the present habitual)
**********

T1: Say the whole sentence.
*******

T1(1): When did you come to Canada?
S: XX

T1(2): I came -- ?
   (rising intonation signalling incomplete utterance)
*******

T2: What do we call that - money back, money back?

6. Referential questions
These are information questions which elicit unknown information or attitudes in which the speaker is interested. For example,

T1: What did you read about?

T1: Is that a democratic way?

7. Comprehension checks

An utterance, often formed with a tag question, which seeks to establish whether that speaker's preceding utterance has been understood. For example,

T3: Do you know -
understand 'leave'?

T3: So, past tense is -
from yesterday -
come/came, right?

8. Confirmation checks

They elicit confirmation that an utterance has been correctly heard and/or understood by the speaker. For example,

S: X does it mean?

T1: What does it mean?
(rising intonation)
9. Clarification requests

Any expression by a NS designed to elicit an explanation of the NNS's previous utterance. For example,

T1: I'm sorry, what kind of steak?

Or statements and orders such as 'I don't understand" and 'Try again'.

More complete definitions, examples, coding conventions and sources for each of the dependent variables can be found in Appendix A.

The particular interactional features measured in this study have been chosen from among those studied by Long and other researchers (Long 1981a, 1981b, Pica & Long 1982, Long & Sato 1983, Long et al 1984, Early in press). Table 1 lists the studies in both settings which have examined each feature of discourse. A few of the definitions employed here are slightly different from those employed by these other researchers. The differences are pointed out in Appendix A.
Table 1. Studies of Nine Interactional Features of Discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactional Feature</th>
<th>Inside Classrooms</th>
<th>Outside Classrooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Or-choice Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>Long 1981b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansions</td>
<td>Early in press</td>
<td>Long 1981a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other-repetitions</td>
<td>Pica &amp; Long 1982 Early in press</td>
<td>Long 1981a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display Questions</td>
<td>Pica &amp; Long 1982</td>
<td>Long 1981a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long &amp; Sato 1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long et al. 1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referential Questions</td>
<td>Pica &amp; Long 1982</td>
<td>Long 1981a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long &amp; Sato 1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long et al. 1984</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation Checks</td>
<td>Pica &amp; Long 1982 Early in press</td>
<td>Long 1981a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 METHOD

2.2.1 SUBJECTS

The subjects were four ESL teachers in the English Language Training (ELT) department at the King Edward Campus of Vancouver Community College. The one male and three female teachers all had at least five years of ESL teaching experience, and are between 32 and 45 years of age. See the
left hand section of Appendix B for details. There were no extremes in teaching style or method: that is, none of the unconventional teaching methods was used, such as Counselling Learning or Suggestopoedia, and my impression was that there were no idiosyncratic behaviours, with one possible exception: a large proportion of teacher 4's utterances at both levels were conversational frames - primarily 'Okay' to bound utterances and to signal task completion.

Since there were only four observations at each level and it was not assumed that teachers behave the same, it was necessary to control for the factor of teacher variability in comparing teacher behaviour with beginner and advanced students - this was accomplished by observing the same teacher at both levels.

2.2.2 THE ESL CLASSES

Most of the classes were taped on the first or second day of a substitution assignment, and two were regular classes taped within a few days of the beginning of the semester. All the teachers, therefore, were in a similar position with respect to teacher-student familiarity. It was necessary to design the study around the observation of substitute teachers because it was impossible to find four teachers who were teaching beginners and advanced classes simultaneously.
The majority of the classes were in the Halftime ELT program at the college; of the rest, two were in the Manpower program, and one in the Night School program.

The students were all adults and all classes contained both males and females from a variety of first language backgrounds. Oriental backgrounds were predominant, however, with seven of eight classes having between 64% and 92% Oriental L1 speakers. The average number of students per class was 16. See the right hand side of Appendix B for further detail.

2.2.3 PROFICIENCY LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

The ELT program at Vancouver Community College/King Edward Campus has a five-level proficiency placement scale ranging from Lower Beginners to Advanced (whereby Night School ELT has two sublevels within each of the first four).

Two lower level observations were made in the Halftime program and two in the Manpower program, all at the Lower Beginners level. Each program has its own placement tests. The procedures, based on oral interviews and multiple choice grammar tests, are comparable, but, in the informed opinion of the testing unit, the Manpower lower beginners are somewhat lower in proficiency than the Halftime lower beginners.

At the advanced level, three of the observations were made in the Halftime program and one in Night School. Having attained an upper range score in an oral interview and
multiple choice desk test designed to place beginners and intermediate students in the Halftime program, students take the English Language Assessment (ELA), a standardized test developed at the college. It measures proficiency in six areas: reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, grammar, written composition, and oral production. The first four sections are considered by one of the developers to be comparable to the TOEFL test (Test of English as a Foreign Language). The ELA was designed to assess English language ability from the intermediate to university level. Total test reliability is .95. The third lowest score range admits a student to the advanced level, higher scores to college preparatory and college content classes.

The fourth observation in the advanced group was a Night School class at the Intermediate 4/Advanced level. This program has its own placement instrument. After an oral interview, a higher level student is given the Intermediate 4/Advanced test, which has listening comprehension, writing, reading comprehension, and structure/grammar components. This class was at a lower level orally than the other advanced classes in my opinion. A representative of the testing unit suggested that Night School advanced classes are generally somewhat lower in proficiency than Halftime advanced classes, and the presence of intermediate level students could have added to this effect.
2.2.4 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher audio-taped all of the observations in as unobtrusive a manner as possible. (She discarded the idea of observing from a window washer's platform with a microphone running in through the window on the grounds that it might be counter-productive).

None of the subjects knew the purpose of the study, but they were told that teacher-student interaction was under scrutiny. They were asked to carry out a regular lesson, but told that any group work or non-teacher-fronted activity would not be recorded. The subjects introduced the researcher briefly at the beginning of class, and the lesson proceeded in all cases with seemingly no regard for the intrusion.

At least an hour of teacher-whole class interaction was recorded in each of the eight classes. Notes were taken when written information or gestures seemed essential to understanding discourse intent.

Identical lessons for all classes in a proficiency level were not used for two reasons. First, the unnaturalness of a lesson not prepared by the teachers themselves could affect the naturalness of the conversational interaction between teachers and students, and skew the results. And, second, findings based on the analysis of naturalistic data tend to be more generalizable.
2.2.5 TRANSCRIPTION AND CODING

Forty-five minutes of tape-recorded material were transcribed from each of the eight samples. Introductions and warm-up conversation at the beginning of the class were omitted, so that the data sets contain lesson material only.

The unit of analysis was the utterance. The rationale for this choice was that each interactional variable is generally realized linguistically in an utterance (or sometimes more, in the case of or-choice questions). A new utterance was defined when
1. a new speaker begins a conversational turn, or
2. the same speaker, within a conversational turn, ends a tone group as signalled by the presence of at least one primary stress followed by a terminal intonation contour and pause juncture (Reeder 1982).

For example,

T1: If she would say it,
    she would say "I can't cope" - always
    followed by 'with' -
    "I can't cope with all the work".

This was one utterance because there was no terminal contour and no pause until 'work'.

Each utterance of teachers' speech was then coded to reflect instances of the nine interactional variables. Appendix A contains definitions, examples and coding
conventions for each of the features.

To maximize independence between the various measures, it is advisable to avoid double coding, which proved to be impossible with a single level taxonomy. For example,

(Advanced students in a lesson on TV guide reading)

T1(1): How about 56?

T1(2): Where is it on 56?

Teacher 1's second utterance is both a display question and a self-repetition. Existing classifications did not provide a way to consign such overlapping pairs of codes to different subgroups (for instance, Long's distinction between strategies and tactics). The key seemed to lie in the fact that there were, in fact, two kinds of interactional variables. On the one hand, there were features with purely functional dimensions which reflect the intention of the speech act -- to elicit a display of knowledge, to request a clarification, to obtain information, to confirm the NS's own understanding, to check the NNS's understanding. On the other hand, some of the features have a formal dimension as well as one or more functional ones. They reflect how the speech act is realized -- as an or-choice question or an expansion or a repetition, each of which has a functional component as well. With this two-tier taxonomy, which makes no claim to being exhaustive at either level, the coding scheme proved to be fully usable. Any given utterance of teacher's speech could then
be coded for either a formal-functional (henceforth, form) feature, a purely functional (henceforth, function) feature, or neither or both.

2.2.6 RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT

Another rater coded 10% of seven of the data sets, after a training session involving about 100 utterances from each of the seven data sets. The percentage of agreement ranged from 72% to 84%, with an overall inter-rater reliability of 77%. The overall score on real disagreements after discussion was 93%. The areas of difficulty were inexplicitness in the instructions concerning coding of corrections, classroom management moves, and special cases of self- and other-repetitions. These have been incorporated. A test-retest reliability score was obtained to determine to what extent the coding scheme was explicit in the researcher/coder's mind. Two hundred and fifty utterances from an early, middle and late transcription were recoded, and test-retest scores of 87%, 90% and 84% agreement were obtained for each of the segments (overall test-retest agreement was 87%). The indications are that the coding scheme is explicit and reproducible given an updated manual and a thorough training period.
2.3 ANALYSIS

Fixed two-factor analyses of variance were performed on frequency counts of each of the nine dependent variables. In each case the data was all eight sets of coded teachers' utterances for the four teachers, each at the two levels of student language proficiency.

Teacher was treated as an independent variable in consideration of several factors. First, this provides a test of the assumption which seems to underlie the classroom studies of FT to date, that teachers' behaviour is so similar that random selection is the only necessary concession to individual differences. Other considerations were the small number of observations, only four per proficiency level, and the fact that they were not randomly chosen.

The constraints of the design did not allow a random selection of teachers. Teachers were asked to be subjects as they received substitute teaching assignments, if they were qualified for and available to substitute at both proficiency levels. For this reason, the teacher variable could not be treated as a random factor. Thus the results are not generalizable to other types of ESL teachers.

Since teacher was being treated as an independent variable, and only one observation was made of each teacher at each proficiency level, it was necessary to construct subsamples to provide a measure of within-subject variability for the analyses of variance. This technique has
been used in other studies to measure within-subject reliability from time 1 to time 2 (Long 1981b, Warren-Leubecker & Bohannon III 1982). A cell size of three subsamples per lesson was chosen with the following in mind: it had to be at least two, and it seemed advisable to keep it small to minimize interdependence between the subsamples. The subsamples were drawn from the beginning, middle, and end of each subsample, as widely separated as possible, again in order to avoid dependence between subsamples which may be caused by placing adjacent utterances in separate subsamples. The subsamples were of equal size to simplify the analytical procedure. Each one contained one third of the total number of teacher utterances in the smallest data set. The corpus of 546 utterances for Teacher 1 at the advanced level was the smallest data set, and therefore each subsample contained 182 utterances. It is, then, frequency counts of a dependent variable in each subsample over all eight observations which were used in the analyses of variance.

Because all nine measures were drawn from the same observation for each teacher and level, one cannot assume independence between them, although it has been maximized in ways just described. To compensate for this, a more stringent confidence level was required: it was set at $p \leq .01$.

For purposes of the analyses of variance, the research hypotheses outlined in Chapter 1 were replaced by null
hypotheses. These are:

1. There will be no difference in the number of or-choice questions used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

2. There will be no difference in the number of expansions used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

3. There will be no difference in the number of self-repetitions used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

4. There will be no difference in the number of other-repetitions used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

5. There will be no difference in the number of display questions used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

6. There will be no difference in the number of referential questions used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

7. There will be no difference in the number of comprehension checks used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

8. There will be no difference in the number of confirmation checks used by the ESL teachers with beginners and advanced classes.

9. There will be no difference in the number of clarification requests used by the ESL teachers with
beginners and advanced classes.

Post hoc Scheffé comparisons were performed on teachers' absolute frequencies of and adjustments to the use of an interactional feature where the main effect of teacher or the interaction effect between teacher and proficiency level was significant. In the case of interaction effects, a Tetrad was used in the numerator of the F ratio. This term reflects the difference in amount of adjustment between the two proficiency levels for two teachers.

2.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
Possible effects of previous observations of a subject on later observations are a concern in a study involving repeated measures. In this case, however, not only did sufficient time elapse between successive observations (in the shortest instance, one day), but the order of the observations at the two proficiency levels were counterbalanced: two teachers were observed first with advanced students, and two with beginner students. See Appendix B for further details.

The limitations in the scope of this study are as follows. First, the number of observations is not large: four teachers are observed in both beginner and advanced classes. This is offset in part by consideration of the sample size. There are 4368 utterances by teachers in the corpora (182 utterances X 3 subsamples X 4 teachers X 2
levels), whereby 1606 of these are coded for a form and/or function feature. The fact remains, however, that studies with larger numbers of teachers, preferably randomly selected from a wider population, are called for. Second, as can be seen in Appendix B, there was considerable loss of data since ease of computation forced use of equal numbers of utterances from each data set. The smallest data set (546 utterances) was the only one fully utilized. The largest number left unexamined was 426 from the observation of Teacher 3 with beginner students. Third, the study is confined to teachers (mostly substitute teachers) at one educational institution. Fourth, class variables such as ethnicity or first language background were not controlled. Fifth, it must be remembered that only teacher-fronted interaction was under study here, so that nothing can be said about other types of classroom interaction (e.g. one-to-one or small group work). Sixth, there is some doubt as to the homogeneity of the students' proficiency levels in the beginner and advanced classes observed here. In particular, Teacher 4's advanced class was probably lower in language proficiency than the other advanced classes. Seventh, there are many other interactional features which were not examined: left dislocation, question types, conversational frames, pauses, stress, to name a few. And, lastly, modifications to speech input have not been taken into consideration.
CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The top portion of Table 2 (see overleaf) contains the average number of instances of each of the nine interactional features across the three subsamples for each teacher at each language proficiency level. The bottom portion indicates the significance of differences from analyses of variance for the three sources of variation — proficiency level, teacher, and teacher by proficiency level interaction. All nine analyses of variance are summarized in Appendix C.

Significant downward adjustment with advanced as opposed to beginner students was found in the use of self-repetitions and display questions, and upward adjustment in the case of referential questions. The teachers did not behave consistently as a group. They used significantly different numbers of self-repetitions, referential questions, comprehension and confirmation checks. There was one significant (and two trends towards) interaction between proficiency level and teacher. Depending on which teacher is considered, referential questions were either increased substantially or not at all at the advanced level, constraining the generality of the main effect.

With reference to the research hypotheses, only #3 and #5 were confirmed. There were insufficient numbers of or-choice questions and clarification requests to permit conclusive tests of hypotheses #1 and #9. It will be noted
Table 2. Group Means and Sources of Variation from Analyses of Variance of Use of Nine Interactional Features of Discourse with Beginner and Advanced Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form Features</th>
<th>Function Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Or-choice questions</td>
<td>3) Self-repetitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Expansions</td>
<td>4) Other-repetitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>B</th>
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<th>B</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T 1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<td>8.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 2</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>7.7</td>
<td>36.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.0</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Proficiency Level Effect | n.s. | n.s. | .001 ** | n.s. | .000 ** | .000 ** | n.s. | n.s. | n.s. |
| Teacher Effect | n.s. | n.s. | .002 ** | .015 * | .014 * | .001 ** | .006 ** | .000 ** | n.s. |
| Interaction Teacher X Level | n.s. | .016 * | n.s. | n.s. | n.s. | n.s. | .002 ** | .019 * | n.s. | n.s. |

LEGEND
B Beginner level class
A Advanced level class
** ps.01
* ps.05 (trend)
that all significant proficiency level effects were in the direction predicted.

3.1 NINE INTERACTIONAL FEATURES OF DISCOURSE

The four interactional features of form are examined, followed by the five interactional features of function. Accompanying each discussion is a figure comparing the average frequencies of the particular discourse feature in the speech of the four ESL teachers to students at the two proficiency levels. (Note that where no bar appears, as in Figure 1 for Teacher 4, the average frequencies of occurrence were zero.)

3.1.1 OR-CHOICE QUESTIONS (FIGURE 1)

There were no significant differences in the number of or-choice questions in the teachers' speech to beginner and advanced students. Nor were there any significant effects of teacher or interaction.

No conclusion is possible on the basis of these statistics, in any case, since so few or-choice questions were present in the data (see Table 2: the average number of or-choice questions at the advanced level was 0.50 and at the beginners level, 0.25). The absence of or-choice questions in these classrooms is in direct contrast to their prevalence in NS-NNS conversations outside classrooms (Hatch 1978, Long 1981b). It may be that the types of lesson observed here do not promote the use of or-choice questions,
Figure 1
Or-choice Questions

Legend
- Beginner
- Advanced
although there is no apparent common characteristic in the eight lessons which could account for this. More likely, the classroom context itself disfavours their use. A teacher has not one but several conversational partners. With one partner, the meaning of a question which has not been understood must be negotiated or the topic dropped. An or-choice question supplies parts of possible answers which can be valuable clues to its meaning. In the classroom, on the other hand, a question which has not been understood by one student can often be directed unmodified to another until someone responds appropriately, providing the model for the rest of the class. Or-choice questions may then be more useful or even necessary to sustain conversation in the first instance than in the second.

3.1.2 EXPANSIONS (FIGURE 2)

The ESL teachers did not use significantly different numbers of expansions in their speech to ESL students at the two proficiency levels. Nor were there any significant effects of teacher. There was a trend towards an interaction of teacher and proficiency level, however.

The interaction trend can be viewed as a dependency of the direction of any tendency towards a proficiency effect on which teacher is considered (although there is no significant proficiency effect). As is evident in Figure 2, three teachers used somewhat similar numbers of expansions at the beginner level and decreased their use slightly at
advanced, while one teacher (3) used the fewest expansions of all with beginners and the most at advanced.

Several explanations are plausible. First, he is the only male subject. Second, use of expansions may be influenced by lesson content. All four teachers employed question and answer practice to some extent with beginners: Teacher 3 did this almost exclusively, with a focus on form, and all the questions coming from him, while Teachers 1 and 2 both focused on content (Teacher 2, for example: "What are some questions you might want to ask about registering?") both had the students compose questions, and both used roleplay for half of the lesson. It may be that frequency of use of expansions and focus on form or content are not just correlated, but causally related, although it is not clear why a content as opposed to form focus would encourage use of expansions. The other two points mentioned, source of questions and use of roleplay, relate to the teacher's control of lesson content. Less tight control of content, as was the case in Teacher 1's and Teacher 2's beginner classes, may favor use of expansions.

Teacher 4's beginner class was, on the other hand, very tightly content-controlled. Possibly, teaching style was a factor in her relatively high use of expansions. The issue of individual style is addressed following further discussion of lesson content.

At the advanced level we find striking differences in the types of lessons employed. Teachers 2 and 4 carried out
grammar and grammar exercise correction lessons in which the teacher was in control to a great extent. Teacher 3, on the other hand, chose a problem-solving exercise which was open-ended, involving the students' opinion and attitudes, and encouraging them to add original material to the discussion. Confirmation checks often followed unexpected student responses, and these were often formed as expansions. For example,

S: Nurse.

T3: So you mean she should look for a nursing job.

A student comment might elicit a tangential question from the teacher, which, possibly because it was unexpected, was not picked up by the students. Again, the teacher often chose to repeat the utterance with an expansion. For example,

T3(1): In that country, women - what's the situation in that country?

T3(2): Explain if you can.

T3(3): What is the situation S: They both have a job. with women and men and working in that country, in China?

T3(4): They both have a job.

----------
T3(8): Whose choice is it?
T3(9): Whose choice is it that they both have a job?

Both utterances 3 and 9 are expansions reformulating questions which the teacher apparently suspects have not been comprehended by the students.

As mentioned above, the form of the exercise encouraged the students to offer original material. When a student's utterance was not understood by the rest of the class the teacher often chose expansions as a form of repetition. For example,

S: To review.

T3: Yeah, to review her earlier - yeah, she hasn't worked for four years.

The suggestion that higher numbers of expansions are related to a problem-solving lesson type is somewhat weakened by inspection of Teacher 1's advanced lesson. She ranked next to Teacher 3 in use of this discourse feature, and spent one-third of her lesson on the same type of problem-solving exercise, but she used no expanded utterances in that section of the lesson.

It may be that two-way as opposed to one-way information exchange is the influential factor in the type of lesson exhibiting relatively high use of expansions. It
is interesting to note that in Long's study (1981a) expansions only appeared on tasks which he reports as being dependent on a two-way information exchange. A problem-solving discussion, such as the one Teacher 1 held, could be seen as much more interactive in the sense of information exchange than the more teacher-controlled activities of Teacher 2's exercise correction, or the largely one-way communication of Teacher 4's grammar lesson at the advanced level.

Teaching style could be an important factor in use of expansions. As mentioned above, the correlation of less tight control of content with higher use of expansions did not hold for Teacher 4 who use a relatively high number of expansions in a tightly content-controlled beginner lesson. She seemed to be a repeater, at least of her own utterances. She did not use other-repetitions extensively, but was the highest user of self-repetitions at both levels. Expansions are also a form of repetition. Any influence of lesson content may have been partially offset, in her case, by a tendency to use various types of repetition. All of these types of repetition were used by Teacher 4 overwhelmingly as strategies rather than tactics. She seemed to be avoiding conversational breakdown in several other ways as well. She treated topics briefly, made them salient in the beginner class through use of pictures, and used more comprehension checks than any of the other teachers at the advanced level. It may be that Teacher 4 is a long-term strategist. The
importance of avoiding conversational breakdown may have outweighed the influence of control of lesson content on her use of expansions, as well as on other interactional features.

Teacher 3, on the other hand, tended to be a user of tactics rather than strategies. He employed significantly more confirmation checks than the other three teachers (see the section dealing with confirmation checks below). A cursory look at the data reveals that he used self-repetitions twice as often as tactics than as strategies with advanced students and almost always as tactics with beginners, and expansions at least as often to repair as to avoid conversational breakdown. Moreover, he was the lowest user of the strategy of checking students' comprehension. It may be that his tendency to repair rather than avoid trouble was outweighed by the influence of the lesson type at the beginner level, where he used fewest expansions, but may have strengthened the influence of the lesson type at the advanced level, leading to highest use there.

There was, then, no clear-cut effect of proficiency level. Other research has reported significantly more use of expansions by NSs with NNS addressees both in (Early in press) and outside (Long 1981a) classrooms. It may be that the language proficiency differential between the two groups of students is larger in Early's study (beginner and intermediate ESL students as compared with native speakers and fully proficient non-native speakers) than in mine.
(beginner as compared with advanced ESL students), and as such allows significant differences to emerge. In summary, it appears that personal style in conjunction with the influence of particular lesson types are at least two of the factors which determine frequency of use of expansions.

3.1.3 SELF-REPETITIONS (FIGURE 3)

Self-repetitions were used highly significantly less often at the advanced level by these teachers (p<.001). The ratios of use with beginner to advanced students for each teacher clustered around the average 1.76. Since there is no significant interaction effect, this result is unmitigated by the significant differences between the teachers in use of self-repetitions (p<.002).

In their comparison of FT to children and adolescent NNSs, Scarcella & Higa (1981, p.414, p.425) maintain that for child second language learners, self-repetitions
1. serve to secure and maintain the listener's attention,
2. provide the learner with a second chance to process an utterance, and
3. serve to make the conversation last.
Presumably self-repetitions assist adult L2 learners in the same way. But as students gain in competence, we would expect them to have less trouble attending to a conversation, and be able to recover meaning quicker, because they have more communicative ability to hold up their end of the conversation. The acquisition of these
communicative abilities may allow learners to deal with increasingly complex subject matter. Teachers would have less need of self-repetitions at the advanced level, as is borne out in this study.

In Gaies' study of teachers' speech to adult ESL learners at four levels of instruction (Gaies 1977, p.210), self-repetition was used most frequently at the two lower levels of instruction, and rarely at the advanced level. The present study widens the applicability of this finding since self-repetition is more loosely defined (Gaies' self-repetitions were exact and immediate, whereas I define them as exact or semantic, and occurring within five conversational turns of the original utterance).

Some teachers seem to be high users and others low users of self-repetitions. There were twice as many self-repetitions in the highest user's class as in the lowest for each level. Post hoc Scheffé comparisons confirmed that Teachers 3 and 4 grouped together as high users who used significantly more self-repetitions across proficiency levels than Teachers 1 and 2 as a group did ($F = 22.08$ (3, 16) $p = .01$).

The teachers' differing behaviour in this regard may be partially an artifact of lesson content. For most of her beginners' lesson, Teacher 4, the highest user, was teaching and reviewing vocabulary words (much of this in conjunction with question and answer practice), activities traditionally involving repetition. The differences brought out in the
discussion of expansions between the beginner lessons of Teachers 1 and 2, on the one hand, and that of Teacher 3, on the other, may be applicable here. Teacher 3's question and answer practice focused on form, and contained only questions posed by him. Teachers 1 and 2 focused on content, had the students compose and ask questions and used roleplay extensively. A focus on form may lead to use of self-repetitions as a pedagogical device to hammer home the grammatical point. The use of roleplay and student questions by Teachers 1 and 2 seemed to lead to a lesser degree of control over content, and may explain these teachers' relatively low use of self-repetitions, as opposed to Teacher 3 who maintained tight content control at the beginner level. It could be that while a high degree of control over content does not favour expansions, it does favour self-repetitions (and other-repetitions, as will be seen in the next section). This apparent contradiction may be explained as follows: repetitions deal with given content, whereas expansions, which can include new items, are more in tune with the relative open-endedness of less tightly controlled lessons. This theory is not borne out at the advanced level, however, where control of content had the opposite effect on the use of self-repetitions. Teacher 3, the highest user, probably had the least amount of control in his problem-solving discussion, and Teacher 2, the lowest user, the most in her grammar exercise correction lesson.
Self-repetitions may be influenced by factors of personal style. While the clear proficiency level effect across all teachers suggests that adjustment behaviour is not affected by personal style, the extent to which teachers tend to be repeaters or not may be, although the present study does not reveal what those factors might be. Since self-repetitions can be used either to avoid or repair conversational trouble, this distinction does not explain high or low usage, but it is interesting to note that the two teachers who use self-repetitions predominantly for one purpose (Teacher 4 as a strategy, Teacher 3 as a tactic) were the highest users, while the two lowest users, Teachers 1 and 2, seemed to employ them as both avoidance and repair devices.

Whatever the explanation for teacher variability, the strong proficiency level effect remains and suggests that the teachers were gearing their speech to the students' proficiency level, with respect to use of self-repetitions.

In the present study, self-repetitions are second only to display questions in frequency of use at the beginners level, and to display and referential questions at the advanced level. Other studies corroborate this finding as well as that of a proficiency level effect. Self-repetitions are pervasive in NS-NNS speech outside classrooms (Long 1981a, Freed 1981, Hatch, Shapira & Gough 1975). More than 20% of the ESL teachers' speech to beginning foreign students were self-repetitions in Gaies' study (1977). Early
(in press) found significantly more self-repetitions in ESL teachers' speech than regular teachers' speech. Gaieš (1977) and Chaudron (1979) both report this feature to be more frequent in the classroom at lower levels of proficiency.

3.1.4 OTHER-REPETITIONS (FIGURE 4)

There was no significant difference in the use of other-repetitions with advanced and beginner level students, nor was there a significant interaction between teacher and proficiency level. However, there was a trend towards a teacher effect.

It is interesting to note that the adjustments made to self- and other-repetitions as a result of level were not similar. Use of the former decreases as level increases, while use of the latter does not. Possibly the explanation lies in the fact that self-repetitions are primarily pedagogical, whereas other-repetitions serve the additional affective purpose of affirmation of the student's response from language and/or content points of view. This kind of support probably plays an important role in any kind of effective instructional setting, regardless of language proficiency.

There is a trend towards a teacher effect as shown by Teacher 3's greater use of other-repetitions at the beginner level. The differences may be at least partly explained as an artifact of lesson content following the same argument as used for self-repetitions. Teacher 3 conducted a question
Figure 4
Other-Repetitions

Legend
- Beginner
- Advanced
and answer grammar practice focused on form throughout the lesson, whereas Teachers 1 and 2 included a considerable amount of roleplay, and focused on content. Teacher 3's formal grammar-oriented drill may have been particularly suited to use of other-repetitions for pedagogical purposes. That is, a form focus, as in Teacher 3's beginner class, may promote use of other-repetitions as a way of emphasizing the grammatical point. This observation runs parallel to that in the discussion of use of self-repetitions. As well, as suggested there, use of roleplay and student questions seemed to lead to a lesser degree of control over content, and may have contributed to the relatively low use of other-repetitions in these lessons (Teachers 1 and 2 at the beginner level).

The differences, on the other hand, may be due differing perceptions on the part of the teachers as to the importance of affirmation of a student's response by modeling it back to him and his fellow students.

At the advanced level, Teachers 3 and 1, who both utilize a problem-solving exercise (Teacher 1 to a lesser extent), fall together as the top users of other-repetitions, while Teachers 4 and 2, who both conduct grammar and exercise correction lessons, are on the low end. Perhaps the problem-solving type of exercise tends to elicit more other-repetitions because personal affirmation lies closer to hand when dealing with a student's own experience and opinions.
There is an apparent contradiction in using more control of content as an argument for higher use of other-repetitions with beginners, and less control of content as an argument for higher use of other-repetitions with advanced students. The contradiction falls away, however, if the differences observed are due to varying use of other-repetitions for pedagogical purposes in the first case, and affirmative purposes in the second, as has been suggested.

The lack of a significant proficiency level effect suggests that use of other-repetitions is not influenced by language proficiency level in the classroom. Other studies do, however, report significantly more other-repetitions in FT in (Early in press) and out of classrooms (Long 1981a), as compared to NS-NS speech.

3.1.5 DISPLAY QUESTIONS (FIGURE 5)

The ESL teachers used highly significantly fewer display questions with advanced than with beginner level students (p≤.000). There was also a trend towards an effect of teacher, but no interaction effect between teacher and proficiency level.

The downward adjustment in use of display questions at the advanced level is a pedagogically important finding in my view. It has been noted that display questions do not in general invite learners to respond at length and even less to initiate new topics and thus sustain interaction (Gaies 1983, p.209). In other words, they do little to promote
Figure 5
Display Questions

Legend
- Beginner
- Advanced
communicative use of language. Furthermore, we know from comparison of in and out of classroom FT (Long & Sato 1983, Long 1983c) that, in sharp contrast to teachers' FT, NSs speaking to NNSs outside classrooms employ very few display questions. If the goal of the language classroom is to prepare learners linguistically for the real, communicative world, then it would be comforting to know that ESL teaching is on the right track in cutting down on display questions as the students' proficiency increases. This result supports that contention, with the qualification that half of the teachers did not replace the display questions with referential questions (see the discussion on referential questions).

It is unlikely that display questions are used less often with advanced students with any conscious motive of preparing students for the real world. More probably the reasons can be found in the content of language lessons at different levels of proficiency. Display questions are useful for vocabulary teaching, which is often a large part of lower level lessons (e.g., Teacher 4's beginner lesson in this study). They are probably less useful for the teaching of discourse negotiation, presumably a larger part of higher level lessons.

An examination of the lessons clearly reveals that Teacher 3's downward adjustment in display questions was an artifact of lesson content. They were, not unexpectedly, pervasive in his question and answer grammar practice of
verb tenses and short answers to yes/no questions, and scarce in his problem-solving lesson. While Teacher 1 and Teacher 3 used display questions about equally frequently at the advanced level, the fact that Teacher 1 adjusted less drastically than Teacher 3 corresponds to her use of a problem-solving discussion, in which only three display questions were employed, and which only accounted for one-third of her advanced lesson.

There was a trend towards inconsistency in the teachers' behaviour. Teachers 3 and 2 seemed to reduce display questions similarly and in higher proportions from beginner to advanced than did Teachers 4 and 1. These last two reduced display questions in similar proportion, but used widely different amounts. The explanation for the grouping of Teachers 3 and 2 as compared to 4 and 1 does not seem to lie in lesson content differences. On the other hand, one could attribute Teacher 4's more conservative adjustment in part to her interest in avoiding conversational breakdown, and Teacher 3's more pronounced reduction in part to his lack of avoidance behaviour. Display questions, especially when employed in drills and exercise correction, would seem to be less likely to lead to breakdown than would referential questions or statements.

The absolute numbers of display questions used by the teachers are somewhat different. At the advanced level, Teacher 4's greater use can again be explained by her tendency to avoid conversational breakdown. Display
questions may be perceived as being less risky in that regard than referential questions. At the beginner level, however, neither lesson content nor strategy/tactic preferences offer an explanation for the differing behaviour. Perhaps it lies in differences in training or personal preferences or in reactions to class composition variables.

3.1.6 REFERENTIAL QUESTIONS (FIGURE 6)

Significant effects of both proficiency level and teacher were evident: in general these teachers used significantly more referential questions with advanced than with beginning students (p≤.000), and absolute amounts differed significantly among the teachers as well (p≤.001). Moreover, there was a significant interaction between teacher and proficiency level (p≤.002).

The interaction effect constrains the generality of the proficiency effect and reflects the fact that certain teachers boost referential questions with advanced students, and others do not. Teacher 3 is clearly one of the boosters. Post hoc Scheffé comparisons confirmed and expanded on what Figure 6 suggests. The adjustment in numbers of referential questions made by Teacher 3 between the levels was significantly different from the corresponding adjustment by Teacher 2 or Teacher 4 (compared to T2: $F = 65.92 (7, 16) \ p = .01$). Teachers 3 and 1 combined adjusted in significantly different amounts than Teachers 2
and 4 combined (F = 77.43 (7, 16) p = .01). But it was Teacher 3 who behaved most differently from all the rest. He adjusted significantly more than Teachers 1, 2 and 4 combined, but not than Teacher 1 alone (F = 72.31 (7, 16) p = .01; F = 17.57 (7, 16) p = .01).

There are several possible explanations for Teacher 3's widely divergent behaviour. The use of referential questions may be to some extent an attribute of personal teaching style. For instance, Teacher 3, who used significantly more referential questions than Teacher 4 at the advanced level, has been shown to be less interested in avoiding conversational trouble than Teacher 4. Teachers who do not tend to avoid breakdowns but to repair them instead, may be more prone to using referential questions, which can involve the students in trying to express thoughts and emotions never before attempted in English.

However, there is also a case for considering his relatively heavy use of this discourse feature with the advanced class as an artifact of the type of exercise or methodology employed. A problem-solving exercise was presented, and the students asked to provide possible solutions, discuss the pros and cons of each, and decide individually on the best solution— all in open discussion led by the teacher. The teacher had ostensible, but little direct control of content, often pursuing points of interest brought up by the students. This accounts at least partially for the prevalence of referential questions. But more
specifically, the very nature of this activity necessitated the use of referential questions of the attitude/opinion type. For example,

T3: Do you think that it would work trying to bring up two kids and working shift work...

And since the problem dealt with family organization, referential questions of the type

T3: Does this kind of thing happen in your native country?

as well as follow-up questions were common.

Teachers 2 and 4, who used virtually no referential questions at either level, both gave grammar and grammar exercise correction lessons at the advanced level. It is not surprising that few referential questions turned up in these highly content-controlled and impersonal types of lessons.

More evidence that use of a problem-solving method of discussion is related to high use of referential questions is provided by Teacher 1's behaviour. Teacher 1 spent one-third of her lesson at the advanced level on the same type of problem-solving exercise as Teacher 3 had used. In the last two-thirds of this section of the lesson over 25% of all teacher utterances were referential questions, and these accounted for almost three-quarters of all her referential
questions. It seems that a problem-solving lesson on a universal topic is a good vehicle for tapping into student experience and opinion, and, if exploited in such a fashion, it will be rich in referential questions on the part of the teacher.

In comparing the results for display and referential questions one might ask what Teachers 2 and 4 replaced display questions with at the advanced level, since they did not increase use of referential questions. The students may have done more of the talking, or the teacher may have used more statements at the advanced than at the beginner level.

Insofar as teachers are not prone to use of referential questions or to choosing lesson activities which promote them, there is some justification for extending Long's criticism of the second language classroom as a place which "offers very little opportunity to the learner to communicate in the target language or to hear it used for communicative purposes by others" (Long 1983c, p.218) to the advanced level based on these findings.

3.1.7 COMPREHENSION CHECKS (FIGURE 7)

There was no significant difference in the number of comprehension checks used by the teachers at the two levels of proficiency. The teachers did use them in significantly different amounts at each proficiency level, however, and there was a trend towards an interaction between teacher and proficiency level.
Figure 7
Comprehension Checks

Legend
- Beginner
- Advanced
Proficiency level does not appear to influence numbers of comprehension checks, possibly because as the students progress the material becomes correspondingly more complex. On the other hand, it may be that the range between beginner and advanced students was just not broad enough for the differences to be significant. Early (in press) reports significantly more comprehension checks in ESL classes than in regular classes. If one views her work as a comparison between levels as well, with the bottom level being a mixture of beginner and intermediate students and the upper one being that much more advanced (i.e., proficient non-native or native) than my advanced ESL students, it may be that a wider range between the proficiency levels accounts for her capturing a significant difference.

The numbers of comprehension checks employed by these teachers were significantly different. Post hoc Scheffé comparisons revealed that Teacher 1 used significantly more comprehension checks than Teachers 2, 3 and 4 combined ($F = 18.21 \ (3, \ 16) \ p = 0.01$). It must be noted, however, that the generality of this effect is limited by the interaction trend, as discussed below.

The notion of strategies and tactics as a matter of personal style may help explain why the teachers behave so differently, at least at the beginner level. Use of comprehension checks has been viewed as a long-term strategy to prevent communication breakdown (Long 1983a). Teacher 3 rarely employed this discourse feature at either level, and
he tended to use short-term tactics rather than long-term strategies. As pointed out above, presumably he would react in the short term to repair communication breakdown with such tactics as self- and other-repetitions, confirmation checks, and clarification requests. In fact, he was the highest user of confirmation checks. He was also the highest user of self-repetitions which he used twice as often as tactics than as strategies with advanced students, and overwhelmingly as tactics with beginner students. In addition, he was the highest user of other-repetitions, but he did not use them as tactics. As far as clarification requests are concerned, there was no teacher effect, making a behaviour comparison invalid for this interactional feature.

A paucity in comprehension checks could also be explained by a teacher's lack of awareness of cultural differences in how or if students register comprehension or lack of it either linguistically or nonlinguistically. The present study did not control for awareness of cultural differences, but, based on the observations, it does not seem likely that this explanation applied to the teachers studied.

Lesson methodology may shed light on why teachers differ. Teacher 3 used fewer comprehension checks at the advanced level relative to the other teachers. This seems logical in light of the fact that the information flow in his problem-solving exercise was largely from student to
teacher, and Long (1983c, p.219) has argued that comprehension checks will be less frequent if this is so. He did not check the classmates' comprehension of a student's utterance either, but it could be that teachers are less likely to check comprehension when in the role of facilitator in a free-flowing conversation than they are in the role of teacher, as imparter of knowledge.

There was a trend towards an interaction between teacher and proficiency level. The effect of proficiency level on the use of comprehension checks depends to a certain extent on which teacher is being considered. Teachers 2 and 4 increased numbers of comprehension checks at the advanced level somewhat, while Teacher 1 decreased usage, and Teacher 3's use of comprehension checks was not affected. Higher numbers of comprehension checks are likely to occur when information is flowing primarily from teacher to student (Long 1983c). Teacher 1, who decreased usage with advanced as compared to beginner students, held a beginner lesson with the typical teacher to student information flow. The flow was in the opposite direction in the problem-solving section of her advanced lesson, where in one-third of the lesson she used less than one-fifth of her total number of comprehension checks, providing an explanation for her decreased usage at the advanced level. Teacher 4's beginner lesson was very tightly controlled with visual aids used throughout. Perhaps the use of media obviated the need for comprehension checks, whereas her advanced class was
less tightly controlled, and so more comprehension checks were applicable there. This might explain why she increased usage at the advanced level. Teacher 2's upward adjustment may be explained by the relative complexity of her advanced lesson, a sentence-combining exercise, which was discussed in grammatical terms such as infinitive phrase and anticipatory 'it'. Teacher 3's lack of adjustment cannot be explained by information flow since it was clearly flowing from teacher to student at the beginner level and in the opposite direction at the advanced level. In any case, he also used comprehension checks rarely, and, as has been mentioned, he was probably a short-term tactics user and so tended not to check comprehension.

It should be noted that a relatively high or low number of comprehension checks at any level for a particular teacher may simply be determined by lesson content or methodology or other factors such as teaching style or the teacher's awareness of or reaction to cultural differences. There may be no adjustment to proficiency level as a cause-effect relationship for any of them. Or, conversely, the teachers may, in fact, be adjusting to the proficiency level of their students, but in individual ways, so that some teachers increase, some decrease usage from beginner to advanced classes.

Aspects of the lesson and teacher behaviour were not controlled in the study, so that what we are left with are not explanations, but valuable clues as to the sources of
variation. Further studies are required which explicitly address these issues.

High use of comprehension checks seems to be a feature of FT, as shown by their prevalence in ESL as compared to regular teachers' speech (Early in press), and in NS-NNS as compared to NS-NS conversations outside classrooms (Long 1981a). But it is also an aspect of teacher talk, as shown by the greater numbers of them found in ESL teachers' speech as compared to NSs' speech in NS-NNS conversations (Long 1983c).

3.1.8 CONFIRMATION CHECKS (FIGURE 8)

There was no significant difference in the frequencies of confirmation checks used at the two levels. The teachers did behave significantly differently in the numbers of confirmation checks employed at a proficiency level, and this effect was general, i.e., it was not constrained by an interaction between teacher and proficiency level.

Long (1983c) found fewer confirmation checks used by NSs in ESL classrooms than outside them, and Early (in press) did not find sufficient numbers of confirmation checks to report any difference between ESL and regular teachers' speech. She suggests that teachers have less use for them because they avoid conversational breakdowns (which confirmation checks are often employed to repair) more so than NSs outside classrooms. They were not particularly plentiful in this study either. They ranked sixth out of the
Figure 8
Confirmation Checks

Average Frequency of Occurrence

Teacher

Legend
- Beginner
- Advanced

11
12
13
14
nine discourse features in frequency of use at both proficiency levels.

The four teachers do, however, make use of this discourse feature in significantly different amounts. The number of confirmation checks used for any given lesson may depend on the type of activity chosen. But the deciding factor may be the direction of information flow as determined by the type of activity. If it is from student to teacher, confirmation checks will be employed more often (Long 1983c). This was borne out by Teacher 3, who used the most confirmation checks at the advanced level in a problem-solving lesson in which information was primarily flowing from student to teacher. They often followed unexpected student responses. The other teachers, on the other hand, used significantly fewer confirmation checks at that level, according to a Scheffé post-hoc comparison test comparing numbers of confirmation checks used by Teacher 3 to the mean of the numbers of confirmation checks used by Teachers 1, 2 and 4 at the advanced level ($F = 23.97 (3, 16) p = .01$).

Notably, two out of the three lessons were entirely grammar discussion-based, while the third one contained both highly controlled exercises and open-ended problem-solving discussion. Information flow is probably not weighted either way in grammar exercise lessons. On the other hand, lesson content and direction of information flow does not explain why Teacher 3 and Teacher 1 with beginners used the next highest number of confirmation checks. Teacher 3's lesson
was purely grammar practice drills in which the flow was definitely not from student to teacher.

Perhaps individual style will provide an explanation here. Confirmation checks are tactics used to repair breakdown. That Teacher 3 was the highest user at both levels is consistent with his high use of self-repetitions and expansions as tactics, and his low use of comprehension checks. In short, he appeared to react to conversation breakdown in the short-term rather than to avoid it. It has been argued that Teacher 4 is a strategist, and, in fact, she is the lowest user of the tactic of confirmation checks at both levels.

It may be that while a change in the direction of information flow towards student to teacher, as was true for Teacher 3 with advanced students, tends to increase the frequency of confirmation checks, the rising proficiency level itself acts to decrease numbers of confirmation checks (because the better the speaker the more likely he is to produce readily comprehensible utterances). The influence of the former tendency may peak somewhere between beginners and advanced, and be offset by the latter, bringing a high number of confirmation checks back down to the observed level with advanced students (or there may be a trough if the latter tendency predominates at lower levels and is only at higher levels offset by a student to teacher information flow).
3.1.9 CLARIFICATION REQUESTS (FIGURE 9)

Not even a trend towards a teacher or proficiency level or interaction effect is evident in the four ESL teachers' use of clarification requests. In any case, there are so few of them in the data that no conclusion is possible. It may be that teachers tend to maintain such tight control over their lessons that student responses can be anticipated, making clarification requests unnecessary, and where they cannot (Teacher 3 at advanced, for instance), it may be that experienced teachers have the facility to at least hazard a guess with a confirmation check. Other classroom studies also report relatively few clarification requests (Long 1983c, Early in press). FT outside classrooms does seem to contain greater numbers of clarification requests (Long 1981a): Early suggests that conversational breakdowns are more likely to occur outside the classroom (where there is not as much work being done to avoid them), and repair is often sought through a request for clarification.

3.2 SUMMARY

There was a significant effect of proficiency level for three discourse features - self-repetitions, display questions, and referential questions. The suggestion is that increasing communicative ability on the part of the student and/or types of lesson chosen by the teacher led to this result. In the case of referential questions a significant interaction between teacher and proficiency level constrains
Figure 9
Clarification Requests

Legend
- Beginner
- Advanced
the generality of the proficiency level effect. There were
trends towards an interaction between teacher and
proficiency level for expansions and comprehension checks.
Explanations for all three interactions seem to involve
primarily variations in lesson content which affect such
variables as amount of teacher control over content or type
of information exchange (two-way or one-way), and teaching
style as affected by the tendency to use strategies to avoid
or tactics to repair conversational breakdown.

There was considerable variation at the level of
teacher. Significant differences were found among the
teachers in their use of self-repetitions, referential
questions, comprehension checks and confirmation checks.
Other-repetitions and display questions showed trends
towards a teacher effect. Inspection of the corpora suggests
that lesson content choices which affect direction of
information flow, amount of teacher control over content,
amount of emphasis on form versus meaning, and linguistic
complexity of the material are determining factors in the
amount of each discourse feature used. Teaching style can
also be crucial. Whether teachers are aware of uses of
certain discourse features or of cultural differences in
class composition, and, most importantly, whether in their
language classroom conversational behaviour they tend to
plan for the long term or react in the short term, are
potentially relevant aspects.
CHAPTER FOUR
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study suggests that ESL teachers' discourse varies as a function of students' language competence for some interactional features: namely, self-repetitions, and display questions. Both of these interactional features are employed significantly less often by the teachers with advanced than beginner students. On the basis of this study, it cannot be concluded that the other features do not also change significantly with proficiency level for these teachers. It may be that larger corpora would uncover differences. On the other hand, it does reveal how widely teachers can vary in their behaviour. The absolute frequencies of discourse features differed among the teachers in many cases, and the amount of adjustment was highly variable. Moreover, the lack of a general effect of proficiency level on most measures of discourse adjustment seemed to be due not to an absence of adjustment, but to the fact that teachers modified in opposite directions on several measures. This was true for expansions, other-repetitions, comprehension checks, and clarification requests. It remains for further study to determine whether these individual differences in direction or amount of adjustment are significant.

It will be recalled from the discussion in Chapter 2 that, since the teacher variable was fixed and not random, the results of the study are, strictly speaking, not
generalizable to other types of ESL teachers. With that in mind, I would like to make some cautious suggestions about how teachers in general might behave based on the findings.

Long and Sato (1983) found that ESL teachers of beginners asked more display questions and fewer referential questions than NSs in conversation with NNSs outside classrooms. The present finding is that ESL teachers of beginner students asked more display questions and fewer referential questions than ESL teachers of advanced students. The ratio of display to referential questions used by Long and Sato's lower level ESL teachers was 4 to 1. It was even more pronounced for lower level teachers in the present study: display questions were 25 times as numerous as referential questions. The same teachers, however, employed on the average about equal numbers of display and referential questions with advanced students. It seems that the disparity in distribution of display and referential questions in and out of classrooms is not as pronounced for ESL teachers' speech to students of advanced ESL proficiency (although this result should be checked against NS speech to advanced NNSs outside the classroom). This finding would tend to mitigate Long and Sato's conclusion that "NS - NNS conversation during SL instruction is a greatly distorted version of its equivalent in the real world" (Long & Sato 1983, p.284), at least for SL instruction at advanced levels. Teachers may create a highly artificial language environment in lower level classrooms, but the findings in
this study suggest that they are moving in the direction of closing the gap to more communicative use of language as the students' proficiency level increases, as far as the use of display questions is concerned. It must be noted, however, that only half of the teachers were creating a more communicative environment by increasing referential questions at the advanced level.

The present study adds to our knowledge of foreigner talk in the following ways. First, it further characterizes FT in the classroom: interactional features of discourse are examined in the light of differing language proficiency levels of the students. It was found that, while numbers of some interactional features did change in the direction predicted between the proficiency levels, there were no significant differences in numbers of most interactional features, contrary to the hypotheses.

This study allowed variation at the level of teacher to emerge as a determining factor. Considerable variation was discovered. Further studies are called for to isolate and examine to what extent lesson choices or teaching styles, as two possible sources of variation, affect teachers' use of interactional features of discourse with students of varying ESL proficiency. Correlational studies of teachers' use of each interactional feature could be useful. If teachers are found to be high or low users of interactional features in general relative to other teachers, then the picture portrayed here of pervasive individual variation would be
mitigated somewhat.

The second benefit from this study is that, although it is only capable of assessing an association between each of the discourse features and student proficiency level, its findings suggest that language proficiency level would be a good candidate for a study on triggers of FT. Though lesson content was not controlled in this study, it has emerged in the discussion as an additional and powerful factor in determining discourse usage. This implication runs parallel to Long's finding that task type (two-way or one-way information flow) influences use of interactional features by NSs in conversation with NNSs outside classrooms (Long 1981a). In addressing teacher variability, the study has also uncovered sources of variation due to teaching style: in particular, whether a teacher tends to avoid or repair conversational breakdown. It appears that FT is influenced by a combination of many factors—personal style in conjunction with lesson content, methodology, proficiency level, ethnic and linguistic background of the students, and probably others as well.

Research has just begun on this aspect of SLA: it has been suggested that age triggers simplification more than linguistic competence in a study of NS speech to NNS children and adolescents (Scarcella & Higa 1981), that it is comprehensibility of NNS speech as determined by grammaticality and pronunciation as well as other linguistic and social factors that triggers FT (Varonis & Gass 1982),
and that comprehension by the NNS is one of a combination of determining factors (Long 1983b).

More research is called for, both into these and other possible triggers of FT and into describing the ways in which the triggers affect FT usage in the classroom and other contexts, for various speech events, tasks and conversational participants. In the classroom, it will be important to investigate how ethnicity and first and/or other language backgrounds affect FT usage. For instance, the fact that most of the students (75%) who took part in this study were Chinese, Japanese or Vietnamese L1 speakers may account in part for some of the differences in the results among this and other studies.

Work in the areas of description and triggers of FT continues as some researchers begin to explore the question of whether or which modifications do, in fact, promote second language acquisition. Hamayan and Tucker (1980) discovered that modifications in classroom input affected French second language learners' production of certain syntactic structures at the third and fifth grade levels. Brock (1984) investigated effects of referential and display questions on learners' target language production. Students responded with longer, more complex utterances, and with more utterances per turn to referential than to display questions. Long (1983b) tested a preliminary step in which it is hypothesized that modifications lead to comprehensible input and interaction by comparing intermediate students'
comprehension of a FT and a NS version of a lecturette. He suggests that one or more speech adjustments do facilitate NNS comprehension.

When answers begin to emerge on which features do or do not promote SLA, and these are mapped onto which features are used by which teachers in which ways, there will be implications for teacher training. Presumably, for specific settings, tasks and participants, there will be a range of FT behaviours which could be shown to be beneficial to the learner (or, more likely, certain ranges of behaviours will prove beneficial to certain types of learners). Long and several colleagues have begun research in this area (Long, Brock, Crookes, Deicke, Potter & Zhang 1984). Students' comprehension of specially constructed and similar lessons was tested before and after their teachers had a 15 minute training session on the purpose and use of referential questions. It was found that even a small amount of training affected their behaviour (use of referential questions did increase), and that the students' mastery of lesson content was higher. Training would seem to be fruitful and indications are that experience does not influence frequency of use of discourse features in any thorough-going way (Pica & Long 1982). Clearly, however, before the implications for teacher training can be pursued, there is much work to be done in answering the question of whether and which discourse modifications are beneficial to the learner.
The present study adds to our knowledge of NS-NNS registers for the setting of the classroom, the roles of teacher and student, and the task of formal teacher-fronted discussion. It suggests, first of all, that we are dealing with at least two different types of interactional features - those with purely functional dimensions and those with a formal dimension as well. It also suggests that some interactional features are rarely used in the classroom (or-choice questions and clarification requests), some are not used in significantly different amounts at the beginner and advanced proficiency levels (expansions, other-repetitions, comprehension and confirmation checks) and some are heavily used features which are employed in highly different amounts with beginner and advanced students (self-repetitions, display questions, and, with qualification, referential questions). The fact that self-repetitions, display questions and referential questions are used in significantly different amounts at the two levels strengthens the case for considering them FT features.

While the extent of individual variation among teachers is great, one might tentatively conclude that ESL teachers do increase communicative use of language as their students near NS fluency. Even more tentatively, one might suspect that teachers, at least on some measures, approach NS-NS teacher talk register as the students near NS proficiency. This requires further study with NS-NS baseline data in the classroom, along with the proficiency level comparison.
In conclusion, it remains to point out that while it seems to be generally agreed that the learner's linguistic environment is an important aspect of the acquisition process, teachers are not on the whole aware of the linguistic adjustments they make with their foreign students, nor are input and interactional adjustments and which types of lessons affect them part of teacher training curricula. I would suggest that they should be, on both counts. The extent of individual variability in discourse usage discovered in the present study suggests that some teachers may have the intuitive ability to fine tune their lesson activities to promote discourse patterns to suit the language learners' needs. Others of us may need to be taught how to do that optimally.
REFERENCE NOTES

1. Since the writing of this thesis, Early's doctoral dissertation has been completed:

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Interactional Features of Discourse
Definitions, Examples and Coding Conventions

Notes.

1. Only teachers' utterances are coded.
2. The references to conversational turns include NNS as well as NS utterances.
3. An utterance is coded for its relationship to the closest preceding utterance, if two relationships are possible. For example,

   S: No, he isn't -
   doesn't.

   T3(1): No, he doesn't.
   T3(2): That's exactly it -
   no, he doesn't.

   Utterance T3(2) is a SR.

4. Even if only one clause of an utterance bears a relationship to a preceding utterance, the utterance is coded for that relationship. For example,

   T2(1): You have the 'me'
   there already, OK.
   T2(2): You have the 'me'
   there already - 'It
   was insulting of him
to write me a nasty
   letter' - so you don't
   need 'to me' and 'me'
   again.

   Utterance T2(2) is a SR.

5. Each teacher utterance will either remain uncoded or be coded for a form or function feature or one of each. No utterance is coded for more than one form or function feature.

The interactional features of discourse under study are:

1. Or-choice Questions (OR)

Questions which include a choice of two or more possible answers in the questioning move (Long 1981b).

E.g. Do you study? Or do you work?

As in this example, the move usually consisted of two utterances. Only the second one is coded as an or-choice question: both parts can be coded for a function
category.
There may be another utterance separating the two parts of an or-choice question, for example:

S: XX

T1(1): You were watching, you were looking?
T1(2): OK.
T1(3): Or were you singing?

T1(1) is coded as CC and SR. T1(3) is coded as OR and RQ.
The or-choice question may also have more than two parts: the last one is coded OR.

2. Expansions (EX)

The NS rephrases and/or repeats all or part of their own or the NNS's utterance within five conversational turns of the original utterance, and adds grammatical functors not supplied previously (Long (1981a) and Early (in press) considered only obligatory grammatical functors). Corrections, identified by falling intonation and emphasis on the corrected segment, are not considered expansions. For example,

S: By bus.

T3: You came by bus?

**********

T4(2): She's a lady.

**********

T3: Yesterday, I ...
T3: Went to my apartment.

**********

S: Allstars.

T3: Allstar game, oh, right, yes.

**********

T3(1): We'll look at some past tenses a little later on, OK?
T3(2): We'll look at maybe six or more of these special past tenses a little bit later.

3. Self-repetitions (SR)

The NS repeats their own utterance, either partially or

---

XX denotes an incomprehensible utterance
completely, with an exact or semantic repetition (i.e., paraphrase) within five conversational turns of the original utterance (Long 1983a). For example,

T2(1): How do you say this word, M.?
T2(2): How do you say that word?

************
T1(1): Something like 'ask her husband to' - do what?
T1(2): What would you suggest that he do?

Repetitions within the same utterance (but not false starts or stuttering behaviour) are considered SRs. For example,

T1: OK, now, what kind of ice-cream, all right, so then we have to say what kind of ice-cream.

Repeated questions are not SRs if they are directed to different NNSs. For example,

T3(1): Are you married? S1: Yes, I am.
T3(2): Are you married? S2: No, I'm not.

T3(2) is not a SR.

4. Other-repetitions (OT)

The NS repeats the NNS's utterance, either partially or completely, with an exact or semantic repetition (i.e., paraphrase) within five conversational turns of the original utterance (Long 1983a). For example,

T1(1): Pardon me? S: And Wall Street.
T2(2): And Wall Street.

Repetitions of NNS utterances for the teacher's own benefit rather than the students' are not coded OT (often these are sotto voce).

5. Display Questions (DQ)

They are test or known information questions. Their purpose is to elicit a display of knowledge from the NNS (Long & Sato 1983). The content of the response is known or of no interest to the NS. The knowledge to be
displayed can be at a range of levels: spoken, written, pragmatic, syntactic, pronunciation, or world knowledge. For example,

T1: When do you come to school everyday? (to practise the present habitual tense)

************

T1: Say the whole sentence.

'Complete-the-sentence' questions are also display questions:

T1(1): When did you come to Canada?  
T1(2): I came --? (rising intonation signalling incomplete utterance)

Both T1 utterances are DQ. All class management moves are disregarded (i.e., they are neither DQ nor RQ):

T1: You're asking him, right?

************

T1: Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?

Questions read from a text are considered neither DQs nor RQs, because they are non-conversational.

6. Referential Questions (RQ)

They are information questions which elicit unknown information or opinions or attitudes (Long & Sato 1983). In addition, the speaker must be interested in the content of the response. For example:

T1: What did you read about?

************

T1: What do you think?

7. Comprehension Checks (CO)
They are any expression by a NS designed to establish whether that speaker's preceding utterance has been understood by the interlocutor (Long & Sato 1983). Examples are 'Do you understand?', 'So, ...., right?', 'OK? (with rising intonation), or any expression which can be paraphrased as 'Are you following me?' 'OK' and 'Right' used in this way are distinguished from other uses as boundary markers and in the sense of 'Do you agree?' Boundary markers usually do not have rising intonation and agreement requests can be identified by context. Comprehension checks can ask either 'Do you understand the words I am saying?' or 'Do you understand what is meant by the words I am saying?'

8. Confirmation Checks (CC)

Any expression by a NS immediately following an utterance by a NNS which is designed to elicit confirmation that the utterance has been correctly heard or understood by the speaker. For example, 'Do you mean ....?' They always involve partial or complete repetition of the NNS' utterance, and will always elicit unknown information (but RQ will not be coded). They always have rising intonation with or without a tag. For example,

S: They both go out to work.

T3: So they need - they need to both work, you say, eh, because wages are so low. (rising intonation medially)

9. Clarification Requests (CL)

Any expression by a NS designed to elicit clarification of the interlocutor's preceding utterance(s) (Long & Sato 1983). A CL is considered to contain a RQ, so the latter is not coded. They are most often interrogative, but may be declarative or imperative. For example, 'Pardon me?', 'Hm?', 'I don't understand', 'Try again' or

T3: From -- ?

S: From XX:
### APPENDIX B

#### Characteristics of the Samples

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<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Experience</th>
<th>Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date</th>
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#### LEGEND

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APPENDIX C

Summary of Analysis of Variance of Use of Or-Choice Questions

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Summary of Analysis of Variance of Use of Expansions

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Summary of Analysis of Variance of Use of Self-Repetitions

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**Summary of Analysis of Variance of Use of Other-Repetitions**

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APPENDIX C (cont.)

Summary of Analysis of Variance of Use of Confirmation Checks

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APPENDIX C (cont.)

Summary of Analysis of Variance of Use of Clarification Requests

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