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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INTERACTION AS A COMPONENT OF CONVERSATION PARTNER TALK IN A COLLEGIATE SETTING

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of
The Ohio State University

By
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to advance knowledge about the potential contribution of interaction in a second or foreign language to second language acquisition by studying the interactional patterns employed by a group of participants consisting of two ESL learners and four English native speakers in a conversation partners program. The conversation partners program can enhance language learning and cultural understanding among ESL learners and English speakers because it provides opportunities to speak, listen, and interact using the target language (TL) as a spoken medium of communication.

Each week during the Winter quarter of 1996, two of the English-speaking conversation partners met in one-on-one interactional sessions with the two Kuwaiti ESL learners. Data in the form of audio-taped recordings, researcher's observational notes, and member checks were collected and analyzed to identify the components of the second language that the participants encountered and used to participate in the interactions, the patterns the participants used to communicate and negotiate meaning in the L2, and the interrelationships between the patterns of linguistic precessing and social interaction employed by the participants in the study.
The components of the second language utilized by the participants to partake in the interactions included phonological and lexical information about the L2 as well as opportunities to practice the communication skills of listening to and speaking with English native speakers.

The second section of the data analysis identified the patterns of language use found within the talk of conversation partners described in the first section. The analysis highlighted the fact that participants' acts of communication and negotiation of meaning were undertaken not only to achieve mutual intelligibility but also to maintain the social relationships between the ESL learners and the English speakers as members of the conversation partners program.

The third section identified three ways in which linguistic and social processes were related in the talk of the six conversation partners. First, linguistically-motivated processing was primarily guided by the linguistic aspects of the L2 input that was produced by the participants in the course of their interactions. Second, socially-mediated processing was the product of participation in conversation partner talk as a communicative event produced by all participants. Third, conversation partner talk oscillated between linguistic and social processing in a reciprocal spiral relationship.
Dedicated to my father,

for teaching me everything I needed to know in the early years of my life.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My primary debt goes to my adviser, Professor Charles R. Hancock, for his continued encouragement, and careful readings of earlier drafts of this document, and his intellectual support. Without such academic guidance, this dissertation would not have been possible. He taught me that I was free to have my point of view, but at the same time, needed to be open to change it in light of counter-evidence. I am also deeply grateful for him for offering me the opportunity to assist him in teaching M.A. level students of TESOL. As always, Professor Hancock was generous in his guidance of my teaching and supervision of the content of my courses.

I wish to thank Professor Keiko K. Samimi for agreeing to serve on my committee as well as in my supplementary exam. She helped a great deal in making that exam a valuable learning experience. My discussions with her regarding foreign language education and second language acquisition continue to inspire my commitment to the discipline.
I also wish to thank Professor Shelley Wong for having served on my committee. Her support of graduate students is an example of dedication and commitment. She was generous with her time and was always instrumental in opening new paths to knowledge to me through deliberation and dialogue.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by several of my colleagues at the Ohio State University. I am extremely grateful to my best friend and classmate Connie Wu who assisted me through all stages of the dissertation both in Taiwan and in the U. S. A.. Without her help, both material and psychological, I could not have finished my work. You are a blessing in my life. Access to the conversation partners program was made possible by Diane Nasman who was always generous with her help in inviting me to the conversation partners orientation where I was able to seek the participation of the study informants. Mr. Bill Holschuh was very gracious in sharing relevant academic information about the participants. I would also like to thank Femada Capraro who contributed to my study generously as a participant.

Above all, I wish to thank the American people for inviting me to share in the strong academic culture of the Ohio State University. Beyond books and theories, I learned enough about the American people to share in their hopes for world peace.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The 1990s have witnessed the emergence of two distinctive bodies of research on the role of interaction in second language acquisition (SLA). The two main schools of thought dealing with interaction/acquisition relationships are sociocultural and input processing studies. While sociocultural studies attempted to link the social/cultural environment of language learners to SLA and sociocultural outcomes, input processing researchers have generally attempted to link the features of the linguistic input that characterize interactional contexts to second language learning outcomes. Researchers from both orientations tended to emphasize evidence and findings that promoted their own theoretical beliefs while at the same time ignoring the equally valid insights offered by the other perspective. Unfortunately, this trend culminated in a rift between researchers representing both orientations. Firth and Wagner (1997), for example, criticized what they called mainstream SLA researchers for their theoretically biased studies on interaction. As researchers representing the sociocultural perspective on interaction, Firth and Wagner argued that the two perspectives had not been
equally represented in the field, with most SLA researchers favoring the psycholinguistic over the sociocultural interpretations of language acquisition through interaction. Moreover, Liddicoat (1997) suggested that the alleged imbalance in interaction studies “has not only downplayed the role of social phenomena, but has also failed to consider the possible links between social and cognitive phenomena” (p. 80). In response, researchers representing the input processing perspective remained deeply entrenched (see for example, Long, 1997), which served to widen the gap between the two groups. The recent publication of two volumes of interaction studies by Ellis (1999) and Hall & Verplaetse (2000) each promoting the merits of one perspective on interaction while deliberately ignoring the other indicated that the theoretical division among SLA researchers still remains unresolved.

While endemic to many academic circles, the lack of agreement among SLA researchers on interaction is problematic in three important ways. First, it had, so far, prevented a comprehensive investigation of what interaction could potentially offer not only in terms of the linguistic development of language learners but also their social integration in the target language (TL) environment. A cursory review of the available literature on interaction reveals an almost complete absence of studies that attempted to take into full consideration what language learners could be experiencing not only at the level of linguistic input processing but also at the level of socialization into the TL environment as a result of learning a second language through interaction. Second, more research is needed to add to
the existing knowledge base on interaction new information related to the nature of the possible links between the linguistic and the social processes employed by conversation partners in an interaction. Whereas a common problem with the input-processing view is that it examines learner-internal mechanisms in insolation from situational or social conditions that may very well have a vital contribution to the language acquisition process, most sociocultural studies are well situated within groups, but equally neglect the individual learner’s activity and autonomy which still may play a crucial role in the learner’s own language development. Third, SLA attempts to inform language pedagogy in this important area of research have been largely thwarted by the inconsistent messages provided so far to language teachers. In other words, the theoretical differences of opinion among interaction researchers have spilled over to the language classroom. While not all researchers agree that the primary role for SLA theory and research is to inform language pedagogy, the fact still remains that the field of second and foreign language teaching is an applied field with the teaching of languages as its primary mission rather than mere theoretical speculation. Unfortunately, the current split state of interaction research along theoretical lines has stood in the way of conducting studies that aim to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the nature and role of interaction in second language acquisition.

Research on the possible contribution of interaction to second language acquisition has been conducted by researchers representing both the sociocultural
and the input processing views, and much progress has been made in those investigations. Regardless of the large body of factual information collected and analyzed for the research, there is yet little specific evidence as to whether or how the various features of conversational interaction influence learner language development. The present study took as its priority the need for basic research on this important area of research. Three questions were particularly important for a comprehensive understanding of the role of interaction in language development: Within an interaction, what was learned? How was it learned? And, through the use of what teaching and learning processes? For all three questions, it was also important to examine whether the answers involved any distinctively social characteristics or amounted to straightforward linguistic input processing by the individual learner. The purpose of this research strategy was to provide new clues to our understanding of the relationships between ambient linguistic data, attendant social factors, and language learning in an interactional setting.

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, the researcher targeted a group of six conversation partners. Two of the participants were Kuwaiti ESL learners in an American university, and four participants were English native speakers who volunteered as members of a conversation partners program. The two Kuwaiti ESL learners took part in one-on-one conversations with the four American conversation partners. The conversations were held regularly on a weekly basis during Autumn quarter, 1996. After obtaining the agreement of the six participants, the researcher recorded the 60-minute long conversations between
the two Kuwaiti learners and their four English-speaking conversation partners. The researcher took no part in the conversations and played the role of non-participant observer. There was no researcher interference in these conversations, especially in how long one interlocutor could speak, or what questions both participants could ask. The participants spoke freely on any issues and topics that came to their minds that day.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to describe what was being done through the use of the second language in these encounters between the conversation partners. The aim was to give as full a description as possible of the linguistic, social, and situational factors that characterized the interactions between the conversation partners. Analysis focused on the ways in which social factors that played a role in the relationship between the partners were embedded in the language used in these interactions. A second analytic task was to describe the communicative actions that were embedded in conversation partner talk that defined the roles of learners and native speakers as conversation partners.

In sum, the purpose of the study was to collect the weekly conversations among the six conversation participants by recording and then transcribing them, to analyze the components of the second language that were used by the participants to achieve their communicative goals and maintain their relationships as conversation partners, to analyze the roles played by learners and native
speakers as active participants in generating and processing the available linguistic and contextual data, and to examine the ways in which the participants’ linguistic activities and social activities related to each other in the context of their interactions. Data analysis was employed for the purpose of finding answers for the following research questions.

1. What components of the English language were utilized and noticed by the conversation partners in the course of their interaction?
2. How did the participants negotiate to make themselves comprehensible to one another, and how did they maintain their social relationships as members of the conversation partners’ program?
3. How were the participants’ linguistic and social activities in the context of conversation partner talk related to one another?

In order to be able to account for the contribution of interaction to second language learning, there was a need to describe not only the components of English that were utilized and noticed by the two L2 learners, but also the range of categories that characterized the interactional roles and responsibilities of both the two L2 learners and the four NS partners. Thus, the complementary research approach adopted in the present study incorporated elements from both the sociocultural and the input processing views to be able to describe not only the linguistic but also the social aspects of conversation partner talk.
Definition of Terms

**Assistance:** Providing appropriate words and pronunciation to assist a nonnative speaker get his/her meaning across in the L2.

**Comprehensible input:** A term introduced by Krashen (1985) to refer to language which a learner can understand. Even though the language may contain items currently beyond the proficiency level of the learner, the language may be comprehensible in this sense through the aid of clues such as contextual information, gestures, situations, or prior information.

**Conversational style:** The manner in which a native speaker provides input, modifies interaction, and manages the conversation with a nonnative speaker.

**Cultural content of input:** Input that contains information about the cultural schemata of the target people.

**Foreigner talk (FT):** The modified language used by adult native speakers when addressing a non-native speaker of the target language.

**Input:** L2 speech directed by the English native speakers to the learners containing information related to the formal properties of the English language such as pronunciation, lexis, and grammar. In this study, the term L2 input is sometimes used to describe conversation partner talk. In this case the term only applies to the two Kuwaiti ESL learners. As for the NS partners, conversation partner talk does not contain any L2 input.
because the interactions are conducted in English.

**Interactional experience:** The kinds of opportunities created during the course of an interaction for a learner to express him/herself in the second language, and to extract from the input new information about the second language.

**Joint action:** At one level it may be a planned social activity that both participants agree to conduct after the interaction. At another level, joint action is related to the management of talk in terms of the procedures both participants agree to take to conduct their conversation.

**Linguistic content of input:** Input that conveys information about the phonological, grammatical, and lexical aspects of the English language.

**Management of talk:** The procedures taken by the participants in talk to manage the course and direction of the conversation.

**Native speaker (NS):** A person who has learned a language from an early age and who has full mastery of that language. Native speakers may vary in terms of vocabulary and stylistic aspects of language use, but they tend to agree on the basic grammar and sounds of the language.

**Naturalistic language learning environment:** A setting in which the second language is not taught, but rather, is learned naturally, i.e., “on the job,” “while traveling abroad,” or “in the streets,” through informal conversations and interactions with native speakers of the language being learned.

**Negotiation of meaning:** Interactional work done by NS and NNS listeners and
speakers who make adjustments to their speech to clarify their meaning to ensure that they have a common understanding of the ongoing conversation. For example, native speakers may use comprehension checks, clarification requests, confirmation checks, and repetition in order to facilitate communication.

**Nonnative speaker (NNS):** A person who is learning a second language after the first has been learned.

**Output:** The language produced by the learner.

**Second Language Acquisition (SLA):** The name given to the discipline devoted to understanding the learning processes involved in learning another language after the first language has been learned.

**Self-selection:** When a learner participates actively in conversation by voluntarily nominating him/herself to talk without having been asked by the native speaker.

**Social bonding:** Social bonding ensures ongoing relationships both within the interaction and beyond in the form of activities such as movie-going, partying, and invitations.

**Topic control:** The ability to nominate topics to be talked about in the course of a conversation.
Theoretical Framework

Studies of the possible contribution of social interaction in second language learning can be usefully divided into two main theoretical orientations: (a) sociocultural studies which attempt to link features of the social/cultural setting such as convergence, scaffolding, social bonding, collaboration, and L2 classroom interaction, with further second language development by L2 learners, and (b) input processing studies which attempt to isolate linguistic and learning mechanisms involved in input processing such as learner attention, input modification and enhancement, noticing the gap, comprehension and integration. It was fruitful to view these conceptions as two theoretical orientations on the same phenomenon, each of which neglects the other. The position taken in this study was that the relationships between interaction and second language learning are multiple and complex, and that to understand them researchers need to take account of these complexities by adopting a more complete framework that incorporates elements from both the sociocultural and the input processing views. By referring to both perspectives, the emerging picture suggests that a more complete and integrated model should lead to significant progress in our understanding of the relationships between the linguistic and social aspects of interaction and the language development of the learner.

In sociocultural research, the learner was viewed in the role of novice cultural member, learning to use the L2 to accomplish social and communicative
goals in the new cultural context of the second language (e.g. Heath, 1989). The main focus of the research is on the social and cognitive aspects of interaction including the role of social mediation on the acquisition of a second language (e.g. Poole, 1991), learning and teaching languages in “the zone of proximal development” (ZPD) (e.g. Lantolf & Apple, 1994), and “scaffolding” of language interactions by teachers and more proficient peers to enable learners to perform communicatively beyond their current level of development (e.g. Hatch, 1983). For example, a study conducted by Hawkins (1987) on the development of both English knowledge and higher-order cognitive skills by such learners presented evidence that it was through “scaffolding” of language interactions by teachers that L2 students were able to use new language forms to accomplish tasks including the recognition of cause-effect relationships, understanding the significance of event sequence, and gradually gaining the ability to do this independently. Hatch (1978) also noted that the role of input features in the acquisition process might involve “incorporation” of native speaker speech elements by the language learner. Hatch suggested that even in cases where modifications to the linguistic code appeared to be minimal, native speakers often took on much of the “work” of conversation with nonnative speakers, thus facilitating their continuing “participation” in the ongoing interaction.

Studies of input processing adopted an information processing model of speech processing in the context of conversational interaction (e.g. Ellis, 1998). Investigations of input processing attempted to specify the nature and sequence of
events by which information about the phonological, grammatical, and lexical nature of the L2 input are conveyed and experienced as salient by learners through such means as noticing, innate processing, frequency of occurrence, learner attention, and task demands, thus becoming candidates for learner further processing and eventual modification of interlanguage (e.g. Van Patten, 1993; Schmidt, 1990). Input processing studies focused on native speaker (NS) interactional modifications as a means through which a learner could analyze input features which “triggered” internally constrained language learning mechanisms involved in interlanguage development. The input processing perspective included studies of pedagogical “input enhancement” (e.g. Lightbown & Spada, 1991), and more recently “focus on form” (e.g. Doughy & Williams, 1998) which sought to promote instructed SLA by investigating the ways in which language teachers made particular input features more salient to student perception, through a focused analysis of the formal features of the second language within the classroom setting.

What emerges from an analysis of both perspectives is a polarization of two conceptions of the role of interaction in language learning, each with its own metaphor. On one hand, we have the conception of learning a language through interaction as a solitary process, emphasizing the individual learner’s acquisition of linguistic knowledge, as a result of the transmission of knowledge to the learner from native or competent speakers of the target language (e.g., Long, 1985; Swain, 1995; Ellis, 1999). On the other hand, we have the conception of
language learning through interaction as a group phenomenon, emphasizing the
group participatory process of learning together by native speakers and language
learners as a result of social learning processes including mediation, scaffolding,
and collaboration (e.g., Hall & Verplactse, 2000; Lantoff, 1999). Thus, one can
speak of the “computational” conception of input processing studies versus the
“participatory” conception of “socialization through language and socialization to
use language” (Ochs, 1986, p. 2). Although each of the two conceptions of
language learning can be understood in its own right, understanding the interplay
between the two will enrich our knowledge of the full potential of interaction on
SLA. While both theoretical perspectives offer two distinctively different
conceptions of language learning, one of the aims of the present study was to
examine their interrelationships, not as two separate logical categories but as two
points of view on the same phenomenon. A complementary research approach
was, therefore, adopted to increase existing understandings of the relationships
between ambient linguistic data, attendant social factors, and language learning
in an interactional setting.

In conclusion, the theoretical framework of the study fits squarely in the
interactionist view of second language acquisition. What was new about it was
that it attempted to approach the phenomenon of interaction from a standpoint
that incorporated elements from both the input processing perspective and the
sociocultural view on interaction and its possible contribution to language
development.
Significance of the Study

For many years now, second language acquisition researchers have been investigating the potential benefits of interaction in the target language. Many SLA researchers and language teachers have become convinced that interaction makes a vital contribution to second language acquisition. At the beginnings of this research, many of the questions that prompted investigations of the contribution of interaction to second language development have been motivated by work in child-language acquisition research. As a consequence, many SLA researchers drew parallels between L1 child language acquisition and instructed interlanguage development by adult second language learners. One reason behind this development was that both types of language acquisition involve the interaction of language learners with adult native speakers of the target language.

During the last decade, however, educators and language researchers have become increasingly aware that research findings from studies in one domain of human learning are not necessarily applicable to the next, and that as a result pedagogical knowledge varies significantly from one subject domain to the next. Researchers in second/foreign language learning were faced with the task of generating new studies that addressed the specific needs of second language learners. There was a need for second language-specific research for generating new knowledge that can directly improve content-specific second language pedagogy.
This study is significant because it is a step in the new direction. This study explores the specific problems, challenges, and needs of ESL learners in the context of interaction with NS of the target language (TL). This dissertation is a report of a preliminary analysis of data from interactions between two ESL learners and four English-speaking conversation partners. The data analysis was conducted from three perspectives: (a) that of the components of the second language input that the ESL learners needed to understand and produce to participate in the interaction, (b) that of the nature of the interactional roles and patterns that were employed by the participants to facilitate learner comprehension, and (c) that of the interrelationships between the linguistic and social dimensions of conversation partner talk. The purpose of the study was to present preliminary evidence from the learner-NS partner interactions, particularly pertaining to the interactive roles both played as learners and facilitators including how they employed the linguistic and social properties of the second language to jointly produce their conversations.

In conclusion, the present study is significant because of its search for domain specific findings that are responsive to the specific needs of language teachers and learners, and contribute to the growing knowledge base of the potential benefits of interaction in the second language. Until more is known about the patterns, opportunities, challenges, and successes inherent in NS-NNS interaction, little can be done to inform language pedagogy and second language acquisition research.
Summary

Interacting with others in a foreign/second language gives language learners the opportunity to apply their knowledge of the second language to a variety of complex linguistic and social tasks to effectively communicate their understanding to their interlocutors. The available literature on interaction presents two divergent views of what learners could be learning while engaged in conversation with others in a foreign/second language. Within this review, interaction studies were divided into input processing research and sociocultural research. Input processing studies looked at the potential contribution of interaction in terms of an observable increase in the linguistic development of the learner in the second language. Sociocultural researchers viewed the benefits of interaction in terms of a learner's gradual acquisition of the social discourse of interaction, or what Hall (1999) called "interactional competence" (p. 90).

The present study adopted a theoretical framework that incorporated elements from both perspectives to analyze not only linguistic input data but also the social discourse of NS-NNS interaction. The purpose of the research was to investigate what the learners were learning while engaged in interaction with English-speaking conversation partners, the linguistic and social discourse patterns employed by both participants to mediate this learning, and the interrelationships between the linguistic and social aspects of NS-NNS interaction. Analysis of the data of interactions drew on the researcher's knowledge of the
second language to identify the ways in which the linguistic input was processed by the participants. In order to show how, when, and in what contexts of language use the participants encountered such input, the researcher employed ethnographic and sociolinguistic skills. The complementary approach that was employed in the data analysis helped the researcher identify the patterns in which learners had the opportunity to learn the rules of linguistic and social behavior in the context of interacting with others in the second language.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 define the problem, review the related literature, and introduce the research methods employed in the study. Chapter 4 reports the findings according to the 3 research questions of the study. Finally, chapter 5 begins with a summary of the findings and concludes by drawing implications for pedagogy and questions for further research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This is a review of the enriching tension in interaction studies between two groups of researchers who hold competing assumptions about the potential contributions of interaction to second language development. While input processing researchers emphasized learner-internal linguistic development, sociocultural researchers focused on learner acquisition of skills and knowledge needed to participate in social interaction with native speakers of the target language. Consequently, researcher attention has alternated between considerations of interaction's potential as a facilitator of either interlanguage development by L2 learners or the learner's ability to gradually apply L2 knowledge and skills to a broadening range of discourse functions. The present study sought to incorporate insights from both theoretical perspectives to identify when, how, and in what conditions language acquisition was facilitated by input and interaction factors. The analytical implication of the commitment to incorporate both perspectives was to pay equal attention to linguistic input data and the social goals of the conversation partners who participated in the study.
Interactionist second language acquisition (SLA) researchers (Hatch, 1978, 1992; Long, 1996; Gass, 1996; Ellis, 1999; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Hall & Verplaetse, 2000) have been investigating the potential benefits of interaction in the target language. They commonly adhered to the position that social interaction between learners and their interlocutors, particularly when they negotiate toward mutual comprehension of each other’s messages, makes a vital contribution to second language acquisition. Studies on the possible ways in which interaction works to facilitate SLA are typically guided by either the input processing or sociocultural perspectives. These two main research lines have had a long tradition in the literature on interaction.

Both perspectives have offered important contributions to our understanding of the role of interaction in L2 acquisition, but they have conducted their studies with different goals in mind. Sociocultural studies have, on one hand, generally attempted to link the social/cultural environment of language learners with SLA and sociocultural outcomes. Experimental studies of input processing, on the other, have attempted to isolate internal learner mechanisms hypothesized to be involved in input comprehension and integration. Researchers who embrace a sociocultural perspective on interaction have looked at the negotiation of meaning between learners and their interlocutors as “socially-constructed” speech events and have consequently ascribed to the sociocultural setting a major role in producing the language learning opportunities that presented themselves to the learners. Because of their concern with the
sociocultural aspects of learning, these researchers have paid attention to typically social issues such as accommodation, convergence, and status within the interactional setting. Researchers representing the input processing perspective were influenced by psycholinguistics and were willing to explain the benefits of interaction in terms of the information encoded in the L2 input that triggered the learning mechanisms that reside within the individual language learner. Input processing researchers have looked at interaction as a setting to study how the second language might be acquired by learners from the input provided by the linguistic environment. For them, the linguistic input provided through interaction contained enriched signals that made it easier for language learners to acquire the second language. They have thus examined how learners filtered new information from the L2 input, comprehended messages, and eventually acquired new L2 items as an outcome of participating in social interaction.

The present chapter sought to accomplish two purposes: (1) to review the theory and research that undergird the two main orientations of the research on interaction, and (2) to draw conclusions from the review for conducting the present study. This chapter was divided into three further sections. Section 2 focused on how input processing researchers have presented evidence that showed learners selecting, processing, and integrating new information about the second language from ambient linguistic data in interactions they had with their interlocutors. Section 3 focused on the sociocultural studies of L2 learners and the ways in which they were empowered to use the new language in the TL.
environment. Section 4 drew conclusions from the current research on interaction by proposing a more inclusive framework for studying the potential benefits of interaction to language learners. The main conclusion was that there was a need for a complementary framework that incorporates elements from both the input processing perspective and the sociocultural perspective. Regardless of their different stances in regard to the contribution of interaction to language learning, language researchers still want learners to learn the second language, and the insights provided by both perspectives help researchers better understand the conditions under which learners are more likely to learn.

I. Input Processing Studies

Input processing studies mostly involved experimental and quasi-experimental investigations of the processes in which the language learner engaged in extracting information about the second language during exposure to the speech of a native speaker or a proficient second language learner. For input processing researchers, social interaction was only a way of acquiring new target language (TL) items. The overriding assumption in input processing research was an information processing model of second language acquisition. According to Ellis (1999), the predominant metaphor of interaction and its relationship to SLA was "the computational metaphor-that of the learner as a computer that internally processes input and subsequently produces output on demand" (p. 17). Although highly mechanical, this metaphor captures the potential for interaction to bring
modified L2 input to a learner's attention which triggers a restructuring of the learners interlanguage (IL) grammar. In short, input processing researchers saw the main function of interaction as a means through which the language learner could obtain new information about the second language grammar. More recently, SLA researchers have turned their attention to learner acquisition of other formal properties of the second language. Ellis (1999), for example, edited a collection of studies dealing mainly with vocabulary acquisition through interaction.

For input processing researchers, interaction as a linguistic activity provided a means for development in the form of an interaction within the learner between the language data made available by native speakers and the learner's innate capacities for language learning. So, if the learner's interlanguage development was facilitated by listening to the kinds of L2 input words and sounds that native speakers uttered during an interaction, an important question was: What kinds of language did native speakers use when they talked with L2 learners? The answer was “Foreigner talk” which was claimed by Ferguson (1975) to be a unique kind of speech that native speakers used when addressing less proficient L2 learners. Studies have shown that “Foreigner talk” actually taught something. For example, the exaggerated and exceptionally well-formed phonetic units native speakers used were claimed to make it easier for learners to hear the essential differences between the sounds of the second language. Moreover, studies of vocabulary acquisition have shown that the more native speakers talked to
learners, the greater the size of their vocabulary had become. The learner's role in the whole process was constructed by input processing researchers as merely that of responding to stimuli in the form of modified L2 input by noticing, comparing, and integrating new L2 input data into his/her developing competence in the L2. Some input processing studies were conducted to specify the nature and sequence of events by which certain features of the L2 input were experienced as salient by learners through such means as hypothesis-testing, frequency of occurrence, quantity and quality of input, perceptual salience, learner attention, and learner output. Input processing researchers maintained that it was through these means that input features became candidates for further learner processing and eventual acquisition of new L2 items.

As a consequence of the information processing assumption that undergirded input processing studies of interaction, no reference to external factors was incorporated in their designs. This research had attributed a minor role to the social and situational conditions that promote interaction which produces comprehension and which encourages the processing of input as a first step in the acquisition process. Because of its affiliation with psycholinguistics, input processing research has shown a lack of interest in external factors in favor of its emphasis on the internal processes of SLA. In contrast, language socialization researchers reflected a steadily growing interest in the field in external factors that were claimed to be important variables responsible for language learning, and argued that SLA researchers' exclusive interest in learner-
internal language development was misguided. Firth and Wagner (1997), for example, have criticized input processing studies for a lack of balance between the internal processing of the individual learner on the one hand and of the social and contextual dimensions of second language acquisition. They argued that input processing researchers favored the psycholinguistic over the social interpretations of language acquisition through interaction.

Input processing research had, nevertheless, generated useful insights on issues such as learner attention, interactional modifications, and input enhancement that have advanced our understanding of the processes involved in learning a second language through interaction. Researchers active in the input processing paradigm include Van Patten (1987, 1988, 1990) and Van Patten and Cadierno (1992) who have addressed themselves to investigating the possible relationships between learner attention to the meaning content of utterances and to the formal features of the target language input. Their experiments have attempted to manipulate learner attention to assess learning outcomes by both experimental and control groups, while holding constant factors such as current L2 proficiency levels, linguistic characteristics of the input, and salience of particular features in the input. Van Patten's research focused on the strategies and mechanisms involved in processing form-meaning connections during comprehension. He and Cadierno presented evidence that when learners attended to the precise meaning of sentences signaled by certain grammatical features (e.g., through matching pictures with sentences), they retained the
grammatical information and could use it in subsequent interpretation tasks better than those learners who were presented with grammatical models and rules followed by practice examples (Van Patten & Cadierno, 1992, 1993). In another experiment with L2 learners of Spanish, Van Patten found that learner comprehension of L2 utterances decreased markedly when both meaning and form must be attended to, while attending at the same time to a lexical item and its general meaning did not interfere with learner comprehension (Van Patten, 1990). The studies conducted by Van Patten increased our understanding of input processing by offering the insight that learners normally interpret L2 input initially for meaning by using content vocabulary to infer the communicative intent of their interlocutors. Only if this strategy failed, for example when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary items, or if the experimenter manipulated the tasks they were faced with to induce them to focus on the formal features of the input, did they carry out grammatical analyses of L2 input.

Building on Patten's experiments, other SLA researchers began to conduct studies that examined whether learner attention was part of a learning mechanism for further learning of the L2. This approach was similar in many ways to studies that targeted feedback (e.g., Doughty, 1993) as a process that played a role in the learner's linguistic development in the L2. Ellis (1992, 1998), Wong-Fillmore (1989), and Schmidt (1990) were among the active researchers who have addressed the role of learner attention as part of a mechanism for further development of learner language. Ellis (1992) noted considerable
individual differences in the ways subjects approached tasks and employed
attention to various features of L2 input. He suggested that the extreme
variability among learners in SLA rates and ultimate attainment might be due to
the different ways learners paid attention during interaction. A general rule was
drawn, however, by Schmidt and Frota (1986), and Schmidt (1990) regarding
learner attention and its role in interlanguage development. After conducting a
six month study on Schmidt's acquisition of conversational Portuguese in Brazil,
Schmidt and Frota (1986) suggested that when a learner "notices the gap"
between his/her own performance and that of a native speaker of the target
language, he/she tends to establish a comparison between the NS model and
his/her own output. Ellis (1991) further suggested that

It follows that situational conditions and tasks that promote interaction
which produces comprehension and which encourages the processes of
noticing, comparison, and integration will be effective for acquisition. (p. 202)

As to the role of learner attention, it became apparent for the general rule of
noticing to be valid, that attention assumed a central role in the acquisition
process. According to Schmidt (1990), the process of acquisition is necessarily a
conscious one. Schmidt argued that learners who notice the most, will learn the
most. Still, Wong-Fillmore (1989) in her investigation of "teachability," noted
considerable individual differences in the way learners acquired the target
language, "even among young learners...even when children have the same age,
motivation, and opportunity to learn the language" (p. 313). It would be safe to
conclude that regardless of where different SLA researchers stand on the importance of learner attention as a factor that facilitates language learning through interaction, an understanding of the situational conditions that may contribute to attention will contribute to the ways in which language teachers can effectively use this variable in the classroom to encourage student learning.

Interest in the situational conditions that may bring salient features of L2 input to learner attention was led by input processing researchers who have investigated the kinds of language native speakers used when they talked with language learners. Accumulating evidence suggested the importance of linguistic and interactional modifications made by native speakers when interacting with less proficient nonnative speakers. These modifications were considered by input processing researchers to be a unique, rather special kind of speech that native speakers used when talking to L2 learners. A significant number of studies have revealed that these modifications occurred in the suprasegmental, phonological, morphosyntactic, semantic, and discourse levels of the second language, as well as in interactional patterns and in nonverbal behavior accompanying speech. Furthermore, Ehrlich, Avery, and Yorio (1986) have emphasized the variability in NS modifications to learners, and have warned that the complexity of factors at work made it impossible to predict the occurrence of modifications in any given situation.

Research on what triggers interactionally modified input in casual encounters between native speakers (NS) and nonnative speakers (NNS)
indicated that it resulted from the NSs' assessment that the NNS could not comprehend normal NS speech (Varonis & Gass, 1985). This assessment could initially be based on such factors as a NNS's appearance or accent, then it may be revised by the NS, together with linguistic and interactional modifications, through feedback from the learner as the interaction unfolds. Most input processing researchers agreed that native speakers (NS) used interactional and linguistic modifications to facilitate comprehension of meaning by learners.

Interactional modifications were hypothesized by SLA researchers to facilitate second language learning in several ways. According to Long (1996), for example, increased input comprehensibility achieved by learners through interactional modification could indirectly facilitate SLA by freeing learner attention to concentrate more on formal structures and form-function relationships than on meaning alone. Hatch (1978) and Aston (1993) furthermore suggested that interactional modifications could also serve to establish positive affect and as an implicit language-teaching mode may have a similar effect on SLA by lessening anxiety among learners. Ehrlich, Avery, and Yorio (1986) found that successful comprehension that results form interactional modifications helped learners offer feedback to the NSs about their comprehension which could influence the quality of modifications in the course of a given interaction. Cook (1988) has also presented data to suggest that interactional modifications could help SLA through the provision of redundant (generally easier-to-process) models which tend to make constituent language
components more salient, and form-function relationships more accessible. Notwithstanding, Sato (1986) and Braidi (1990) presented evidence to suggest that interactional modifications to L2 input may not facilitate SLA. They suggested that interactional modifications which worked so well to aid learner comprehension and lexical development (e.g., vocabulary elaboration through restatements, use of time adverbials) could in fact reduce the need for learner attention to syntactic information, and thus not necessarily aid syntactic development.

One of the most ambitious areas of input processing research to date has been “input enhancement” for instructed learners. Because it sought to directly impact language pedagogy, input enhancement research in the classroom has attracted the attention of Canadian and North American researchers. In several classroom experiments, L2 learners’ attention was directed at specific formal linguistic features of the L2 input that were embedded within communicative activities (i.e., meaning-oriented), with the goal of developing increased grammatical accuracy (e.g., Doughty & Williams, 1998). Some of this work had been carried out in language immersion programs (Harley, 1987, 1998; Day & Shapson, 1991), some in intensive ESL programs in Canadian schools (Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Lightbown, 1998; Swain, 1998), and some in ESL programs in North American Schools (Doughty & Williams, 1998; DeKeyser, 1998). Results to date suggest that when varied input enhancement activities focusing on the same grammatical rule or principle are embedded within communicative activities in
the classroom, such as increasing salience through frequency of use, or providing feedback, or setting tasks such as pattern recognition which require analysis of specific linguistic features, they can lead to changes in a learner's interlanguage (IL) system toward target-like accuracy levels.

Current input enhancement studies are theoretically motivated by the idea that second language teaching that is primarily focused on communication could be improved with some degree of attention to form. This development in research was in reaction to earlier calls by researchers who claimed that when classroom language teaching was entirely experiential and communicative, some linguistic features of learner speech did not ultimately develop to target like accuracy levels, thereby resulting in fossilization (Harley, 1992; Harley & Swain, 1984). Proponents of input enhancement in the classroom have conducted studies to investigate the ways in which a “focus on form” can be embedded within communicative activities to overcome the threat of fossilization, seen by several researchers as a major limitation of a total focus on communication in the classroom. One of the major conclusions of this research, however, was that a “focus on form” alone would not be able to achieve the desired outcome of target like accuracy levels among classroom learners. Doughty and Williams (1998), for example, suggested that “focus on form entails a pre-requisite engagement in meaning before attention to linguistic features can be effective” (p. 3). Put more simply, the learner's attention could be drawn to a linguistic feature only after it was necessitated by a communicative demand.
In sum, input processing research was primarily interested in the three areas of learner attention, interactional modifications, and input enhancement. Studies on attention addressed the role of learner attention in second language learning while engaged in interaction. Of particular interest was the relationship between learner attention to the meaning of utterances and to the formal features of the target language input. Research on input and interactional modifications made by native speakers of the target language while addressing less proficient nonnative speakers investigated the several ways modifications could facilitate SLA. The major finding of this body of research was that interactional modifications resulted in increased learner comprehension which could indirectly aid SLA by freeing learner attention to concentrate more on the formal features of L2 input than on meaning alone. Input enhancement studies have investigated the effects of pedagogical “focus on form” activities within a communicative paradigm in controlled classroom experiments. In general, input processing studies have generated new evidence on the interplay between internal learning mechanisms and the ambient linguistic data of NS-NNS interaction. These learning mechanisms were found to be responsible for input comprehension and integration while the linguistic environment offered modification and enhancement of L2 input features.
II. Sociocultural Studies

The expanding view of what is to be learned by the second language learner as a result of interaction has brought a shift in focus in the interactionist literature from the learner's acquisition of phonological, syntactic, and lexical features of L2 input to the learner's acquisition of communicative competence, broadly defined to include linguistic knowledge as well as the ability to engage in social interaction with NS of the target language. Hall (1999) captured this change in perspective when she stated that "Interacting with others in another language involves more than knowing the appropriate syntax and lexicon. It is also, minimally, a matter of interactional competence" (p. 137). This meant that input and interaction researchers needed to incorporate larger units of analysis to account for the acquisition of discourse features, pragmatics, and the learner's "Socialization through language and socialization to use language" (Ochs, 1986, p. 2). As Heath (1986) has suggested, "all language learning is cultural learning," or "learning that enables a member of the family and community to behave appropriately within that group" (pp. 145-146). Gough (1975) conducted an ethnography in which she found that it was quite possible for L2 learners to use the rudimentary linguistic knowledge they had to accomplish a considerable range of communicative functions. Ethnographic research outcomes furthermore suggested that not only language behavior was involved, but the learner's pre-existing knowledge of what it meant to engage in social interaction. In addition
to the learner's transfer of the social skills from the native language and culture, researchers became interested in studying how it was possible for learners whose L2 linguistic knowledge was still deficient to achieve communicative competence. Their research had revealed that where proficient TL users and native cultural members took responsibility for helping nonnative-speaking learners not only with language but also in understanding the ways language was used in the new culture, they juggled a complex set of grammatical, lexical, discourse, and pragmatic elements to provide “scaffolding” assistance that helped the learner perform at a higher level than he/she could do without such support (Hatch, 1978; Hawkins, 1987). Wong-Fillmore (1989) suggested that individual learner characteristics in evoking such support should not be underestimated. She also emphasized that it was in the presence of social bonds ensuring ongoing relationships that language development progressed. The message that these perspectives brought to the research on interaction was that paying sole attention to what was going on at the level of linguistic input during interaction could be missing the point of how people learned a second language through interaction. By focusing on the social/cultural factors that could lead learners to pay attention to input and native speakers to modify their L2 input, sociocultural researchers attempted to link the social/cultural environment of language learners with SLA and sociocultural outcomes.

Sociocultural researchers criticized the SLA notion that what drove interlanguage development was the unseen psycholinguistic restructuring that
took place in the learner's interlanguage system that came about through input processing, and resulted in a current development stage in the learner's system being modified to a more advanced stage of development in the second language. According to McLaughlin's (1987) paper entitled "Restructuring", for example, second language acquisition came about more as the result of a process of internal change than as being driven by the social and situational conditions of second language use. For sociocultural researchers, this view of second language learning was a simplistic, one-sided answer to the enormously complex problem of how learners are eventually able to acquire the L2 through interaction. Reflecting this general mode, Willet (1995) stated that "Focus on the individual learner has dominated investigations of L2 learning over the past four decades" (p. 473). In sociocultural research, the learner came to be viewed in the role of cultural member, learning to use the L2 to accomplish a variety of social and cognitive goals in the new cultural context on the basis of a limited linguistic repertoire.

Ethnography was one of the main research methodologies employed in language socialization studies, "long term studies of the daily habits of a particular social group in which researchers both observe and participate in the lives of those they are studying" (Heath, 1986, p. 53). The main units of analysis in these studies were the recurring discourse patterns that were employed by the participants to manage their interactions, and thus involved long stretches of discourse in which specific patterns of language use revealed some aspects of cultural assimilation or language socialization. The use of ethnography
introduced new and substantive findings. For example, sociocultural researchers found that there was a need to make a clear distinction between the language learning experiences of language-majority children who were familiar with the ways language was used in the school setting because it resembled language used at home, and those of language-minority children who came from varied and mainly non-western cultural backgrounds, who need to learn "not only the vocabulary and grammar of English but also the ways of using English the school expects" (Heath, 1986, p. 144). By highlighting the experiences of language-minority children in mainstream classrooms, Heath (1989) was very instrumental in influencing teacher education programs in American universities. Prospective teachers were increasingly introduced to courses that aimed to enhance their cultural sensitivity. Heath's argument was that if one was to enhance socialization and integration through culture, it was crucial to understand students' cultural backgrounds and to somehow take into account that the patterns of language use in the American classroom may not be congruent with those of immigrant children's cultures. Teachers, therefore, needed to be more sensitive to the patterns of language use these students routinely transferred from their native languages and cultures to achieve their communicative goals in the L2 context because these patterns might not necessarily reflect their personalities as much as they were a reflection of their native languages and cultures.

Within the same tradition of ethnography of schooling that aimed to highlight how mainstream schooling practices, discourses, and social structures...
conspired to subdue and suppress the cultures and natural learning tendencies of ESL minority speakers, Peirce (1995) decided to treat her five immigrant women subjects as “having a complex social identity that must be understood with reference to large and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interactions” (p. 13). Moreover, using the ethnographic method of participant observation, McKay and Wong (1996) also conducted a study of the socialization processes that impacted four adolescent Chinese learners’ sense of identity in a California ESL school setting. Their study showed how the various “discourses of power” surrounding the students at school prompted them to employ a variety of “coping strategies” including resistance, accommodation, code switching, and language transfer. The main argument of McKay and Wong’s (1996) article was that the students’ need to cope with undue oppressive pressures on their sense of identity could have a direct influence on their subsequent success or failure in acquiring English as a second language. They stated, “We relate their development of various English skills to the coping strategies they adopted while positioned by relations of power” (p. 580). In addition to the constraints imposed by discourses of mainstream power, McKay and Wong (1996) focused on the limits imposed by the ESL school context on the degree of ultimate linguistic attainment the four Chinese adolescent learners were able to achieve.

Sociocultural researchers conducted classroom ethnographies that focused on identifying other classroom socialization practices that may impede or facilitate
further language development by ESL learners. Poole (1992), for example, investigated the teacher's role as a social agent whose use of language was culturally determined by the majority-language. Poole focused on the ways in which this role was inconsistent with ESL students' cultural backgrounds and was, therefore, impeding their language development and acculturation in the mainstream culture. By highlighting the teacher's role in using language in culturally determined ways, Poole urged teachers to be aware of the incompatibility between the discourse practices of mainstream classrooms and ESL students' cultural backgrounds. Poole's study treated teacher talk as part of the cultural constraints that L2 learners face in mainstream classrooms. She argued that teacher talk contains some of the social messages that are interactionally conveyed in the L2 classroom. Following Heath (1989), Poole (1992) urged teacher training programs to accommodate ESL students' backgrounds so that their integration as new cultural members can be done in a smoother fashion than she observed in her own study. Finally, Poole suggested that the schooling of ESL learners must provide classroom experiences in the greatest possible range of authentic oral and written language uses.

Another line of sociocultural research that could have a direct impact on language classroom practice was research on the “scaffolding” of language interactions by teachers and proficient peers that helped learners perform communicatively beyond their level of competence in the L2. In response to a growing interest in mother-child interaction in first language acquisition studies
and other domains of development, Bruner (1975) introduced the notion of “scaffolding” to describe the manner in which mothers aided and supported their children’s development, for example by fine-tuning their speech to the child’s level of comprehension. In second language acquisition research, Hatch (1978) noted that one of the reasons behind the use of interactional modifications was that native speakers often took on much of the “work” of conversation with nonnative speakers, thus facilitating their continuing participation. Hatch also suggested that “scaffolding” was a distinctive feature of NS-NNS interaction and might involve “incorporation” of NS speech elements by the learner that eventually contributed to further language development. According to Hatch (1978), “out of learning to interact verbally, learners may internalize syntactic knowledge from the discourse constructions they jointly build with their more proficient interlocutors” (p. 404). Research conducted by Hawkins (1987) on ESL learners development of more advanced English knowledge and higher-order cognitive skills also presented evidence that it was through scaffolding that learners used the new language forms to accomplish cognitive tasks such as recognizing cause-effect relations or event sequence, and gradually were able to do these independently.

The renewed emphasis on mother-child interaction and native-nonnative speaker interaction in language studies spawned interest in Vygotskian theories of development. For example, Vygotsky’s (1978) notion of the “zone of proximal development” (ZPD) to characterize the role of mother-child interaction in
development emphasized the social nature of individual learning. Virtually anything one learned, according to the sociocultural view, was deeply embedded in a cultural context, and involved culturally informed tools and figures as part of a range of highly social activities, however alone the learner could be at particular moments. Within the ZPD, a parent or a teacher could help raise the level of a child's performance interactively, generating improvements in performance that became permanent as the child internalized them. Parents and teachers, as the more skilled performers and the more sophisticated interactional partners, facilitated their children's growth in important ways. During early development, parents were the social agents that could best understand children's intentions and thus could provide the scaffolding they needed to reach higher levels of understanding than they started with at the beginning of the interaction.

Following Vygotsky, sociocultural researchers such as Lantolf (1994) and Hall and Verplaetse (2000) viewed the NS as a facilitating social agent that provided the scaffolding that ESL learners needed to participate in interaction at a higher level of proficiency. It was in the process of negotiating meaning and incorporating the language skills and communicative competence needed to participate in the interaction that language learners developed further in the second language. Thus, the same interactional modifications that have been hypothesized by input processing researchers as important for second language acquisition came to be seen by sociocultural researchers as caused not only by the learner's deficient linguistic knowledge but also by the sociocultural setting of
language learning and use. Hatch (1978), for example, suggested that interactional modifications, while primarily used to facilitate comprehension of meaning by learners, may also serve to establish positive affect and as an implicit language-teaching mode. Aston (1986) also argued that interactional modifications could occur for other purposes than for negotiating meaning. Aston called for a social perspective to complement the psycholinguistic perspective offered by the input processing studies. He argued that modifications to the structure of interaction could occur when the participants needed to achieve "a formal display of convergence" through which they performed "a ritual of understanding or agreement" in order to show one another that the interaction has been successful. Aston went on to argue that excessive modifications could jeopardize the potential benefits of interaction from a language learning point of view. This finding was confirmed by Braidi (1990) who suggested that too many interactional modifications to L2 input may not facilitate SLA because they reduce the learner's need to pay adequate attention to the linguistic information embedded in the L2 code, and thus not necessarily aid syntactic development. These findings also suggest that a learner's attempts at learning the L2 need to be managed by the learner to some extent, or else the learner will not develop independently in the L2. It would be safe to conclude here that learners who are constantly scaffolded during interaction are less likely to develop than learners who receive smaller amounts of assistance from their NS partners.

In conclusion, sociocultural researchers focused on the role of the learner's
sociocultural environment in second language acquisition. They viewed interactional modifications as a form of social mediation of language learning in which native speakers scaffolded nonnative speakers and promoted positive affect and convergence. The collaboration and scaffolding that occurred in NS-NNS interactions were viewed by socialization researchers as facilitative of further language development by the L2 learners.

III. Conclusion

Research on input and interaction in second language acquisition indicated that much of the target language input directed to language learners was modified in various ways to take account of their limited proficiency. This review demonstrated that the resulting patterns of interaction which characterized NS-NNS talk were dynamic and extremely variable, involving selection by the participants from a repertoire of communication strategies to carry on their conversations. These include learner attention, interactional modifications, and linguistic input enhancement of various kinds. Evidence showed that the occurrence of interactional modifications in NS-NNS talk was influenced by a group of relatively stable factors such as type of conversation, the ages, personalities, and relationships of the interlocutors, the proficiency-level of the learner, and by changing factors as the conversation unfolds (e.g., newness of topic, complexity of communication goals, learner feedback, and scaffolding). The main purpose of interactional modifications was more effective...
communication, including better comprehension by language learners. As a consequence, modified input and interaction were hypothesized by Krashen (1985), Long (1989, 1986) and others to facilitate learner development of different aspects of L2 knowledge.

Among researchers who believed in the vital contribution of interaction to second language acquisition, two schools of thought were reviewed. First, the input processing researchers who focused mainly on internal processing mechanisms of the learner produced evidence to suggest that these mechanisms were responsible for learners’ extracting relevant L2 input from the ambient linguistic data provided by the speech of native speakers of the target language. Second, sociocultural researchers who focused mainly on the social surroundings of language learners produced evidence to suggest that these surroundings were responsible for facilitating the mediation of relevant L2 input to encourage and promote further language development by L2 learners. The sociocultural perspective has thus emphasized the contribution of society and culture in the form of interactional practices that could facilitate or impede the learning opportunities that present themselves to learners in an interaction.

The main implication for the present study was that interaction-acquisition relationships are multiple and complex, and that in order to understand them, researchers must develop complex solutions for doing research on interaction. As a consequence, these two theoretical orientations (language socialization and input processing) could best be viewed as complementary, rather than in
competition with one another. Like two sides of the same coin, they set out to investigate the same phenomenon, but approach it from different angles. One probable reason for each side neglecting the other could be that some researchers have pushed the pendulum too far on one side from the other. For a better and more conceptually rewarding synthesis, these two perspectives will be treated as two levels of data analysis with different emphases. In fact, the two viewpoints must come together if we are not to miss what might be valuable insights into the potential benefits of interactions and the many ways these benefits can be realized in the linguistic and social environments of interaction. Thus, a research approach that can further our understanding of interactional phenomenon should take account of the social context of SLA as well as the psycholinguistic processing of L2 input data by learners. In conclusion, the scope of research should include all relevant data pertaining to interaction in order to serve the goal of generating new information on this important area of research in the fields of second language acquisition and second language teaching.

Summary

The literature on NS-NNS interaction was influenced by two theoretical frameworks on the possible contribution of interaction to second language development. First, input processing research was concerned with psycholinguistic processes and whether or not comprehensible input and interactional modifications provided sufficient conditions for learners to arrive at
the systematic rules of the second language. According to the input processing view, interaction contributed to the learner's linguistic development in the second language. Interaction thus provided a means for the learner for extracting new information from the speech of native speakers about the linguistic features of the second language. Input processing researchers identified variables such as learner attention, input modification, and input enhancement as having a measurable effects on the quantity and quality of input learners acquired from interaction.

Second, sociocultural researchers were concerned with the social environment in which interaction took place. They investigated whether interactional modifications and comprehensible input were in fact socially-constructed strategies used by conversation partners as part of the social order of interaction. According to this view, who can say what to whom, for what purpose, and in what manner were shaped as much by the social conditions surrounding the interaction as they were by the linguistic features of the second language. Sociocultural researchers demonstrated that learners acquired more than just linguistic forms as a result of participating in NS-NNS interaction. Their studies showed that learners were actively collaborating with their NS partners to manage their conversations together, utilizing scaffolds from NS input to perform beyond their current levels of language development, and socially bonding with their NS counterparts. Sociocultural researchers saw the contribution of interaction to learner language development mostly in social terms and claimed that the sociocultural setting in which the second language was used and learned
was primarily responsible for either inhibiting or facilitating learner development in the second language. In sum, both the input processing and the sociocultural perspectives offered valuable insights on the ways in which interaction could make a vital contribution to second language acquisition.

The present study adopted a complementary approach in which equal attention was paid to the social and linguistic aspects of NS-NNS interaction. A complementary approach to the study of interaction takes into account a linguistic variable and attempts to uncover the social processes that lead to its creation. This approach was needed to investigate the ways in which linguistic and social processes were related to one another. For example, comprehensible input can be shaped not only by the learner's limited linguistic repertoire, but also by the conversation partners' need to share common ground with each other. As an outcome of this social concern, the native speakers could focus on the second language as a resource they are familiar with to enrich the learner's limited linguistic knowledge. Additionally, the learner's role in the interaction could be one of a risk-taker who utilizes the information provided by the native speaker to test and revise hypotheses about the second language in the context of the interaction. Relating social and linguistic processes like these has the potential of documenting the complex role played by the learner in struggling to learn and at the same time communicate in the second language.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The present study targeted the linguistic and social activities of a group of six conversation partners in order to analyze how they jointly accomplished their interactions for the purpose of contributing to the language development and cultural understanding between the NS partners and the ESL learners who participated in the research. The research methodology was geared toward the identification of the discourse patterns that characterized the interactions as they were routinely employed by the six conversation partners to collaboratively produce their talks. These discourse patterns were then treated by the researcher as the outward manifestations of the social and linguistic processes in which language and culture learning were negotiated by the participants.

Ethnography and discourse analysis were adopted in the present study because most other instruments of data analysis that were employed by SLA researchers were not efficient means for investigating the linguistic and social discourse of NS-NNS interaction and its potential impact on language and culture learning. Because much of the research on NS-NNS interaction has been
conducted under experimental conditions, in which the subjects were asked to perform tasks and comply with instructions that were required by the researcher, and in most cases, were not informed about the purpose of the research, the ecological validity of the findings have been questioned by Erickson (1991), Van Lier (1988), and others. The lack of ecological validity meant that the conversational data collected for the purpose of the research did not resemble actual conversations that take place in everyday life between real people. Another design flaw of these experiments was that the pre-arranged performance tasks did not adequately provide sufficient conditions for negotiated interaction especially when they assumed more active interactional roles. In most experiments, the researcher controlled both the questions that could be asked, and, as a consequence, the answers that were anticipated.

The research questions of the present study called for analysing the ways in which the two ESL learners’ L2 output achieved their communicative goals despite the lack of culture-specific knowledge or the linguistic complexity in their utterances. The methods of ethnography and discourse analysis were useful for identifying the patterns in which the learners’ limited linguistic repertoire was put to use in on-going discourse activity. With minimum interference from the researcher, both the NS partners and the ESL learners were free to use the second language in informal conversation.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the ways in which conversational interaction within the linguistic environment of conversation
partner talk fostered further language development in the L2 learners who participated in the study. Specifically, the data analysis was performed on the data of the interactions in search for answers to three research questions on: (a) the linguistic components and communication skills that the learners employed in their conversations with the NS participants that facilitated their comprehension of L2 input and development of speaking and listening skills, (b) the common recurring patterns of interaction in which the participants negotiated the meaning of the linguistic and cultural input produced in the conversations, and (c) the ways in which the linguistic analysis and social interaction by the participants were related to one another in the context of conversation partner talk.

This chapter contains a report on the methodology that was employed by the researcher to analyze the data of the interactions. It consists of five sections: (a) the rationale behind the choice of data analysis methods, (b) the pre-data collection stage which reports on the site and respondents, matters of access and entry, and the researcher's role, (c) the data collection methods, (d) the data analysis methods, and (e) the steps taken by the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

Rationale

Second language acquisition researchers have been investigating the potential benefits of interaction in the target language. Many of them are convinced that interaction makes a vital contribution to second language acquisition. However,
much of the input processing research concerned with the role of interaction in L2 development adopted a methodology that addressed only the acquisition of linguistic forms. The kinds of analyses applied to NS-NNS interaction have been focused on the lexical and syntactic features of NS input to see if nonnative speakers have produced them as a result of interaction. Unfortunately, it became clear that in the vast majority of cases, researchers have not managed to obtain proof that a change in the learner’s linguistic performance has occurred. In spite of the large body of factual information which now describes the linguistic environment of L2 learners, there is as yet little specific evidence as to whether or how the various features of L2 input influence second language acquisition.

The emerging picture from research on interaction has suggested that input-interaction-SLA relationships are multiple and complex, and that to understand them researchers must assign a bigger role for learners as active participants in generating, filtering, and processing the available TL and contextual data. They must also take account of the social context of SLA as well as of the cognitive and linguistic processes employed by both NS and NNS participants to make target language data more comprehensible to eventually build learner development in the TL. The current calls to more complete and integrated research approaches in place of the earlier descriptive studies of the linguistic environment of the language learner are promising developments (e.g., Gass, 1996), and should lead to significant progress in our understanding of the relationships between ambient linguistic data, attendant social factors, and SLA.
Within the present study, the scope of the research included not only data related to the formal features of L2 input (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.), but also the social and contextual patterns of language use in conversation partner talk. This approach to data analysis entailed paying equal attention to the linguistic and social characteristics of the input and interaction in CP talk. For example, if a NS partner's use of vocabulary or pronunciation features of the input was simplified at a certain moment because of a social factor such as accommodation, the analysis focused on describing not only the linguistic features of L2 input to show in just what way such input was simplified, but also on describing the patterns of language use to show where in the social context, and in what situations the participants accommodated each other to maintain their social relationship as conversation partners. Because the focus of the study was the possible contributions of both linguistic input processing and the social interaction that contributed to the use of L2 input, it was fruitful to treat these features of conversation partner talk as two sources of evidence, each of which complements the other in making L2 input comprehensible to L2 learners.

In terms of conducting the analysis, the researcher employed two data analysis methods in conjunction with each other: (a) error analysis was used for describing the kinds of linguistic errors made by the learners and the interactional modifications and linguistic analysis of L2 input done by both NS and NNS participants, and (b) conversation analysis for identifying the patterns of language use both participants employed to create the linguistic environment and to
maintain their relationships as conversation partners. Conversation analysis and error analysis were employed in the study to document the patterns of talk and the methods used by the participants to analyze L2 input. By analyzing both the social and linguistic processes employed by the participants to manage their interactions, the present study sought to increase the existing knowledge on the relationships between ambient linguistic data, attendant social factors, and SLA.

The next sections of this chapter are devoted to a more detailed discussion of the research methods followed in the study to describe the patterns of NS-NNS interaction in the speech of the six participants in the study. The following discussion is focused on the pre-data collection stage that included the site and respondents, access and entry, and the researcher's role.

Site and Respondents

Within several English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in the U.S.A., the conversation partners concept has become widely accepted. A conversation partners program refers to English language teaching that is delivered by one NS partner to one ESL student, and this NS partner is usually not the student's classroom teacher. He or she can be another educator, a parent or other volunteer, or even another NS student. The conversations take place outside the regular classroom. The focus in most American conversation partners programs has been on one-to-one interaction for language learning and cultural exchange. In fact, while most NS partners are attracted to the program because it offers
them the opportunity to be in contact with students from other cultures, ESL learners are attracted to the program for the chance to learn English from native speakers in a supportive, non-threatening context outside the regular classroom. The program from which the six participants came followed a format in which ESL students are matched with NS volunteers from the teaching staff and the student body by the ESL program of a large American university. The conversation partners program is organized by the ESL Department at an American Midwestern University with almost six thousand international students admitted to various programs at the university every academic year. The title of the program is the “Conversation Partners,” and it has been in existence since at least 1990. The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for ESL and American students to interact and get acquainted with each other’s culture. Conversation partners are matched at the beginning of each quarter according to an application form in which applicants list their expectations of the characteristics of a conversation partner such as gender, native language background, major, hobbies, and so on. Conversation partners are asked by the program to commit themselves to meet at least once a week for an hour of face-to-face interaction in public places accessible to both partners.

The present study chose as its site an ESL program at a large Midwestern American university that served the language needs of prospective international students already admitted to enroll in various academic departments at the same university. As a supplement to formal classroom teaching the ESL program
arranged for its students weekly contacts with English native speakers who volunteered to engage in informal weekly conversations with the ESL students outside the classroom. The researcher was looking for a group of ESL students and a group of English native speakers to participate in the study. Conversation partners were matched at the beginning of each academic quarter according to an application form in which applicants stated their preferences for choosing a partner such as native language background, academic level, major area, and so on. Partners usually met once a week for an hour or so of free conversation in which they talked about any topics that came to their minds that day.

The meetings typically took place around the campus area (e.g., near the library, in a campus building, or a restaurant).

Two Kuwaiti ESL students and four English native speakers agreed to participate in the study. The two Kuwaiti students were two male ESL students who majored in Engineering. Those present at each meeting consisted of one English native speaker, one ESL student, and in those meetings for the purpose of the study, the researcher was present as a non-participant observer. At the beginning of each meeting, the researcher placed a running tape recorder between the two participants.

After taking an institutionally organized placement test at the beginning of their enrollment, ESL students were placed at different proficiency levels (i.e., beginning, low-intermediate, high intermediate, and advanced) in the ESL program. According to the results of the placement test, the two Kuwaiti

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students, Hamid (age 19) and Ali (age 21) were placed at different proficiency levels in the ESL program (i.e., Michigan Test). Hamid was placed at the low intermediate level and Ali was placed at the advanced level. The four English native speakers included Jim (age 21), a male undergraduate student, Elaine (age 32), a female graduate teaching assistant in the ESL program, Cassandra (age 20), a female undergraduate student, and Sunny (age 22), a female undergraduate student. An elicitation letter was used to ask the six subjects to participate in the study (see Appendix A).

**Access and Entry**

The researcher's access to the conversation partners program was gained by contacting the coordinator of the program who helped in advising the researcher of the campus location where the ESL students and the English native speakers were first introduced to each other. The researcher approached a number of ESL students who were present in that meeting. After explaining the purpose of the study, the researcher handed elicitation letters to both ESL students and English native speakers who had the option of contacting the researcher if both agreed to participate in the study. Four English native speakers and two Kuwaiti ESL learners agreed to participate in the study. After initial agreement, the participants contacted the researcher to ask him to explain what they needed to do to participate in the study. The researcher asked all the participants to inform him prior to having any meetings so he can be ready to join
them. The participants also gave their phone numbers to the researcher and duly informed him of the times and places in which they met. The elicitation letter directed to the participants in the study can be found in Appendix A of this document.

**Researcher Role**

As the main research instrument of the study, the researcher played two roles related to access and data collection as well as data analysis. First, in terms of access and data collection, gaining access to the data of the conversations was facilitated because the researcher's native language is Arabic and was a Kuwaiti citizen which meant he had the same national origin as the two Kuwaiti participants. Probably due to "similarity attraction", a theoretical construct proposed by Bishop (1979) which argues that we are most attracted to people whose beliefs, values, and attitudes are similar to our own, the Kuwaiti participants agreed to join the study. Giles and Smith (1979) used "similarity attraction" theory to explain what they called "linguistic convergence". They also argued that not only does convergence result in approval from others, but that the greater one's need for approval, the greater will be the tendency to converge. This was true of the researcher's interactions with the Kuwaiti participants. For example, the researcher used Arabic to communicate with the two Kuwaiti participants for the most part, and used English only during the times he conducted member checking about what they said in the conversations.
Moreover, due to the fact that they were still learning to communicate in English, the two Kuwaiti participants probably found it easier to communicate about their interactional experiences in their native language.

Second, in terms of data analysis, the researcher generated and refined the system of codes and categories that described the patterns of language use in the speech of the six participants that created the linguistic and social environment of conversation partner talk. A system of codes and categories is a researcher’s descriptive conceptualization of the phenomena that starts from the “raw data.” The raw linguistic data in the study were the L2 speech of the six participants that was produced, recorded, and transcribed as an outcome of their interactions as conversation partners. Out of these raw data, the researcher focused his attention on the emergent discourse patterns produced by the participants to manage their interactions and reach their communicative and linguistic goals in the context of conversation partner talk. These recurring discourse patterns were tentatively identified by the researcher as (a) the patterns of linguistic processing, and (b) the patterns of the social relationships among the participants that characterized the L2 speech of the six conversation partners. Two steps were involved in establishing a category system of the raw data of the interactions: (a) a provisional classification derived from the data of the interactions, and (b) continued revision and refinement of the category system until a stage of coherence was reached in which categories could be identified by their distinctive characteristics. This step was taken to avoid overlap between the categories.
As for the actual desk work involved in generating and refining the system of codes and categories of the patterns of NS-NNS interaction in conversation partner talk, the researcher engaged in repeated readings of the transcripts, and ongoing revisions of existing categories which eventually led to the final system. A first reading of the transcribed data sets focused on evidence of both linguistic processing and social processing in the participants’ L2 speech. Some of these insights began to take hold after a second run through the data, and some were omitted from consideration because they did not take hold as recurrent patterns in other interactions. With the tape running, and the researcher reading the transcripts, the researcher started generating additional insights and to make some written observation notes about the discourse patterns employed by the participants in conversation partner talk. After a third reading, the researcher began to identify instances of linguistic processing of L2 input in the participants’ utterances. The next step was the identification of the social processes involved in managing and coordinating the interactions. At the end of this step, the researcher formulated a tentative set of codes and categories and clustered them into major and subcategories. The researcher used a different color pen to mark and underline examples of each category on the script of the transcribed interactions so that the utterances of the participants could be used in the eventual data analysis. The researcher then took the whole set of the interactions and went through them one by one to assign the remaining utterances to corresponding categories of NS-NNS discourse patterns.
The Participants

The Two Kuwaiti ESL Students

This section offers a short biography of the two learners introduced earlier in this chapter, followed by remarks about each learner's general progress in English as a second language.

(a) Hamid: Hamid arrived in the United States from a town in Kuwait in the Autumn of 1995 at the age of nineteen. Hamid was recorded from one year after his arrival while he was attending a full-time English course for ESL learners at an American university. He was a very social and talkative person. However, passing the language requirement was apparently too difficult for him, and he was anxious about not being able to pursue his Engineering degree at the same university. Within Ohio, he looked for another college that will admit him, but his real desire was to stay on in the first university that admitted him, because he was very impressed with the general collegiate atmosphere and the city. Most of his acquaintances were from Kuwait, but he enjoyed getting acquainted with the international students who took ESL courses with him. Hamid saw the conversation partners program as a way to expand his circle of acquaintances to include American friends, and at the same time to improve his English. Hamid had a fairly rich and varied communicative potential at the time of the first recording, and continued developing.
Ali: Ali was born in Kuwait in 1975. He was generally an outstanding student when he graduated from secondary school. In the interim between secondary school and his attendance at the American University, his father agreed to send him to England, at the age of eighteen, in order to join Summer School in England to improve his English. The Summer School Program included living with a host family for room and board was well as contact with target language speakers. After he arrived in the U.S., Ali developed friendships with his American and international classmates through the use of English as the language of communication with other foreign students. He joined the conversation partners program because he believed that it would give him an added chance to practice his English skills and learn more English from speakers of the target language.

Ali’s general progress in English was remarkable. Presumably as a result of his high level of contact with English speakers, Ali quickly became an accomplished speaker of English. By the second academic year, his linguistic repertoire was elaborate and he had acquired some American morphology. One example is the wanna-contraction, a rule in informal spoken American English which allows the sequence want to to contract to wanna. It also applies to going to which can contract to gonna. Ali was a high contributor in the interactions he engaged in with his conversation partners, and during the Winter Quarter of 1997, Ali achieved a passing score (83) in his Michigan Test. That score qualified him to enroll as a Freshman in Mechanical Engineering at the American

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University. This meant that he passed all the requirements of the ESL program and no longer needed to attend English classes offered by the university.

**The NS Partners**

The four English native speakers included Jim, a male undergraduate student, Elaine, a female graduate teaching assistant, Cassandra, a female undergraduate student, and Sunny, a female undergraduate student.

(a) Jim: Jim was twenty-one at the time of recording, and he was matched with Hamid. He majored in Horticulture, but was interested in learning Chinese as a foreign language. Jim considered learning a foreign language as part of having an international experience which he thought many American young men lacked. He considered Hamid lucky because he was already having an international experience as a result of coming to America and enrolling at one of its major universities.

(b) Elaine: Elaine was a thirty-two-year-old female graduate assistant at the ESL Program. She volunteered as a conversation partner mainly to be able to work one-on-one as a tutor with an ESL student as a departure from teaching a whole classroom of ESL students. Elaine was motivated to become a conversation partner because she believed that the best way to learn about other cultures was to interact and exchange views with people who come from other cultures.

(c) Cassandra: Cassandra was a twenty-year-old female undergraduate student who wanted to learn more about other cultures and to get acquainted
with foreign students as a way of sharing ideas, and learning other perspectives. Cassandra also believed that there were many ways to learn about other cultures such as watching the Travel Channel or reading books, but person to person communication was a much better source of knowledge about other cultures.

(d) Sunny: Sunny was a twenty-two year old female Freshman. She enrolled in the Conversation Partners Program to get exposed to other people's cultures and to know their different ways and traditions. She considered her participation in the program a part of her Freshman course because she wanted to know and work with the foreign students she met in her classes at the university.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection process was divided into two stages in the research design of the study. The initial stage of data collection was used to conduct the necessary fieldwork to set the stage for the actual recording and transcription of the data. The initial stage was used, for example, to answer any remaining questions the six conversation partners had about the study, and to coordinate every one so that no potential overlap between the participants meetings could take place. The researcher wrote down the times and places of every meeting specified by the participants. These agreed upon interactional encounters were entered into the researcher's log in order to track down every meeting that took place among the participants of the study. Also during the initial stage, the researcher made sure that the study is conducted according to the guidelines
established by the Human Subjects Review Committee of the Site university. According to these guidelines, the researcher submitted letters of "informed consent" to the six participants in the study. The letter contained information about the study and provisions for the protection of the rights of privacy and confidentiality of the participants.

In the second stage, the data collection started with the recording of the interactions between the pairs of conversation partners. Initially, the actual taping of the interactions took place at school. When that could not be arranged, for example, when the participants could not find a suitable spot that they both liked, the researcher secured rooms in the building of the College of Education so the participants could talk to each other in a reasonably quiet room. Each of the Kuwaiti students was scheduled to have an English native-speaking partner who was available for at least one of the taping sessions. The recorded data from the interactions consisted of one hour conversations spaced at intervals of about one or two weeks, beginning in September, 1996 and ending in March, 1997. After each conversation was completed, a record of the date, place, and names of the interactants was written by the researcher both on the researcher's log and on the back of the cassette itself. The researcher's log was used for recording pertinent information about each tape. These were useful during the data analysis stage for refreshing the researcher's memory about the specific conditions and the observations that the researcher took note of at the day of conversations.

A total of 20 tapes were recorded, transcribed, and assigned numbers in a
computer file under each Kuwaiti participant's name. Each participant had a total of 10 sessions (10 hours). Each session consisted of 60 minutes of continuous recording (see Appendix B). The first five minutes were devoted to a warm-up, introductions, and instructions on how to operate the recording equipment. At the end of the initial five minute period, the researcher let the recorder work and took a seat in the background so that the participants could talk to each other. For the most part, the order of these interactions was held constant to make sure that all the participants went through the same conditions in each interaction.

In sum, data collection methods consisted of a series of audio-taped sessions of interactions between the two Kuwaiti learners and the four English speakers during the time that they learned English in an ESL program in a large American university. Subsequent to the participants’ agreement to be part of the study, the initial fieldwork comprised the initial stage of data collection. The purpose of the initial stage was to explain the purpose of the study and to set up a schedule detailing the participants’ meetings. The researcher, for example, had to be in touch with any changes the participants made to their meetings in adequate time to be available at the new meeting location. This was done by reminding the participants to call the researcher about any plan changes whether they were related to the time or place of the meetings. The second stage of data collections consisted of twenty hours of audio-taped interactional sessions between the two Kuwaiti learners and the four English native speakers. In addition, the researcher conducted member checking with all the participants.
Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis methods were employed by the researcher to highlight the various aspects of the data for the purpose of looking for answers to the three research questions of the study. The different patterns of language use as produced in the L2 speech of the six participants were identified, isolated, and organized into sets of categories by the researcher. The data sets were first used to analyze the components of the L2 input in terms of the lexical, pronunciation, speaking fluency, and listening comprehension information the two Kuwaiti learners utilized to fulfill their roles as conversation partners. Second, analysis was conducted to investigate the roles performed by the participants to make input comprehensible including learner autonomy and NS reinforcement. The third analysis focused on the interrelations between the social processes and the linguistic processes in the context of conversation partner talk. Because of the need to investigate not only linguistic development but rather the social scaffolding that facilitated the learners' ability to use the L2 effectively in a variety of social contexts, the data analysis targeted the immediate relations between the participants with a concern for the roles each played in the interactions. This step allowed the analyst to observe how each participant communicated, what kinds of language they used, how fluent their speech was, and how receptive or encouraging their listening appeared to be.
Hatch (1978) has promoted the value of examining what learners can be learning when engaged in “collaborative discourse.” Hatch (1983) suggested that in addition to language learning through rule-formation “other processes which are non-linguistic may be critical to the learner’s discovery of linguistic elements that make up that system. Such processes may make the formation of linguistic hypotheses possible” (p. 187). Conversation analysis was adopted in recognition of the need to examine not only the linguistic processes that contribute to learner performance but also the non-linguistic processes that may equally contribute to a learner’s language development. Thus, the analysis focused on the emerging errors in a learner’s linguistic performance by also examining the follow-up questions and conversation management procedures performed by the NS partner. For example, NS follow-up questions were classified under the category of “NS as a model” because NS partners, in many instances, felt the need to address and highlight a linguistic feature of a learner’s performance only if it interfered with the meaning of what they were saying at the moment. According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1990), conversation analysis in interaction research “has allowed the investigation of the relationship between L2 input and learner acquisition of linguistic rules and forms as well as the contribution of conversational interaction to language development” (p. 71). What ties these two different levels of emphasis in conversation analysis is that both require the researcher to view NS-NNS interaction from a discourse perspective. The analyst is thus required to work with units of analysis above the sentence level. In the
case of examining learner performance at the linguistic level which aims to
discover learner knowledge of language components (vocabulary, phonology, and
grammar), the analyst also aimed to contextualize learner performance by
examining the preceding NS input to the learner.

The analysis focused on the ways in which the NS participants supported
the learners as conversation partners, and the ways in which the learners reacted
to this support by creating opportunities for themselves to nominate new topics
for discussion by both partners. The learners' autonomy was examined in relation
to the effects it had on the learners' effort at listening and speaking to their NS
partners. Analysis of social processing examined a learner's development of the
skills of listening and speaking, and the ways in which the social relationship was
maintained in the kinds of discourse used in the interactions. The present study's
attention to a more complete and integrated conversation analysis targeted the
complex and multilevel relationship between ambient linguistic data, social
process, and second language learning in the context of conversation partner talk.

The observed patterns of language use that were employed by the
conversation partners were systematically coded by means of the processes of
open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was a three stage
coding process. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), "open coding is the part
of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena
through close examination of data" (p. 62). The second stage involved looking at
the data to relate the patterns named in open coding throughout the whole data
set of interactions. In axial coding, similar patterns were grouped under the five major categories of: (a) learner autonomy, (b) NS as a model, (c) scaffolding, (d) collaboration, and (e) receptivity. A large number of subcategories emerged and the five major categories were classified as five core patterns of NS-NNS interaction in the six conversation partners’ talk. After several revisions, the five resultant categories were becoming more precise than the names generated during the open coding stage. Linkages between similar patterns were made in terms of shared characteristics related to these patterns. The third stage was selective coding. After examining the data, the researcher made connections and linkages that related the patterns to the core categories of linguistic processing and social interaction. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) selective coding is “the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating these relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development” (p. 116). Unlike the close analysis of the first two stages of open and axial coding, selective coding was mainly interpretive in nature. This being the case, constant interaction between the data sets and the tentative interpretations was maintained throughout the data analysis process in order to strengthen the validity of the final interpretation of the data sets.

In conclusion, because the research questions sought information both about the contributions of the linguistic input and conversational interaction on learner development, conversation analysis was employed by the researcher with two different levels of emphasis. The emphasis on linguistic processing
necessitated the adoption of the linguistic components of L2 input as the units of
analysis, and the equal emphasis on collaborative interaction entailed the
adoption of discourse units of analysis to examine sequences of talk and discourse
moves as the manifestations of social processing by the conversation partners.

Measures Taken to Ensure the Trustworthiness of Findings

Four measures suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were adopted by the
researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings:

(a) Member checks: This strategy was useful as part of the researcher's
efforts to confirm initial observations of what was at work during the
conversations. For example, after a conversation has been recorded, the
researcher asked the participants about what they thought was important for
them, and what they most remembered about the interactions. Additionally,
when one of the American participant's speech was not clear on tape due to a
quick rate of delivery or the failure of the recording equipment to clearly capture
every word that was articulated in a particular sentence, member checks were
conducted by the researcher to verify the data for eventual transcription.

(b) Prolonged engagement: The researcher maintained contact with the
participants during and after the study. For example, the researcher kept track of
the two Kuwaiti participants and in the process learned that Ali had to travel to
Britain to become a commercial pilot for Kuwait Airways, and that Hamid
transferred to another Big Ten school, eventually graduated as a Mechanical
Engineer, and returned to Kuwait. In addition, the researcher spent hours transcribing the data sets, and after the process was completed, the researcher maintained prolonged engagement with the data sets. This process demanded that the researcher spend hours on each data set not only during the data analysis phase but also throughout the process of write-up of the dissertation.

(c) Triangulation: During the third and final stage of the coding process, the researcher confirmed each category and each group of patterns in the category system by making sure it was a recurring pattern and by making sure it was a common category throughout most but not necessarily all of the data sets. The process of triangulation of categories was a means to establish the commonality of these categories throughout the data sets.

(d) Fieldnotes: Observations on fieldwork such as the researcher's observations about the social relations between the participants were regularly recorded on fieldnotes. These observations focused on each pair of conversation partners: Whether they had other contacts by phone or in person, and when and where they met? The purpose was to confirm the patterns of the relationships as they emerged in the participants use of the second language.

Summary

This chapter consisted of five sections: (a) the rationale that formed the basis for the methodology, (b) the pre-data collection stage which covered the site and the participants, access and entry, and the researcher's role, (c) the data
collection methods, (d) the data analysis methods, and (e) the measures taken by the researcher to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. The next chapter presents the data and discussion.
CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The present study targeted two Kuwaiti ESL learners and four American native speakers of English who were engaged in one-on-one interactional sessions as members of a conversation partners program in an American university. The data were collected and analysed in search of answers to the three basic research questions of the study. These questions dealt with three aspects of conversation partner talk: (a) the major components of the second language that were learned by the two Kuwaiti participants, (b) the recurring discourse patterns in which the learning was made possible, and (c) the ways in which the linguistic and social aspects of conversation partner talk were related. The first section of this chapter, therefore, addresses the major components of the second language that were utilized by the conversation partners in order to participate in the interactions. The analysis described these components as information about the phonological and lexical properties of the second language as well as the oral communication skills of listening comprehension and speaking fluency. These four components were used by all the conversation partners to participate in the
interactions. The second section of the chapter identified common discourse patterns that characterized the interactional roles of the conversation partners as they went about exchanging information and negotiating the meaning of L2 input items by using the oral communication skills of listening and speaking in the second language. The second section also identified the common discourse patterns used by the participants to maintain and strengthen their social relationships as conversation partners. These patterns included scaffolding, accommodation, and receptivity. As a general observation, the researcher noted that participants' roles changed as they shifted their focus from linguistic to social processing, and vice versa. While linguistic processing encouraged an implicit teaching mode in which the NS partner, as the more proficient speaker, assumed the role of a facilitating agent and the learner assumed the role of a language student, social processing encouraged a more symmetrical footing between the participants who assumed their interactional roles as students in the same university and equal members of a conversation partners program. The third section of the chapter further described the ways in which the patterns of linguistic and social processing were inter-related. The analysis addressed, for example, how patterns of linguistic processing were employed by both participants not only to achieve the goal of input comprehension but also to strengthen the social relationships among the participants. The content of this chapter was organized into three sections that begin with the listing of the research questions and proceed to report the findings for each. Findings were
based on conversational data collected by the researcher from 20 hours of interactional sessions between the six conversation partners who agreed to participate in the study.

Section I

The first research question was as follows:
What components of the English language were utilized and noticed by the conversation partners in the course of their interactions?

A mixture of opportunities for both learning the second language as input and for using it as a tool for communication in natural discourse confronted the two learners as their conversations unfolded with their NS partners. The linguistic environment of conversation partner talk was characterized by providing the two learners with both input that drew their attentions to the phonological and lexical nature of English as well as interactional experiences in which they had opportunities to improve their oral fluency and listening comprehension in English as a second language. In addition to conveying information about the phonological and lexical properties of the English language, input to the two learners in the linguistic environment of conversation partner talk included numerous opportunities for improving the two learners' speaking and listening performance in a real communication situation. This analysis was an attempt to relate input acquisition to performance enhancement conceived of as the improvement of the two learners' overall communicative competence as an
outcome of participating in conversation partner talk. The following four sections are each devoted to an analysis of four categories: (a) phonological awareness, (b) new vocabulary, (c) oral performance, and (d) listening comprehension.

(a) Phonological Awareness

On approaching a conversation with an ESL learner, the NS partner tries to assess which aspects of English are difficult for the learner to control. One such area of difficulty is correct pronunciation. In the first interaction between Joe and Hamid, for example, Joe realized that part of Hamid's difficulty lied in the area of pronunciation. According to NS partner accounts, they made a kind of informal assessment when they first entered into a conversation with an ESL learner. This assessment was done in an implicit way, but the NS normally did it all the time. For example, Ali asked Elaine what she thought of his pronunciation:

A: So, what do you think about my pronunciation?
E: I think it's pretty good indeed. Yeah, I could tell as soon as you started speaking. I could tell you were here for a while.

It is this kind of informal, on-going, assessment that the NS formulates about the ESL student's linguistic level. One of the first aspects of an ESL student's performance that is usually noticed is pronunciation. Elaine's utterance revealed that she noticed Ali's pronunciation "as soon as you started speaking." One other fact Elaine noticed was that Ali must have spent sometime in the U.S. probably
because his pronunciation sounded like American English and was, therefore, based on American vernacular English.

Because both of the learners who participated in the study spoke Arabic as their native language, the sound differences between the English (/p/, /b/) and (/f/, /v/) were especially problematic for them because these differences do not exist in Arabic. According to Bialystok and Hakuta (1994), "The sound differences that turn out to matter because they change meaning are called phonemes" (p. 12). If a learner's second language has phonemic categories that are meaningfully differentiated such as (/p/, /b/) but not so in the first language, these phonemes will be problematic for the learner. While Arabic does not make a distinction between (/p/, /b/), they are meaningful phonemes in English. Meaning will change if one says "pat" or "bat" in English, but in Arabic this sound difference is hardly noticed. The following excerpt from the first data set between Hamid and Joe illustrates Hamid's pronunciation problem when he tries to articulate the English phonemes of "/p/" and "/v/" which are not differentiated in Arabic from "/b/" and "/f/"

J: So tell me about this afternoon? What was the final score?
H: Yeah, you mean the *points.
J: Uhn, uhn.
H: Our team has *twelve.
J: Twelve points.
H: *Twelve points, and their team has *eleven.
J: Wow! That's a high score.

Judging from Joe's final comment "Wow, that's a high score" it is obvious that Joe understood Hamid's response. The goal of mutual intelligibility was achieved by
the participants, even though Hamid’s English was “marked“ accent-wise. Moreover, by accommodating Hamid as a nonnative speaker, Joe realized that Hamid would probably speak with a foreign accent. So, Joe did not bring Hamid’s lack of control of pronunciation to his attention in a direct manner. Rather, Joe adopted “other repetition” as a strategy to correct Hamid’s pronunciation errors. “Twelve points.” However, the overall meaning of what Hamid was saying came across and was not hampered by Hamid’s pronunciation. This strategy of correctly repeating what the learner has just said was employed by Joe for the purpose of supplying correct input that is related to the phonological aspects of Hamid's English. The information contained in Joe’s input was that the phonemic differences between (/v/, /f/) and (/b/, /p/) really mattered in English. As a recipient of that input, Hamid was an active listener to Joe’s model. The above data set shows that after initially hearing Hamid’s faulty pronunciation of (*twelve *points), Joe responded by correctly repeating those words, to which Hamid responded correctly this time. The initial lack of phonological control of these words “twelve points” contributed to faulty pronunciation, but it did not interfere with Hamid’s ability to perceive them when they were correctly pronounced by Joe. This may also help explain Hamid’s subsequent attempt to correctly produce them in his speech. The above transcript shows that Hamid was able to repeat Joe’s corrections so that he could learn them and improve his pronunciation. As far as Hamid was concerned, one of the benefits of participating in the conversation partners program was to improve his pronunciation ability.
Hamid's lack of phonological control and his attempts to improve his awareness of English pronunciation were apparent in the area of distinguishing between two seemingly similar sounding lexical items that have different meaning. For example, in the interaction between Hamid and Elaine, Hamid came across the word "required" that he had confused with another similar sounding word "record." Hamid asked Elaine to help him distinguish between these two words, which led Elaine to give him advice on consonants and vowels. Elaine, an ESL teacher, was in the context of talking to Hamid about her English class:

E: The students who are in the class want to become teaching assistants in their departments, and in order for them to teach, they have to take a speech test, and depending on how they score in the Speak Test, and they are required to take further classes until their level in pronunciation improves so they can teach.
A: Like you say the, the required, required. Is this similar for the required and the record?
E: Required and-?
H: And the record.
E: And record.
H: Yes, it's always in the pronunciation. What's the difference? Required and record.
E: The vowel sounds are more than different, too.
H: Yes, its...
E: The (O-R) in record.
H: Yes, it's very similar.
E: And then required.
H: Yes.
E: The (i) in required, yeah.

The input provided by Elaine in the context of talking about her class included the word (required) which prompted Hamid's question about the word (record) and how to distinguish between the two. Elaine quickly pointed out the differences in
the phonemes (or) and (i) in required and record. The source of confusion for Hamid was that both words started and ended with the same sounds, but Elaine pointed out that they were different in the middle.

Another pronunciation difficulty facing Hamid was in the area of words sharing the same sounds but ending in different suffixes (i.e., the last morpheme). For example, when Hamid tried to say the word (homeless) he confused it with (homesick). This confusion created a temporary breakdown in communication between him and Elaine, his NS partner. While Hamid was trying to explain to Elaine how he experienced his first culture shock upon arriving to the U.S., he meant to say the “homeless” but he confused it with “homesick.”

H: Before I came here, I imagined about. I make some image about the United States. But when I came here, there is a lot of difference. It is homesick. When I first saw the “homesick people,” I did not see that in my country. Home, homesick, home, home....

E: A house for sale?

H: No, I mean the poor people like in the street by himself.

E: Oh, the homeless people.

H: Homeless.

E: The homeless people, ok.

The pronunciation problem that Hamid showed in trying to distinguish between two similar sounding words did in fact interfere with the meaning of his message. Hamid's use of the word (homesick) instead of the word (homeless) can be termed a case of mistaken identity that resulted in an erroneous use of suffixes. What was relevant to pronunciation difficulty in this case was that Hamid allowed word sound to override other linguistic factors such as the distinction between the morphemes of “-less” and “sick.” Because the words sounded alike from Hamid’s
perspective, he got confused between them. While Hamid intended to say (homeless) from the beginning of his utterance, he mistakenly used the word (homesick) instead probably because it was the more familiar of the two words.

The presence of an English-speaking conversation partner, however, and her provision of the correct word, lead Hamid to realize that he had made a mistake, and after receiving Elaine's input, prompted him to correct his own usage. Thus, cases of mistaken identity in conversation partner talk can be an indirect source of evidence about variants of words already known to the learner due to corrective feedback from the NS conversation partner.

Pronunciation remains an area to research. While Hamid's case continued to show that pronunciation accuracy was a challenge, he did not seem discouraged by the differences between his L2 output as a non-native speaker and that of his English-speaking conversation partners. Due to the gradual nature of the acquisition process, most SLA researchers working on interaction (e.g. Ellis, 1998; Gass, 1996; Schmidt, 1990) agree, however, that "noticing the gap" by an L2 learner between his/her own performance and that of an adult native speaker of the target language is the first cognitive step that formulates the basis for the comparisons that may "trigger" further language development because the ESL learner is motivated to approximate native-speaker performance. In most cases, the conversation partners were trying to achieve mutual intelligibility.

The linguistic challenges facing the learners were not confined to English pronunciation. This area of challenge was not the only one. Vocabulary, listening
comprehension, and oral performance tended to pose problems for the L2 learners. The next three sections will deal with vocabulary, listening comprehension, and oral performance as components of the second language that the learners needed to deal with in order to participate in the interactions. Conversation partner talk was both a catalyst for potential problems facing the learners due to their limited English repertoire, and a resource from which learners were introduced to new information about English as a second language by their English-speaking conversation partners.

(b) New Vocabulary

The collaboration that took place between the conversation partners during any given interaction created contexts in which L2 input can be modified at just those points where learners experienced comprehension problems. This was especially true of what might be for the learner a new vocabulary item. For example, when Hamid encountered a new lexical item that prevented him from understanding Joe's utterance, he requested a clarification of the word meaning. Joe, his NS interlocutor, supplied further information about the word until Hamid understood what was meant by it. The word that was new to Hamid was “resume” which he did not encounter before.

J: I am taking a one credit hour class. It's a class that helps you write a resume.
A: Resume?
J: You know, a resume to help you get a job, how to go through an interview, things like that.
H: I see.
The vocabulary comprehension problem that Hamid had with understanding what the word “resume” meant became apparent to Joe after Hamid repeated “resume” with a rising intonation pattern as if to exclaim from Joe, or to make him stop to explain its meaning. When faced with questions by the learners about word meaning, the native-speaking partners employed a recurring strategy for handling such situation. That strategy was to provide a simplified definition that explained what the word in question referred to. “Fine-tuning” input was mentioned by Doughty (1993) as a strategy performed by adult native speakers when they interact with children learning their first language. The data above set provided further support for this finding as it was manifested in the interactions between the conversation partners.

In some instances of fine-tuning word meanings, there was no observable learner output that indicated lack of comprehension. Rather, the NS partner made a judgement call that the learner could not possibly know the meaning of the word he/she just said, and voluntarily offered a short explanation. For example, in the interaction between Hamid and Elaine, Elaine used the words “community” and “individualistic” which she thought might be difficult for Hamid:

E: I think the Italian culture is much more community centered. In a sense, what I mean by community is much more family oriented. There is more family which has a more important role.
H: Uhn, uhn, in the community, eh, community.
E: Yeah, uhn, whereas here in the States, I think we're much more individualistic. We don't always necessarily consider our family when making decisions. Yeah, we're just much more independent here and individualistic.
H: Uhm, everybody live outside the family and look after himself.
In both cases of providing new input (community, individualistic) Elaine decided that these words might be useful to learn by Hamid. The use of simple definitions is intended to clarify their meanings so that Hamid can acquire them. This pattern which was shared among the NS participants points to a relationship between interaction that is modified to fit a learner's competency level and word acquisition. Interaction can be a vehicle for the acquisition of new or unfamiliar words that constitute gaps in the learner's current knowledge of vocabulary. For example, the word (melt) constituted a gap in Hamid's current knowledge of the L2:

H: And my friend say, they put salt, salt, salt on the snow to, I don't know, to, they make the snow...
E: were they making a snowman?
H: No, no, no. When the people. I don't know what they call on the put the salt, salt, slat.
E: Put it soft?
H: Yeah, yes, in the snow.
E: I don't know what it was. Can you describe it more?
H: It's like we pour in the eat, and they put in the snow. When you cook or something like this, you put the salt to that.
E: I don't know. Were they eating something?
H: No, no. To make the snow like, like. I don't know what it's called!
E: To melt the snow.
H: Yeah, may be.
E: To make it soft and watery?
H: Yes, yes.
E: Salt?
H: Yes, salt.
E: Are you talking about the trucks?
H: Yes.
E: Spreading the salt on the road?
H: Yes in the road.
E: Wow! Yeah, so that people can drive.
When Elaine realized that the word Hamid did not know was “melt,” she tried to fill this gap in his knowledge by saying “melt.” Before that, she offered several clues such as “snowman” and “soft.” Even after he heard Elaine say “melt,” Hamid was not sure that this was the word he needed to communicate what he saw. Only after Elaine made him know that she finally knew what he was talking about did Hamid realize that “melt” was the missing item in his lexical knowledge base. It is reasonable to infer from the above data set that interaction facilitated Hamid’s recognition of his knowledge gaps through a collaborative process in which Elaine was offering him several clues that could be candidates from which he could choose the words most appropriate to fulfill his communicative needs.

(c) Oral Performance

Evidence collected for the purpose of the study pointed to the existence of a relationship between interaction and learners’ oral fluency. The learners’ active participation in the oral communication that took place within the context of conversation partner talk contributed to their oral performance in the second language especially in those instances when learners were given the opportunity to nominate their own topics and to develop these topics in their interactions with their NS partners. In other words, the opportunity for topic nomination and control of what was being talked about contributed to the oral performance of both learners.
It is interesting to note that each of the two learners developed his own strategy to nominate and control topics. Hamid, for example, employed a strategy of scaffolding his questions to questions that were first raised by the NS partner. Hamid’s strategy was to ask “How about you?” to turn the questions that were asked by the NS partner back to the person who originally asked the question:

J: How about French Fries? Have you tried French Fries?
H: Yes, it’s really, really...
J: You like it?
H: → Delicious. How about the fish?
J: All kinds of fish.
H: Yeah.
J: I can eat just about anything.
H: How about the rice?
J: Rice?
H: Yeah, what your opinion about the rice?
J: I’d say Americans eat rice, but probably not as much as, let’s say, spaghetti.

Joe used the wh-question “How about...?” to ask Hamid about French Fries, and Hamid scaffolded Joe’s question to ask him about fish and rice. This offered Hamid a comfortable way to practice his oral performance with Joe and at the same time control what the questions were going to be about. Because the wh-question in its present form (e.g., How about...?) came originally from Joe, Hamid was certain that there was nothing wrong with the way he asked the questions about fish and rice.

In his interaction with Elaine, however, this question form was not helpful to Hamid’s oral production probably because Elaine was controlling the topic. The topic was supposed to be one with which Hamid was most familiar “his
experience in the U.S.,” but the way Elaine asked the question about his experience contributed to a lack of understanding on Hamid’s part:

E: It's been a year, right? You have been away from them for a year?
H: No, this...
E: How long has it been?
H: Here? One year or so.
E: One year, ok. So, how has it been for you not being near them?
H: You mean the...
E: About you’re here?
H: Why I am here?
E: No, no, no. Since you have been here, right? You haven’t been near your family.
H: Yes.
E: How has that experience been?

Hamid was initially confused in understanding which of the two questions he was supposed to answer: (1) the question about how he came to the U.S., or (2) the question about what it has been like to live away from his family. Because of the initial confusion that he was experiencing, he erroneously concluded that he was supposed to answer the question about coming to the U.S. He probably misunderstood or was unclear about Elaine’s question to be about what the experience (of coming to the U.S.) was like. So his answer came as follows:

H: I don’t know I will come to the U.S.. I just applied for the Ministry of Education, and they tell me they accept me to travel to the U.S., and I asked my friends about their opinion. They said, Ok, it’s your future and it will be nice to study in the U.S. So after that I travelled to the U.S.. It’s really was a good experience for me.

Hamid’s answer revealed that he misunderstood Elaine’s question about not being near his family for the past year. This data set supports the point made earlier: that topic control is related to a learner’s oral performance. When the questions

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were controlled by the NS partner, Hamid's subsequent oral performance tended to be inaccurate because he was confused about which questions to answer. The earlier data set demonstrated that when Hamid had a reasonably bigger role in nominating the topics under discussion, even through scaffolding, he achieved a more accurate oral performance in the L2.

Ali used scaffolding in his interaction with Sunny to maintain some degree of topic control which positively contributed to the accuracy of his oral performance. In the context of interacting with Sunny, Ali built on Sunny's mention of the fact that her grandparents came from Mexico to narrate his own experience of going there on a recent trip:

S: My grandparents are from Mexico.
A: Uhn, so I guess you can speak some Spanish?
S: Well, a little.
A: a little?
S: A little.
A: Have you been to Mexico?
S: No.
A: I have been there last month and I stayed there for two weeks. It's a nice place. I like it.

Topic control and the subsequent oral performance were achieved by Ali when he asked Sunny whether she had been to Mexico. When she said no, he had an opportunity to recount his experience of recently going there for two weeks. It was interesting to see how Ali scaffolded on Sunny's first mention of Mexico by creating an opportunity for himself to ask Sunny whether she knew Spanish. This relatively high degree of topic control gave Ali an opportunity to practice what he already knew because he figured that the topic of "Mexico" was interesting to
Sunny, his interlocutor. The ability to nominate and develop a topic obviously gave Ali a higher degree of topic control in terms of anticipating and planning what he was going to say next. In the absence of such an opportunity, the learner loses some degree of control over what is being said in the conversation and uses his oral performance to cope with and react to his NS partner's questions. Being asked to answer a successive series of questions strains the learner's ability to carry on the conversation because the learner is not given enough time to formulate and ask questions of his/her own in a satisfactory form.

In conclusion, the above data sets suggest that there is a strong link between topic control in conversation partner talk and learner oral performance. This relationship was observed when learners had topic control because it gave them time to plan and watch the form of what they were saying. When they had topic control, both Hamid and Ali were more accurate in their oral performance because they anticipated what they were going to say next. Conversely, inaccurate oral performance was observed in the data set in which Hamid did not have topic control. He became confused about which question to answer and wound up trying to answer the wrong question.

(d) Listening Comprehension

The more interaction opportunities a learner had, through a context like conversation partner talk, the more exposure to opportunities of authentic L2 input he/she will enjoy. Authentic input had the potential to play a positive role
in the learning process because it exposed the two learners to the actual patterns of discourse that English speakers used in their weekly interactions. SLA researchers have long known that there was a relationship between the kinds of language learners are exposed to and the development of their proficiency in the L2. It is safe to assume that exposure to authentic input in face-to-face interaction can trigger the language learning mechanisms learners have to advance in the L2.

The data sets showed that the relationship between authentic input and listening comprehension was due mainly to two aspects of conversation partner talk: (a) the opportunity to observe the ways in which NS utterances were constructed to engage in casual talk, and (2) the opportunity acquire authentic L2 input in the process of sharing discourse with a NS partner. The demands on the learner's listening abilities were increased as a result of the need to be on the lookout for these two sources of NS input. First, the opportunity to observe authentic stretches of discourse uttered by the NS partner kept the learners focused on the L2 input so as to respond correctly and participate in the conversation with the NS partners. Second, the learners had the opportunity to gain new words that filled gaps in their current knowledge of the English language.

Ali's interaction with Cassandra provided him with an opportunity to observe the way she manipulated familiar chunks of language to construct her utterances during their discourse. For example, Cassandra asked Ali a question about how many hours of sleep he had before coming to their meeting. He already told her that he took a trip to Cleveland, Ohio with his friend a day
earlier:

C: → So, how many hours of sleep do you think you got, if at all, before coming
to our meeting here?
A: Maybe four hours.
C: Oh, I see.

The purpose of Cassandra's question was to ask Ali how many hours of sleep he
had. Additional words such as "do you think," and "if at all" were added by
Cassandra to qualify her message and fit it to her interlocutor. For an L2 learner
who is engaged in interaction with an NS partner, exposure to segments of
connected authentic discourse in English provided the opportunity to interact
with regular patterns of communication that native speakers use in their daily
interactions. The language-rich talk of conversation partners can create
favourable conditions for language learning. Ali was successful in extracting from
the stream of speech that Cassandra produced the main purpose of the question.
Moreover, his answer showed that he had been frequently exposed to the way
that Cassandra used to construct her discourse to communicate with him.
Because he was exposed to several conversation partners and numerous
conversations with Cassandra, Ali had gradually improved his listening
comprehension. In sum, conversation partner talk offered Ali several
opportunities in which he listened to a large amount of connected discourse
which enabled him to effectively processes extended utterances like Cassandra's
authentic question.
In addition to the opportunity to observe how native speakers constructed discourse to express meaning, conversation partner talk offered the learners the chance to learn new L2 input items. Even in the case of words that were already familiar to the learner, interaction with a Ns partner included cultural information within which familiar words took on additional meaning. For example, upon receiving feedback from Hamid indicating that he did not acquire the cultural connotation of “driving,” Joe communicated to Hamid that “driving” implicitly indicated a car even if that was not explicitly stated:

H: In this week, I am going to Cleveland on Wednesday because I have to take a test in the lab. So I have to go in the Wednesday.
J: You guys have been up there?
H: No, I have a... I only go with my, my roommate.
J: Uh, I mean are you driving, though?
H: → No.
J: Flying? How, how are you getting there?
H: By, by the car. I mean.
J: You are just driving by car?
H: Yeah.
J: It’s not that far though. Two and a half hours, maybe.
H: Yeah, exactly.

Upon hearing Joe’s question “Are you driving,” Hamid offered a negative response by saying “no.” Since it was later established that he was driving with his roommate to Cleveland, Hamid’s first negative response meant either one of two levels of comprehension: (a) he understood the word but thought that because he was only getting a ride while his friend was driving, he could say “No, I am not driving,” and (b) he understood the word “driving” but did not know that it implicitly meant “driving a car.” The second level of listening comprehension is
the most likely explanation because when Joe asked him “You’re just driving by car,” Hamid offered an affirmative response by saying “yes.” Building on the feedback Hamid gave when he said “by the car,” Joe reformulated his utterance to “driving by car.” Member checking with Hamid helped confirm the fact that at the time of the recording Hamid did know the meaning of the word “driving” but was unaware that it implied a car. It is in the context of talking about a trip to another city that Joe was able to assess Hamid’s lack of comprehension. The new L2 lexical item that was gained by Hamid was related to the cultural connotations of the word “driving” and the fact that in American English it implicitly indicates a car. This new information about a familiar word to Hamid was gained through both partners’ negotiation of meaning in the context of conversation partner talk. It is probable that Hamid already knew the basic meaning of the word “drive” but that he did not yet know that “driving” also implied a car. Joe’s feedback brought to Hamid’s attention that “driving” has an embedded meaning that all native speakers of American English commonly took for granted.

In conclusion, the data sets showed the more opportunities to engage in interaction a learner had, the more exposure to authentic L2 input he/she enjoyed. Interaction can thus enhance learner listening comprehension in two ways. First, by offering learners the opportunity to observe the ways in which NS partners construct their discourse for the expression of relevant meaning, and second, through supplying the relevant information within which the meaning of the code is usually understood. Interaction in the context of conversation partner
talk provided the learners with a language-rich environment in which they listened to the kind of language used by the NS partners when they spoke to L2 learners. Additionally, as an outcome of listening to NS partners speak as well as speaking with them for extended periods of time, the learners improved their listening and speaking skills.

Section Summary

The context of conversation partner talk provided the learners with an interactive medium in which they could practice and improve their listening and speaking skills. The language used by the NS participants when they spoke with the learners provided them with new information about the phonological and lexical characteristics of English. The interaction data showed how the learners could increase their awareness of English pronunciation by observing the sounds that their NS partners combined to create words, as well as take into account the tempo and rhythm of different words and phrases. The linguistic environment also provided the learners with several encounters with new vocabulary words. The data showed that the learners, for example, had several opportunities to speak for extended periods of time especially when they nominated and developed their own topics. The learners also had the opportunity to increase their listening comprehension by both observing the ways in which NS utterances were constructed, and by learning from their NS partners the authentic meaning of words as commonly understood by native speakers of American English.
The second research question was as follows:

How did the participants negotiate to make themselves comprehensible to one another, and how did they maintain their social relationships as members of the conversation partners' program?

The regular patterns of social interaction and linguistic processing that were regularly undertaken and produced by the 2 Kuwaiti ESL learners and their 4 English-speaking conversation partners pointed to the existence of two different role relationships. First, in the case of linguistic processing, the analysis revealed that there was a clear separation between learners and native speakers in terms of the distribution of interactional tasks and obligations. The two categories of the NS as a facilitating agent and learner autonomy showed that the native speakers were helping the learners in two ways: (a) to comprehend the L2 input that was produced by the NS, and (b) to correct a learner's ungrammatical utterances or misuse of vocabulary items. Second, the patterns of social interaction indicated that the conversation partners assumed a symmetrical role relationship during social interaction. This was probably due to the fact that they enjoyed equal social status as students and colleagues in the same school and as members of the
same conversation partners program. The equal roles of the ESL learners and NS partners were manifested in the three categories of scaffolding, receptivity, and collaboration named by the researcher. In these categories, there was no clear separation between the participants who worked together to achieve a display of convergence. In sum, the analysis revealed that there were two distinct role relationships that existed side by side in conversation partner talk. Five categories were determined to characterize the interactions. Under linguistic processing the categories of learner autonomy and NS as agent described the system of precessing linguistic information by both NS participants and ESL learners. The categories of scaffolding, receptivity, and collaboration characterized the social interaction that was jointly conducted by the participants as a manifestation of their social relationship.

The present section is organized in five parts that explicate the patterns of conversation partner talk. Patterns of linguistic processing will be analyzed in parts I, and II. The first two of the following five parts are devoted to a discussion of learner autonomy and the NS partner as a facilitating agent. Part I addresses the patterns of learner autonomy which was defined as the learner’s active participation and initiative in the language learning process. Part II analyzes the patterns employed by the NS as a facilitating agent of the learner’s comprehension of input and production of output in the context of conversation partner talk. Patterns of social interaction will be analyzed in parts III, IV, and V. The remaining three parts are devoted to a discussion of the patterns of
receptivity, collaboration, and scaffolding. Part III analyzes the patterns of receptivity between the participants, part IV describes the patterns of collaboration employed by the participants, and part V analyzes the patterns of scaffolding as communicative activities that characterized the social interactions between the conversation partners who participated in the study.

Patterns of Linguistic Processing

The linguistic dimension of conversation partner talk was defined as the conversation partners' interactions that were directly focused on the formal properties of the English language such as the areas of phonetics-acoustics, lexical, and syntactic information. These interactions were embedded within the partners' negotiations of meaning, but they formulated an implicit form of pedagogy in conversation partner talk. During linguistic processing, the NS partners acted as facilitating agents that reinforced the accuracy of learner output. This was manifested in the NS participants' attempts at helping the learners comprehend English in the three patterns of providing positive evidence, other-repair, and, selective targeting. The data analysis will show that these three discourse patterns were pedagogically-oriented to promote the L2 learners' acquisition of linguistic knowledge. The processes of modification of learner output and learner comprehension of new L2 input were linguistic processes that took place as a result of the distribution of interactional rights and obligations between the NS partners and the NNS learners. Learner comprehension of L2

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input was assisted through the negotiation of meaning between the learners and their NS partners. The learning system at work during linguistic processing consisted of a to and fro movement between the learners and the NS partners. During hypothesis-testing, for example, the learners requested their NS interlocutor's help in comprehending unclear or unfamiliar linguistic items, and obtained interlocutor feedback on the comprehensibility of their own oral performance. They then responded accordingly through modification of their output. The learners, in effect, had autonomy to shape the linguistic environment in dialogue with the NS partners. In order to assume their autonomy over the language learning process, they performed a hypothesis-testing function. Learner autonomy over the ability to communicate in English was manifested in the communication strategies of asking for clarifications, other-repetition, and feedback indicating lack of comprehension.

I. Learner autonomy

Learner autonomy was defined as the learner's active participation and initiative in the language learning process as demonstrated by the employment of communication strategies in the context of conversation partner talk. Learner autonomy was manifested in the learner activity of producing the second language in the course of talking with the NS partners. The data of the interactions was a primary source to explore what the learners were trying to communicate to their NS interlocutors. According to Van Lier (1996), "The
autonomous learner must be able to make significant decisions about what is to be learned, as well as how and when to do it” (p. 13). Van Leir promoted learner autonomy as part of the language learning process. According to Van Lier (1996), for example, learners become autonomous when they “have choices and responsibilities and develop their own sense of direction” (p.19). Other researchers have promoted learner autonomy as learner agency over their choice of communication strategies in the second language. Macaro (1997), for example, defined learner autonomy as the learner’s “ability to communicate having acquired a reasonable mastery of the L2 rule system” (p. 170). The position taken in the present study is that both of the above definitions are not mutually exclusive, and that learner autonomy as a term can encompass learner choice in both areas of language learning and communication strategies.

Learner autonomy over the language learning process may be illustrated using the following example of a learner attempting to test how the word “equipment” sounds in spoken English. It is generally agreed among second language acquisition researchers that “hypothesis-testing” is the central learning process for acquiring a second language (e.g. Beebe, 1988; Crookes & Gass, 1993). Hypothesis-testing and reformulation was a process after which a learner gained more confidence in his/her ability to use new L2 items as a result of the NS’s reformulation of his utterance. Consider the following interaction:

H: It's a big school and they have a good program to learn English. It's got more, uh, *quipment? Quip, *acquipment?  
J: You mean equipment?
H: Yeah, equipment, and they have a good schedule....

In the above exchange, Joe, the English native speaker, reformulated Hamid's pronunciation of the word “equipment” in the form of a comprehension check and the reformulated pronunciation was taken up in the learner's response. The availability of a conversation partner enabled Hamid to modify his hypothesis after he received feedback on it from Joe. The word “equipment” was a new word that Hamid acquired at the lexical level. At the phonological level, however, Hamid was not sure how the word would sound in English. In other words, he needed to hear it from Joe, his English native-speaking conversation partner. Hamid’s “partial” knowledge of the word “equipment” was reformulated by Joe as the more experienced participant. The use of hypothesis-testing by Hamid in this interaction created a condition under which he was empowered by Joe to approximate more accurately the NS speaker's use of the word “equipment.” Joe demonstrated to Hamid how the word sounded in standard American English.

In sum, hypothesis-testing was found by the researcher to be a useful learner strategy from a language learning perspective because it allowed the learner to reformulate his hypothesis by modifying it upon receiving feedback on its accuracy from the English native-speaking participant. In the above example, hypothesis testing as a learning strategy provided the learner with an overt comparison between his own output and target language pronunciation. Hamid learned the correct pronunciation by testing a hypothesis that Joe corrected.
The patterns of learner autonomy over the deliberate choice of three communication strategies are consistent with Macaro's (1997) functional definition of learner autonomy. These communication strategies included clarification requests, other-repetition, and feedback. Communication strategies were utterances designed to get the NS partner to clarify an utterance which has not been understood by the learners. They were an expression by the learner that some item of the input was not comprehended by the learner and needed to be clarified by the NS before the conversation could move to another topic. In order to indicate their lack of comprehension of certain English words and phrases to their NS interlocutors, the two L2 learners developed strategies in which they asked for clarification or repetition of individual words that were not comprehended by them when they were first used by the English conversation partner. In a sense, these communication strategies were employed to convey a learner's lack of comprehension of an L2 item that was introduced by the NS conversation partner. The two ESL learners' use indicated that there was trouble or difficulty for the L2 learner in trying to follow the speech of the NS. A lack of comprehension of a single word can, for some L2 learners, impact what they are able to comprehend of the target language as used by a NS. In their efforts to make sense of the L2 input, learners employed communication strategies that led to a temporary interruption of the flow of conversation until these comprehension problems could be tackled by both participants. These communication strategies included clarification requests, other-repetition, and feedback.
(1) Clarification Requests

Learners' use of clarification requests was a discourse pattern in which the learners attempted to make sense of the L2 input. According to Nunan (1999), a clarification request is “a strategy used by the listener for a more explicit formulation of the speaker's last utterance” (p.302). In those instances of the conversation when a learner was confronted by a new or unfamiliar word usually in a question or statement uttered by the NS partner, one of the communication strategies that was used was to ask for clarification. For example, when Joe asked Hamid a question that he did not understand, Hamid asked for clarification:

J: When you, when you graduate from college, you will stay here, or you think you will go back to Kuwait?
H: -> Uhn, you mean...?
J: When you finish, you, you get your degree in Mechanical Engineering?
H: Uhn. Exactly I have to go my country.
J: Uhm, uhm.
H: To take care my country, like advance my country.
J: Right.

Hamid was able to convey to Joe that he did not understand the question fully, probably because Joe related graduation from college to a next step which was going home. Hamid's clarification request prompted Joe to try again by only mentioning (i.e., graduation). This reduction of the number of propositions included in the first question seems to have worked to simplify the question for Hamid. There were also other subtle changes. For example, Joe replaced the verb phrase (graduate from college) to a simpler (get your degree). Upon checking with Joe, he told the researcher that he did that for fear that Hamid
might not comprehend the verb “graduate” After Joe simplified his question to a level that Hamid understood, Hamid responded in a way that made it evident that he has comprehended Joe’s question.

(2) Other-Repetition

Other-repetition was used by the researcher to indicate that the learners were actually repeating what the NS partners were saying. The choice of a term like other repetition is intended to distinguish this pattern of talk from “self-repetition” which indicates repeating oneself. Other-repetition occurs when a learner repeats part or the whole of the NS partner’s previous utterance to ask for clarification. Other-repetitions were employed as a means of obtaining new L2 input items. For example, when Ali brought up the topic of marriage customs in the U.S., he asked Sunny, his NS conversation partner whether one needed to gain the approval of parents before a marriage contract can be legally fulfilled. Sunny kept saying “it’s up to you as long as one is above 18 years of age”. Ali kept repeating it after Sunny as if he was practicing a new expression that appealed to him:

A: What about the marriage here? I know its different than my country. Like, for example, if you like someone or someone like you, do you need to tell your parent before you marry this person? Or-
S: (incomprehensible) We’re not in this habit.
A: Or you decide yourself?
S: Not too much trouble like this.
A: Like your mom and your father they must agree?
S: No.
A: Or you have to decide.
S: → It’s up to you.
A: Yeah.
S: You know here, you can marry anyone, you know, you want to.
A: And without the permission from your parent, or?
S: Well, if you are 18 or older, it's up to you.
A: It's up to you.
S: Uhn. I am sure. After you are at the age of 18, you are accepted as an adult.
A: It's up to you.
S: You make your own choices.

Ali's use of "other-repetition" of "it's up to you," in addition to being a way of practicing a new expression out loud, could be probably due to his admiration of this aspect of American culture which gives the individual more freedom than the more strict traditional Arab culture when it comes to issues of marriage and choice of a spouse. When Ali encountered this aspect of American culture, it ran against all that he had been socialized to believe about marriage in Kuwait.

Other-repetition was also employed as a way of telling the NS partner to repeat an individual word more slowly. Listening to a question by Joe, Hamid could not guess what the word "theater" meant because Joe was speaking at "normal" native speaker speed:

J: Have you seen any kind of like plays or movies or anything at the Wexner Center or the Art Center over there yet?
H: No, no.
J: They have different things. I haven't gone in there either. I am just wondering, you know, what does it look like? Uhm, theater, have you gone to a play?
H: Theater?
J: In there. Not the movies but a play. Theater.
H: No. Ha.
J: That's different. Have you ever, let's say, gone to like a dance, like a ballet, or...
H: No.
Hamid reported that he knew the word “theater” but that he did not recognize it when Joe used it. He wanted Joe to repeat it more slowly or explain the meaning of the word. The strategy of “other repetition” was used by Hamid in another interaction with Joe:

J: What movies have you seen lately?
H: Lately?
J: What was the last one you’ve seen?

In the above transaction, the word “lately” was repeated by Hamid more successfully because Joe responded in a way that made sense of the word to Hamid. This implies that the use of the communication strategy of “other repetition” in order to work for the learner in any number of situations, must seek input from the native-speaking participant. Individual learners may employ their own strategies for efficient language learning, but in the social context of conversation partner talk, the native speaker has a role to play. What Joe did with Hamid as a less proficient partner was to bring to his attention the meaning of the word “lately” in a different way that could be understood by Hamid. Based on Joe’s explanation and Hamid’s subsequent understanding, it can only then be stated that “other-repetition” worked as a communication strategy in the conversation partner talk in the present study.
Feedback

A communication strategy that was employed by both Ali and Hamid was to provide feedback on their lack of comprehension of L2 input. The effect of this strategy was for the learner to indicate that he/she did not understand the input or at least part of it. For example, in the conversation that took place between Hamid and Joe, Hamid did not fully understand Joe's question. So, Hamid started to ask Joe about the spelling of an unfamiliar word:

J: Do Kuwaitis drink goats' milk, or cows' milk?
H: → What does that mean?
J: Goats' milk?
H: Aha:
J: Here in the United States we have cows' milk. But from my understanding, most of the world drinks goats' milk.
H: What? Spell the word.
H: G-O-A-T.
J: Goat. An animal that has horns. Goats' milk.
H: I don't think so.
J: Cows' milk?
H: Yeah. You know that's, that cows, actually it's famous for my country.

Hamid performed two feedback tactics to indicate to Joe his lack of comprehension of the words “goats’ milk.” First, Hamid asked Joe what he meant, to which Joe explained that he wanted Hamid to confirm or deny his assumption that most of the world drinks goats’ milk. Second, Hamid asked Joe to spell the word “goat.” But only after Joe explained that “goat is an animal that has horns” did Hamid comprehend the meaning of the word. Again as this example showed, the success of the employment of different communication
strategies to indicate a learner's lack of comprehension depends to some extent on the native speaker's reaction. It may be that different communication strategies can be used by a learner with different NS interlocutors to achieve the same results. The above transaction, for example, demonstrated that asking for the spelling of a word may not, in and of itself, achieve the learner's goal of making sense of L2 input. Until Joe gave Hamid a definition of the word in simple English that Hamid could understand, the lack of comprehension displayed by Hamid could not have been clarified. Thus, a positive native speaker's role in all of this negotiation of meaning is helpful for learner-initiated communication strategies to work.

In conclusion, learner autonomy was manifested in communication strategies which involved the learners in making sense of the conversational input by asking for clarification and repetition of new words that were present in the input. The analysis of learner output revealed that learners were active participants in the interaction. They utilized what they had already learned about English to manage the interaction in ways that increased their own comprehension of new input introduced by their NS partners. While the L2 learners provided feedback that indicated a lack of comprehension, the NS partners provided support by giving feedback on the accuracy of learner language. The English language learners then modified their output as a result of the availability of relevant input from their NS interlocutors.

The patterns of learner autonomy may have important pedagogical
implications, which are more fully discussed in chapter 5. Even though student output is a prevalent feature of many communicative activities within contemporary language classroom, exactly how it helps with language learning has often been assumed, rather than researched. More empirical investigation in this area is needed. Of interest is whether providing students in an EFL/ESL conversation class with spoken output activities followed by relevant input would facilitate more accurate approximations of target language forms by learners. Another interesting question is whether learner awareness of problems as a result of output followed by relevant input would prompt them to seek out subsequent input with more focused attention to the formal aspects of L2 input. Recommendations for further research such as the above types are described in chapter 5.

II. The Role of the NS as a Facilitator

When the NS conversation partner uses the spoken medium to provide feedback on learners' hypotheses or to respond to their clarification requests, repetitions, and feedback, she or he is taking on the role of a facilitator. Following Vygotsky, sociocultural researchers such as Lantolf (1994) and Hall and Verplaetse (2000) viewed the NS as a facilitating social agent that provided the scaffolding that ESL learners needed to participate in interaction at a higher level of proficiency. It was in the process of negotiating meaning and incorporating the language skills and communicative competence needed to participate in the
interaction that language learners developed further in the second language. The NS partners in the present study acted as facilitators of the unfamiliarity of L2 input to the two Kuwaiti learners. Macaro (1997) envisioned a similar facilitator role for the language teacher. In describing the role of the teacher as a mediator/facilitator, Macaro (1997) stated, “The teacher acts as a mediator between the complexity or foreignness of texts (authentic or otherwise) and the level of language competence of the pupils” (p. 60). The data of this study has suggested that this role was often played by the NS participants during the linguistic processing of L2 input by NNS participants. This role was revealed by the data analysis of interaction data to operate in the three areas of (a) positive evidence, (b) other-repair, and (c) selective targeting. These linguistic manifestations of the role of NS as a facilitator were strategies employed by the NS as a reaction to the hypothesis testing and communication strategies in the learners’ output.

In conversation partner talk, the NS as a facilitator and the language learner seemed to form a joint learning system, one that was at work in the linguistic processing of conversation partner talk as a system of hypothesis testing and facilitation. For example, the NS agent provided information in the form of instructions or demonstrations, informative and relevant feedback about what was right and what was wrong and what could be done instead, as well as clarifications and explanations. The linguistic manifestations of the NS role as agent served to reinforce learner output.
In order for participants' roles to be maintained effectively, they have to be doing things which could not be done outside the role. For example, the L2 learners seemed to accept the native speakers as facilitating agents and therefore allowed the NS partners to succeed in various roles. In other words, learners acquiesced to the NS role in the conversation partner interaction talk that was governed by the linguistic boundaries set by both participants. Learner output reflected the average linguistic competence of the learners, and the role of the NS as agent reflected the linguistic boundaries of what the NS could do to help the learners approximate NS accuracy. The participants assumed different interactive roles that corresponded with their unequal access to the L2's formal code. These different roles entailed a type of division of labor in which the learners were able to increase their own linguistic competence while receiving relevant input from the NS partner. NS reinforcement strategies were basically interactional management procedures in which NS partners supervised the correctness and appropriateness of learner output. The following sections are devoted to a discourse analysis of NS strategies including: (a) positive evidence, (b) other-repair, and (c) selective targeting.

(a) Positive Evidence

Positive evidence was defined as native speaker models of what is grammatical and acceptable. Evidence from the data suggested that learners who lacked the ability to recognize new words were assisted by the NS reinforcement...
strategy of providing positive evidence. Positive evidence can assist language
learning by enabling learners to obtain comprehensible input. For example, when
Joe realized that Hamid did not know the meaning of the word “adapting,” he
gave Hamid positive evidence that helped make the word comprehensible:

J: So have you got used to the cold weather yet? Have you got used to it?
H: It was cold, uhn?
J: I am out of it. Have you been adapting to the cold weather?
H: → Adapting? You mean....
J: → Uhm. Are you..? Do you feel ok with it?
H: No, it's not ok.. I don't like the weather.

Subsequent to Hamid’s “other-repetition” of Joe’s use of the word “adapting”
which was followed up by a clarification request (you mean...) indicating his lack
of comprehension, Joe adopted a facilitative role in which he simplified the
meaning of “adapting” (feel ok with) at a level that was more likely to match
Hamid’s basic competency level. Immediate and relevant feedback to Hamid’s
attempts at making sense of the input was provided by Joe in the form of positive
evidence. In the unfolding context of interaction, “feeling ok with” provided an
appropriate and correct model of “adapting.” Further feedback from Hamid
indicated that he understood what Joe meant. By comprehending “Do you feel ok
with it?” as an equivalent for “adapting,” Hamid was able to successfully
approximate the meaning of Joe’s question. Hamid’s response “I don’t like the
weather” indicated his ability to comprehend Joe’s question as a result of the
positive evidence that was matched to Hamid’s needs. Joe, thus, played the role
of a facilitating NS agent who mediated between the complexity of L2 input and
Hamid’s limited repertoire of lexical items that probably did not contain the word “adapting.” Joe’s linguistic adjustment of “adapting” was a reinforcement of the original meaning but in simpler terms that Hamid could comprehend. His use of the strategy of providing positive evidence for handling Hamid’s lack of vocabulary items was given at a relevant point in the discourse that helped Hamid make sense of the input. In other words, the linguistic adjustments made by Joe in order to accomplish positive evidence were fine-tuned to Hamid’s competency level in the L2.

(b) Other-Repair

Other-repair was defined in the study as the replacement of an error (lexical, grammatical, or phonological) made by the learner with a more accurate alternative. While positive evidence can be considered as a substitution of an L2 input item made by the NS partner with a less complex equivalent that accommodates the linguistic knowledge of the learner, other-repair is another variation of a reinforcement strategy initiated by the NS partner for the treatment of trouble occurring in the learner’s interactive language use. The NS as a facilitating agent employed “other repair” to introduce more accurate linguistic items to the learners’ attention, thereby helping the learners express themselves more accurately in the L2. A good example of the trouble that was caused by the L2 learner’s erroneous use of a lexical item took place in the context of Ali’s account of his experience while visiting Madame Tussaud’s, the wax museum in
London, England. Ali used the word "candle" to describe the substance of the statues. Elaine, the NS partner, reacted by employing "other-repair" as a reinforcement strategy offering Ali an alternative acceptable word:

A: So when I was in England, we always go to museum with my friend. There are some museum called Madam Tussaud’s. It’s about they bring all the famous people around the world, and they make it from candle.

E: Oh, from wax.

A: Wax.

E: You went to the wax museum . . .

A: To the wax museum, and we see all the famous people in the past.

By putting the word "wax" in a complete sentence, Elaine made sure that the learner understood that the "other-repair" was directed at the word "candle." The last line of the excerpt showed that Ali was able by means of this "other-repair" to produce the word more accurately as in "went to the wax museum." The NS partner’s use of "other-repair" thus provided the learner with both the relevant input and the opportunity to produce the correct usage in the context of a complete sentence that was modeled by the NS partner.

(c) Selective Targeting

Selective targeting was defined as any action taken by the NS partner which changes or demands improvement of a learner’s utterance. This is the kind of corrective action that is directed by the NS at those errors in a learner’s output that keep appearing regularly in ways that might sometimes interfere with a learner’s communicative intentions. For selective targeting to be employed by a NS partner, an error has to meet two conditions. First, the error has to be a
recurrent feature in a learner's performance. In conversation partner talk, learners can produce a large quantity of errors because the communicative use of the L2 in ongoing interaction can push a learner's competence to its limits. When those errors become recurrent, NS partners have employed selective targeting of these errors. The second condition for employing selective targeting was that the error may interfere with the learner's intended communicative intension. The NS might accept the content of what a learner was saying even though the grammatical form was slightly inaccurate. However, when the inaccuracy interfered with meaning, selective targeting was employed. For example, in the interaction between Ali and Elaine, Ali was actively engaged in expressing himself with Elaine's support and encouragement. But when Ali made a recurrent syntactic error that kept interfering with his communicative intentions, Elaine employed selective targeting. Ali's active participation, in effect, exposed a lack of control of reflexive pronouns that Elaine was able to detect. Elaine's action was to selectively target Ali's use of personal pronouns in sentence construction:

A: My parents send me to England, and I stay there for three months. For the three months, I didn't go back to my family. So, all the time just speak English. Nobody can speak with me Arabic. I can't speak my language, and when I went to school, me is the only one who can speak Arabic.

E: You're the only...

A: One who can speak my language.

E: Speak that language. Ok.

Elaine, the NS partner, noticed that Ali was having difficulty controlling the use of reflexive pronouns in his output. So, she brought the error to Ali's attention at a relevant point in the interaction when the error occurred. When Ali said "me is
the only student,” Elaine latched on “you're the only” then stopped so Ali could finish the sentence correctly. In other words, She gave him the floor at a particular moment after she made the correction. Elaine's strategy of selectively targeting Ali's erroneous use of reflexive pronouns was effective in three ways. First, it brought to Ali's attention the fact that there was something wrong with what he has just said. Second, by pausing in mid-utterance, it highlighted the location of the error. Third, it was an invitation for Ali to correctly fill in the blanks of the remaining parts by following the NS model utterance. The unsaid portion of Ali's revised utterance revealed that he avoided further use of a reflexive pronoun because he recognized that he had been corrected by Elaine. He could not convert Elaine's “You're the only” to “I was the only” so he probably avoided using a pronoun and instead used “one.”

In conclusion, the NS partners played a positive role in the linguistic processing of conversation partner talk as skilled facilitating agents who provided relevant L2 input in the form of positive evidence, other-repair, and selective targeting that were finely tuned to match the particular output levels of individual learners. Fine-tuning of L2 input meant that the NS partners were actively tailoring their instructions and demonstrations to match the linguistic needs of learners during the times when their output was aberrant or did not meet the accuracy standards of the target language. In response to learner initiated hypothesis-testing and communication strategies, the NSs as agents employed three reinforcement strategies. First, positive evidence was employed as a way of
offering learners with models of what is grammatical and acceptable in the target language. Second, other-repair involved the NS partner in replacing an erroneous form made by a learner with a more accurate alternative. Third, selective targeting was a corrective action in which the NS partner changed or demanded correction of a learner's error when it interfered with the meaning of what a learner was saying. These three strategies were determined by the researcher to be reinforcement strategies in response to a learner's hypothesis-testing and communication strategies. The NS partner, in employing these strategies, assumed the role of a facilitating agent who mediated between the formal features of the target language and the learner's output. In conversation partner talk, the impact of the role of NS as facilitating agent can be judged by how accessible the target language was made to the learner. In other words, if the learners have comprehended and acted according to the salient points that the NS raised through employing positive evidence, other-repetition, and selective targeting, then the NS role as a facilitating agent has achieved its purpose.

By employing discourse analysis to examine the data of interactions in which NS reinforcement strategies were used, the evidence suggested that this was indeed the case. The learners, as revealed by the data, acted upon the NS corrections by either repeating what the NS said as a model or by noticing that they had a problem in a particular area of grammar (e.g., personal pronouns). Learner awareness of areas of error in their interlanguage performance or initiation of NS input have been seen by SLA researchers as adequate conditions for restructuring...
of a learner's developing competence in the L2 (Lightbown & Spada, 1993).

Section Summary

Analyzing conversation partner talk as a setting where both learners and NS partners employed a number of strategies designed to facilitate and cope with the L2 input that was produced there revealed that a joint learning system was at work in those interactions. The learning system consisted of a hypothesis testing learner (who experimented with the target language) and a facilitating NS agent who mediated between the learner output and the target language by reinforcing the learner's hypothesis (either confirming or disconfirming) and communication strategies. The system of language processing was a system of active social mediation of individual learning in which a NS agent helped out the learner to learn the target language. The NS as a facilitating agent and the individual learner seemed to form a joint system in which the NS was actively engaged in helping the learner test and reformulate his/her hypotheses about the L2 in the form of linguistically more accurate output.

The data analysis revealed that both learners and NS partners developed and used separate strategies to facilitate the learner's comprehension of new L2 input items. For example, the learners made sense of the input by employing the communication strategies of clarification requests, other-repetition, and provided feedback that showed their lack of comprehension to ask for the NS partner's help.
in making the input easier for them to comprehend. Through hypothesis-testing, the learners generated alternatives by varying their output and selecting alternatives through NS reinforcement. The learners obtained feedback from their NS partners on the accuracy and acceptability of their output. They then responded accordingly through modification of their output according to NS models in the form of instructions and demonstrations.

**Patterns of Social Interaction**

Evidence from the data of the interactions suggested that both participants worked better as conversation partners when they connected with each other on a social level. The social relationship was defined in this study as the mutual respect the participants exhibited toward each other as users of English, with the NS partners' recognition that although the learner was a nonnative speaker of English who lacked the native linguistic skills of English as a native speaker, he or she was still a speaker of another language who needed encouragement and support in his/her endeavor to learn ESL. The conversation partners' talk was characterized by patterns of receptivity, collaboration, and scaffolding. The data analysis showed that a close social connection between the participants contributed to an interactional environment which facilitated the linguistic processes of hypothesis testing and reinforcement. Even though this connection was social in nature, it had an effect on the quality of NS linguistic explanations and learner communication strategies. This finding directs attention to the impact
of the social relationship between the participants on their motivation in the task of language learning and teaching. The participants needed to make sure that there was a strong personal connection between them before they could comfortably correct errors, offer feedback, and ask for clarifications.

Analysis of the linguistic processes that characterized conversation partner talk maintained a clear separation between the learners and the L2 input they produced and comprehended in the interaction, on the one hand, and the patterns of NS reinforcement of linguistic knowledge, on the other. Because the patterns that characterized the social relationship were, however, jointly produced by both parties to the conversation partner talk, data analysis maintained a dual focus on the combined efforts taken by both participants in the categories of receptivity, collaboration, and scaffolding. In each of these categories, each participant's contributions were taken into account in the final analysis. Thus, the jointly-constructed categories of the social relationship were analyzed as a dialogue, rather than as a monologue that was produced by an individual learner or NS partner.

The next three sections correspond to the three categories of receptivity, collaboration, and scaffolding. Section III describes the patterns of receptivity in conversation partner talk. Section IV describes the patterns of collaboration which include (a) coordination, (b) parallelism, and (c) sentence completion. Section V describes the patterns of scaffolding which include (a) conversation management, (b) cultural input, and (c) social bonding.
III. Receptivity

Receptivity was defined as the open attitude of the conversation partner members toward the experience of interacting with someone who speaks another language. As Allwright and Bailey (1991) put it: “By ‘receptivity’ we mean a state of mind, whether permanent or temporary, that is open to the experience of becoming a speaker of another language, somebody else’s language” (p.157). The learners’ positive motivation to join the conversation partner program was equally matched by the NS partners’ enthusiasm to learn something about the learners’ culture. Receptivity among the conversation partners contributed positively to the interactional environment. The linguistic processes of hypothesis testing and reinforcement were conducted in a non-threatening environment which added to the learners’ confidence in producing and comprehending the L2. Receptivity also added to the learners’ opportunities for second language use and topic development. Because learners felt that their contributions to the interactions were expected and appreciated by the NS partners, they initiated and developed new topics related to various aspects of their culture. The relationship between receptivity and reinforcement can be explained by the partners’ need to collaboratively produce what is essentially an unpredictable conversation in which both participants could predict their roles but not the kinds of topics or interactional sequences that were “created” by them on that day. The receptivity between the participants was a kind of glue that bound the conversations together.
especially at times when the participants did not particularly know what to talk about next. They could count on their receptivity of each other to sustain the conversation on these uncertain moments as well as strengthen their social relationships as speakers, colleagues and friends. The present analysis was focused, however, on describing the various manifestations of receptivity in the conversation partner members social relationships.

There are several sides to the category of receptivity. For instance, learning a new language implies learning about another culture, another way of life. If the new way of life is itself attractive to the ESL learner in some way, then it may be easier to cope with the moments when language learning seems difficult or demanding. This aspect of receptivity to the new language was articulated by Elaine, a female English-speaking partner who came to the U.S. from Italy at the age of six:

A: What was the most important experience you had in your life?
E: I think the most important experience that I had in my life has been learning how to adapt to a new language and culture. We have been here a long time, but it's, it's hard. I mean my parents didn't know the language when we came here. So, I had to learn English in school. It took a long time, so I think the most rewarding learning experience I had was learning English, and having adapted to American culture.

These remarks by the NS partner demonstrated to Ali that learning a second language was not simply a linguistic accomplishment; rather it is an expansion of perspective that monolinguals rarely attain. Creating a collaborative context in which NS's and NNS's partners exchanged information about each other's cultures contributed to the learners' receptivity to the target language as well as to the
people and culture the new language represents.

Another facet of receptivity to L2 learning was the learner's desire to master English because it was going to be the language of instruction at the undergraduate level. The learners also wished to be fluent speakers of English because this gave them the opportunity to have interesting and lucrative careers when they graduate and return to their home country. For example, Hamid was asked by his English-speaking partner, Joe:

J: So, Hamid, why did you decide to come to America, studying English and Chemical Engineering here in America?
H: You know, in the business, America is more advance than my country, and for the English, you know, it is very important to learn it, to speak it, and everyone hopes and wish to speak English, especially in this time. You know it is real important to speak English.

Joe's reaction to Hamid's desire to learn English was that he recognized that Hamid needed to pass the Michigan Test, a standardized English test for ESL learners, in order to be eligible for admission as a Freshman in the Chemical Engineering Department at this university. Hamid replied that he already took the test but that he was still waiting to know his score:

H: I really hope to pass the Michigan Test.
J: I think you will.
H: I hope. It is really easy for you. I think so.
J: I know. I understand because at the beginning of this quarter I started taking Chinese and I had to drop it because it was too demanding.

This was an additional aspect of receptivity among the conversation partner members because they knew what it meant to struggle to learn a new language.

Both Joe and Hamid identified with each other as people interested in learning
foreign languages. Because Joe was interested in learning Chinese and actually enrolled in a class at the beginning of the quarter which he had to drop because of the challenge, he was able to appreciate Hamid's predicament. Conversation partner talk provided both participants with a context in which the processes and strategies they needed for communication allowed them to take charge of the learning/teaching of ESL. Based on his understanding of Hamid's positive attitude to learn English and his hopes of passing the Michigan Test, Joe identified with Hamid as a language learner who needs help in learning English. This nurturing social-linguistic relationship probably made an impact on the quality of Joe's explanations and Hamid's receptivity and attention during the course of the interactions.

Another aspect of receptivity was receptivity to the idea of being a conversation partner member. This meant being associated with a program that aimed to meet the language needs of nonnative speakers of English. The NS partners saw their contribution to the program as a chance to know someone from another culture. This was referred to by Joe as having an "international experience." For the NS partners contributing to the conversation partner program was one way of having such an experience as part of a fully rewarding university life. Joe recognized that the ESL learners, by virtue of leaving their countries and coming to America, have already been exposed to an international experience:

H: How about you? When you finish, are you going back to Cincinnati?
Joe's awareness that Hamid was having an international experience by coming to the U.S. shows his receptivity to the idea of being part of that experience. His contribution to Hamid's language learning effort can be seen in the quality of his explanations of new linguistic items as well as his reinforcement of Hamid's already existing linguistic knowledge. Another benefit of being a conversation partner member was to contribute to the cultural understanding of America by foreign students. For Joe, the opportunity to be a conversation partner member was one way to dispel some of the cultural misconceptions of Americans that foreign students might have. For example, Joe humorously raised one of these misconceptions in his conversation with Hamid:

J: As far as when you came over here, I know Kuwait and Ohio are totally like different places. Was like culture shock?
H: When I came here I saw a lot of things that strange for me, like people.
J: How they dress?
H: Yes. It is not strange for me now, but in the beginning, it was really terrible, really.
J: Really? Wow! What did you think over here like the first impression, like were, we all crazy, uha-ha...?
H: No. You know there is cultural difference. There we have our culture. For us, it's good. At the same time you have your culture. It's nice but it was strange just for some days, but it's really nice. Not bad.
J: I am glad things turned better though.

The above stretch of talk offered a glimpse of the personal identification between the participants. The ESL learner's feelings of isolation and uncertainty were
shared with a member of the target culture. Hamid got to describe his experience in getting used to American culture. But that was made possible only through Joe's solidarity and willingness to participate in a program that was designed to help Hamid improve his language skills. As a conversation partner, Joe came across as someone who was interested in learning a foreign language (Chinese), and who liked interacting with people who were learning English as a second language. Because English was the native language spoken by Joe, he was willing to do whatever he could to help Hamid learn it. It was true that Hamid was instrumentally motivated to learn English, but his becoming a conversation partner member showed Joe that he was receptive not only to the language but also to the people who spoke it as well as their culture. This common ground between the participants increased their receptivity to each other and impacted the quality of interactions that they produced.

Solidarity was defined as the expression of sympathy to or approval of a learner's account by a NS partner. These expressions of solidarity were spontaneously produced by the NS partner whenever the occasion called for NS support of a learner's utterance. The learners were exposed to these expressions of solidarity at relevant points in their interactions with the NS partners, and therefore had an opportunity to see when and how they were used by the NS partners for the expression of solidarity. The first pattern of solidarity was the expression of sympathy to a learner's complaint or trouble. For example, Ali was explaining to Cassandra that he was tired because he had to drive his roommate
to Cleveland, Ohio the day before. Ali was complaining that he only took the trip
for his roommate's sake, and that he himself was extremely bored because he had
to wait in a lobby for an hour and a half while his roommate was taking the exam.
At several points in Ali's account of his experience in Cleveland, Cassandra
expressed her solidarity by making sympathetic comments:

C: So, why did you guys to Cleveland?
A: Because my roommate he need to take a test yesterday.
C: Oh, I am sorry.
A: And I was just waiting for him.
C: I don't think you had an interesting time.
A: Just looking around and nobody was in that school because it was after 5
p.m.
C: That's annoying.
A: So, I look around, read some newspaper, eat chocolate.
C: Oh, that's good. That's a good idea.

Cassandra's feedback to Ali was in the form of sympathetic comments that
expressed her solidarity with him as a friend and as a partner. She stated that she
was sorry that he went through this "annoying" experience, but when she learned
that he had eaten some chocolate, she thought that was a positive thing to do.
Cassandra's use of the language to express her solidarity with Ali could very well
be the first time Ali heard these expressions in the setting of conversation partner
talk. This is a form of socialization through the language that exposed Ali to NS
performance in the use of the language for the expression of solidarity.

In his conversation with Elaine, and in the context of reporting his
experience of becoming friends with an Italian ESL student, Ali was exposed to
expressions of solidarity that indicated approval. Ali was explaining to Elaine
how he came to know his Italian roommate from the very first day he arrived in the US:

A: My best friend is from Italy.
E: Ooh!
A: We arrive in the same day. We were in the same class. We have been together all the time for 3 months.
E: Right. That's how you met him first of all.
A: Uhm, uhm.
E: Good.
A: And we go back the same day.
E: Ok.
A: The same day. Go to the airport.
E: What a coincidence!
A: So we arrive the same day. We go back the same day. I had a nice time with him.
E: That's nice. That's wonderful.

Elaine's feedback to Ali was approving and supportive. These expressions of solidarity varied in length from one word (e.g., Good) to a sequence of two sentences (e.g., That's nice. That's wonderful). The language forms themselves are so common they could very well have been introduced to Ali in the language classroom. What was unlikely to take place in the classroom, though, was the NS use of these expressions in the varied contexts of conversation partner talk whenever the occasion called for the use of one of these expressions of solidarity. NS use of expressions of solidarity gave Ali the opportunity to hear them used according to the variation in the learner's account of his/her experiences.

In conclusion, conversation partner membership was a kind of support group which contributed through peer pressure and empathy to the use of English among the participants in an encouraging atmosphere.
IV. Collaboration

Collaboration means learning that involves comprehension of L2 input aided by NS peers in a collaborative setting in which different alternatives are provided by conversation partners and the selection of the best one is a matter of detailed deliberation and agreement. Conversation partner talk is a kind of interaction that demands that both participants collaborate in accessing L2 input, modifying inaccurate constructions, and making sure they are correctly built. It is a particular kind of interaction in which both interlocutors worked to move the conversation towards a mutually-agreed goal such as openings, and closings. They cooperated to make their talk contribute to the accomplishment of these goals. According to Kramsch (1992), the joint construction of context through dialogue means “the joint realization of potential meanings in conversation” (p.12). As a matter of fact, a great deal of the production of conversation partner talk was not determined by the activities of a single person, but was rather jointly constructed by both participants. The data from the interactions revealed three patterns of the collaborative production of conversation partner talk. These were (a) coordination, (b) parallelism, and (c) sentence completion.

(a) **Coordination**

Coordination was defined as the conversational management (patterns of talk) in which both participants collaboratively produced a dialogue in which they move the conversation toward a mutually-agreed goal such as openings and
closings. For example, as soon as Elaine and Ali started their conversation, Elaine
used an opening speech act in which she set up Ali’s expectation by signaling that
their interaction is about to begin. Because this was their first conversation,
Elaine invited Ali to participate in the speech act of self-introduction. Since she
had not yet formulated an idea about Ali’s competence in the L2, however, she
offered him a helping hand:

E: Ali, what is your last name, Ali?
A: Last name, Raees.
E: Raess?
A: R-A-E-E-S.
E: Ok, and you’re from Kuwait.
A: Yeah, I am from Kuwait, and I have been here for about one year now.
E: Yeah, I can tell already.

Elaine and Ali collaboratively realized the speech act of self-introduction for Ali,
and at the same time Elaine had a chance to know that Ali actually had been
exposed to American English for some time. Elaine’s saying “I can tell already”
indicates that she informally assessed Ali’s proficiency level to be that of an ESL
learner who had been in the U.S. for at least a year. This was an important piece
of information about Ali, and for Elaine at least, it seemed to have set the
parameters of her reinforcement strategies as an NS agent. The process in which
the assessment was conducted was that in opening the conversation, Elaine gave
Ali a hand in producing the speech act of self-introduction. The linguistic token
“what’s your last name?” was used by Elaine to signal to Ali the opening of the
conversation. In conclusion, Elaine used the second language as a tool of
communication to convey to Ali the opening of the conversation, and that both

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needed to collaborate to achieve this common goal. Ali had a piece of information unknown to Elaine which was his last name, and Elaine allowed Ali to be part of the opening process because he needed to cooperate and tell her what his last name was. The above example showed that knowledge construction in conversation partner talk was a participatory process in which both participants’ contributions were needed to accomplish the goal of opening a conversation.

Coordination as the joint management of discourse moves was evident in conversation partner talk at the closing of the same conversation between Ali and Elaine:

E: Well, do you think we should stop?
A: Ok. I am very glad because you are here today.
E: Oh, thank you. It was very nice meeting you.
A: It was very nice to talk with you.
E: Thank you.
A: And I hope to see you again.
E: Thank you.
A: Thank you.

Elaine’s question “do you think we should stop?” showed that she took Ali’s views into account and that ending the conversation hinged upon the agreement of both participants. The same question was also a speech act in which Elaine signaled to Ali movement from the activity of interaction to the next activity, namely closing the conversation. Ali’s statement “it was very nice to talk with you” showed his awareness that conversation partner talk was an interaction in which ESL learners and their NS conversation partners talk with, rather than talk to each other.
Talking with implies a two-way exchange while talking to implies a one-way conversation in which the learner assumes a subservient position in comparison to the dominant NS partner. The coordination that took place in order to open and close the conversation between Elaine and Ali indicated that conversation partner talk was a two-way communication in which both participants played a part in determining the goals of their interactions.

Within the interactions, the conversation partners frequently coordinated their next moves in a way that showed awareness of each other's role in the interaction. Even though the NS participants held the initiative of asking most of the questions in the conversations, they, nevertheless, adopted a pattern of exchanging the question-posing role with their NNS partners. Partly due to the fact that they had superior knowledge of English, and partly to put the NNSs at ease, the NSs recognized that in order for the conversation to be alive and not full of long silent pauses, they assumed the role of initiating many of the questions. Because they viewed the NNS as having equal status as conversation partners, the NSs shared the responsibility of posing questions with their NNS partners. For example, after asking a series of questions, Joe decided to give control of the floor to Hamid to ask some questions of his own:

J:  Ok. I'm glad things turned better though. What, uhn, I don't know. You can ask me a question. I, we've been talking a lot, so-
H:  Ok. Do you plan to, to visit another country, to learn about their culture after your studying here?

In another encounter between Ali and Cassandra, the roles of NNS and NS were
changed the other way around:

Ali: Well, I don't know what to ask!
Cass. No problem
Ali: No?
Cass. I was gonna ask you one question about your culture.
Ali: Ok
Cass. Do you like, as far as birthdays go. Do you celebrate them the same way we do in America?

Even though Cassandra gave Ali the initiative to ask her a number of questions, she did not give up her responsibility as an equal partner. When Ali indicated to her that he ran out of questions, Cassandra reassured him that she was ready to take things over from there on. This level of coordination between the two participants regarding what "next" questions to ask allowed the NNS to have a breathing space from where they could collect their thoughts, remember questions that they did not ask yet in the conversation, and eventually to ask questions on their own.

(b) Parallelism

One of the features of conversation partner talk was that the learners alternated with their NS partners in the talk by using parallel questions to what the NS partners asked of them. This pattern was revealed in parallel questions as they were used by both parties as turn-allocation devices. The use of parallel questions was probably due to a host of factors. One can think of these questions as a form of unassisted scaffolding that the learners used to see how a NS would answer a question that he/she has just asked. Another motivation behind parallel
questions could be that parallelism is a distinctive feature of spoken interaction in
general, and therefore, it was logical to find them used by learners in conversation
partner talk. A final possible reason behind the use of parallel questions could be
that the learners used them as a way of asserting their equal social status with the
NS as conversation partner members who were actively engaged in the
interactions by posing similar questions to those posed by the NS even though
they did not have the same access to a NS linguistic knowledge of the L2.
Without dismissing others, it would be safe to assume, for the time being, that
there were as many reasons for the use of parallel questions as there are learners
who posed them. Nevertheless, parallel questions are pedagogically interesting
because learners can be introduced to them within the classroom. Parallel
questions were defined as identical in substance to questions posed by a NS a
short time prior to the NNS initiating such questions. For example, after being
asked by Joe about his reasons for coming to America and joining the university,
Hamid turned around and asked Joe:

H: What about the university?
J: Why do I come here?
H: Yeah, exactly right.
J: Ok. I think the reason why I came here is because there's a lot of
opportunities. It is a big school and usually if you go to a big school they
have a lot of programs, a lot of opportunities.

Because Hamid felt comfortable with being accepted by Joe as an equal
conversation partner, he exchanged roles with Joe from a question-answering to a
question-posing participant, but at the same time he lacked the linguistic
repertoire to initiate topics on his own. Asking parallel questions to what Joe had already asked was a pattern of unassisted scaffolding in which Hamid engaged throughout his interactions with his NS conversation partners. Some NS questions were models the NNS emulated and subsequently used as parallel questions. In conclusion, parallel questions contributed to the NNS's control over which issues to discuss in the on-going interaction.

(c) **Sentence-Completion**

The strategy of sentence completion was frequently employed by the NS participants as a support to the L2 learners when one of them stopped in mid-utterance or completed a sentence but in an erroneous form that the NS finds unacceptable. The NNS participants explained that they sometimes stopped before the completion of an utterance because they realized that a mistake was made or simply because they forgot the rest of what they wanted to say in English. Completing a learner's unfinished utterance was a relatively simple task for the English native speakers who saw it as way of providing support and of teaching the learners new L2 input needed to finish their sentences correctly.

The strategic use of "sentence completion" highlighted for learners semantic and structural relationships between their words and the NS's contribution and therefore was likely to be effective for learner comprehension of L2 input. Through this joint-construction of sentences, the NNS participants were able to gain access to the correct version of what they originally intended to say in
English. For example, the following transcript contained an utterance in which the NNS got mixed up on the use of the first-person pronoun:

NNS: And when I go to school, me is the only student who can speak Arabic.
NS: You're the only...
NNS: One who can speak my language.
NS: Ok.

The English-speaker noticed that the learner was facing difficulty in the use of personal pronouns. She corrected the NNS's sentence on the point where the error occurred "me is" to "you're the only" then stopped and allowed the learner to finish the sentence. The NS's "sentence completion" strategy achieved three purposes. First, it brought to the learner's attention that there was something wrong with what he has just said. Second, by pausing in mid-utterance, it highlighted the location of the error. Third, it was an invitation for the NNS to correctly fill in the blanks of the remaining parts of his utterance. When the NNS realized that he has made a mistake in the use of the first person pronoun, he strategically avoided further use of me is and correctly finished his sentence. The unsaid portion of the sentence showed that the learner recognized that he had a problem with the use of the first person pronoun which needed to be overcome because it did not match the NS's model.

Other instances of the use of "sentence completion' occurred when the learner failed to remember the rest of the words that normally went together with what he/ she already uttered. NS support in the form of sentence completion helped the learner produce an otherwise incomplete sentence:
NNS: I have been here for a long time, far away from my family, so they...
NS: They really miss you?
NNS: They really miss me.

In the case of some formulaic utterances, the L2 input that the NS offered was unfamiliar for the NNS. For example:

NNS: It is really a good story. I don't know if the story is real or...
NS: Or it's fiction?
NNS: Yeah.

The use of "sentence completion" by the NS was intensified when the topic of the conversation was also interesting to the NS. One of the learners, for example, was describing how his mother would not allow any member of the family to go into his room while he was in the U.S.A.:

NNS: So she say sometimes I go to your room, see your picture and then leave. She keep the key to the room with her so nobody...
NS: Can go in it?
NNS: She doesn't want anyone to touch anything until I come back.

The "sentence completion" strategy was employed by the NS to support the NNS because he stopped in mid-utterance. While still on the same topic, another "sentence completion" occurred this time to help the learner finish his sentence:

NNS: You know she like to change the room every time, like to move this there, move...
NS: Move things around?
NNS: Yes, to make some different.

By using the common expression of "moving things around" the NS was introducing new input for helping the learner in the task of talking about his mother's behavior.
V. Scaffolding

Scaffolding was defined in the study as the use of the English language as a tool for establishing common understanding between the participants. The NS partners and the learners entered into a linguistic partnership in which learners did not receive direct help from the NS as an agent actively adjusting to the learner's needs for the processing of linguistic information. Rather, the learners were greatly helped by the use of the English language as a scaffold to comprehend and produce language that they could not process alone. The collaborative process in which learners and their NS partners managed the conversations, shared cultural input, and socially bonded through the use of English created a social setting in which language learners were assisted by the NS partners to produce and comprehend linguistic information that were beyond their present ability to use the language. The learners used NS scaffolding to participate in social and cultural interaction with their NS partners.

(a) Conversation Management

Using the L2 for social interaction encompassed different areas of the second language such as phonetics and syntax. For example, when Hamid was not sure about the pronunciation of new words, he used scaffolding as a means of eliciting a NS response that helped him know how to pronounce terms correctly:

H: It's a big school, and they have good program to learn English, and it's got more uhn, quipment? quip, quipm ent?
J: Equipment?
H: Yeah.
Although Hamid knew how the word “equipment” sounded, he was not able to produce it on his own. So, when Joe volunteered with the correctly pronounced word, Hamid recognized it right away. Another word that Hamid did not know the correct pronunciation for was “crime” when he was telling Joe about a movie he saw that week:

H: Before they met, and two of them still in their “trime.
J: Crime?
H: Crime, and they have to meet someone.

Despite the fact that Hamid was using words that were new to him, he could rely on assistance coming from Joe in the form of correct pronunciation on which Hamid could build new sentences to go on with his topic. Ali was looking for the word “navy,” but because he could not remember it quickly enough he elicited Elaine’s help in supplying the word:

A: If want to be... I don’t know what you call this. If you want to be in the army, but in the sea? Or?
E: You mean in the navy?
A: In the navy.
E: The navy.
A: They send you to Australia.
E: Australia!
A: Uhn, uhn, for the navy.
E: Wow!
A: So your major decides which country
E: You want to go.

The word “navy” must have escaped Ali’s memory because moments after Elaine helped him with it, Ali was able to use it in a complete sentence. It is worth mentioning that Elaine continued to play a supportive role to Ali to complete his sentence “So your major decides which country...” with “you want to go.” Elaine
felt that the word 'country' needed an adjectival clause to complete the sentence in a syntactically meaningful way. Thus, in addition to Ali's effort in attempting to communicate to Elaine what he wanted, he could also rely on the social and linguistic support coming from Elaine whenever he tried to communicate to her about his country.

In the one-on-one context of the conversation partners, the learners sometimes expressed the fact that they did not know the answer to a question posed by the NS. This was usually followed by a simplified version of the same question until the learner comprehended the meaning of the question, after which the learner was able to answer the original question. So, it can be said that the learner was scaffolding on the NS input to build-up his knowledge of the question. For example,

E: What type, uhn, uhn, fun thing have you done here?
A: Uhn. I don't know, uha?
E: What types of, uhn, what types of things have you experienced here?
A: → Uhm, like, uhn, I can't think about a thing.
E: Uhn. Have you been visiting... anything in the city.
A: Well, in Columbus I haven't been to many places.

Ali's statement "I can't think about a thing" was an invitation for assistance from Elaine which she followed up with a more specific focus for her question.

Scaffolding, as the data showed, was frequently used by the learners to elicit their NS partners' help in providing a scaffold on which the learners could build their subsequent utterances. In Hamid's case, scaffolding was provided because he made a pronunciation error that interfered with the essential meaning of his
utterances. Joe as Hamid’s conversation partner was proactive in providing assistance because he wanted Hamid to continue his output. In other words, it was sufficient for Hamid to commit the pronunciation errors for Joe to offer his help. In Ali’s case, however, there was a deliberate communication strategy by the learner eliciting the NS help in providing a lexical item and simplifying a question. Both learners benefitted from the scaffolding offered by their NS partners to finish their utterances.

(b) Cultural Input

In addition to input that was directed by the NSs about the phonological, grammatical, and lexical nature of the English language, the input to the learners included new information about American history and culture. This pattern in the NS input indicates that acquiring knowledge about the target culture and its speakers constituted part of a learner’s emerging communicative competence. Saville-Troike (1985) stated, “input to second language learners in an English-speaking social milieu includes cultural information within which the emergent meaning of the code must be situated and interpreted” (p. 52). The data of the interactions suggested that the cultural input in the NS speech was introduced to the learners through the strategy of providing positive evidence or models of relevant cultural scripts. As in the case of linguistic input that was provided through the provision of positive evidence or models of what is correct and grammatical, conversation partner talk was a way for learners to obtain new
information about American culture. For example, after explaining Christmas to Hamid, Joe was requested to explain the difference between Christmas and New Year's Eve.

H: All this happens on the December 25. Ok, what about... What's different between December 25 and the beginning of the year?
J: December 24?
H: → No, I mean the first day of the year.
J: Oh, New Year's Eve.
H: Yeah.
J: New Year's Day?
H: Yeah, what's the different?
J: Ok, Christmas is just supposed to celebrate the birth of Christ.
H: → You mean the January 1?
J: No, no, December 25.
H: Aha, ok.
J: And then Jan, and this January is the first day of the year. That's all there is. Just to calibrate new year's because it's a new year. It doesn't have anything like that.
H: Ok.

It is remarkable that Hamid knew the linguistic forms that indicated "New Year's Day" to be able to ask Joe about the difference between New Year's Day and Christmas. This meant that the emerging linguistic forms the learner has can be further related to emerging cultural schemata through input from the NS. For example, out of a number of celebrations that were mentioned by Joe, Hamid was interested in knowing more about the Fourth of July:

J: In the spring time, we have Easter, which is like a Christian Holiday, supposed to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Uhn, in May there is Memorial Day which is the day when we recognize all the people who have died in the past. Then in July, the Fourth of July is Independence Day. That's the United States birthday.
H: It's called the birth of the Untied States.
J: Right. And then in the beginning of September, it's Labor Day. That's another holiday that's uhn, you just recognize all the people that work. So,
what's the holiday you want to talk about?
H: I want to talk about, you say the birth of the United States?
J: The Fourth of July?
H: Yeah was there a colony by the British.
J: A colony?
H: Yeah, colony by the British.
J: By the British. Yes.
H: How many states?
J: There was 13.
H: 15?
J: 13 original colonies.....

Out of the whole cultural content of the input offered by Joe, the conversation partners collaborated to interpret the Fourth of July. The way in which this collaboration was accomplished was that Joe offered Hamid a list of celebrations one after the other starting with Easter in the spring and ending by the 4th of July in the summer. Joe then gave Hamid the option to talk about one or more of these holidays. Hamid wanted Joe to talk more about the Fourth of July. This also required some negotiation because Hamid had a couple of questions asked at the same time. He could have spaced his questions to come one after the other. Joe was able, however, to answer both questions to the best of his ability.

In conclusion, the above example showed that in addition to negotiation about the linguistic information of the second language, the partners sometimes collaborated to interpret the cultural content of the input. Joe's strategy of offering Hamid several options to choose from is remarkable. He was introducing input that Hamid could notice by bringing to his attention a number of celebrations that Americans hold every year. Because Hamid has the option, he chose the celebration that he already knows and wants to know more about. As a
result of Joe's multiple choice strategy Hamid was able to ask two questions for which he did not know the answer. In this way, the interaction was a vehicle for the NS to introduce input that could be noticed by the L2 learner, and through the negotiation that took place between the participants, the NNS was able to learn something new about Independence Day.

Another interaction that contained cultural information took place between Cassandra and Ali. Ali was not clear about what Halloween meant for Americans. But he definitely heard about it. It was Halloween night and with Cassandra present, Ali wanted to get an understanding about the cultural significance of the occasion:

A: So what do you think about tonight?
C: Uhn?
A: What I know from the people, tonight is Halloween.
C: Yeah.
A: And a lot of people. I don't know, some people they say they are going to celebrate this day. Some people they are going to wear something strange. They change their face.
C: Oh, yeah. I know people are wearing something strange. Last night I got candy for kids. I like to see little kids.
A: Usually do you do something in the states, like before?
C: We didn't really -
A: Did you celebrate this day before?

Even though Ali knew that Halloween was a special occasion in American culture, he was trying to collaboratively negotiate with Cassandra to know more about this event. His questions to Cassandra indicated that he wanted to know how Americans went about celebrating Halloween. Also, his statement that "people are going to wear something strange" showed that he was curious about this
particular aspect of Halloween, and how it became part of this occasion. Ali’s attempts to elicit more information from Cassandra about these particular aspects of Halloween were not successful, however, because he only heard Cassandra talk about buying candy for the kids. In other words, Cassandra did not make the connection clear between people wearing strange clothing and knocking on doors to say “trick or treat!”

The above data set showed that not all attempts at collaborative interpretation with NS partners have to necessarily be successful. Conversation partner talk was a context where all the different interactional goals of the participants were brought together. But it is up to both participants to mutually agree on a topic for further exploration. The constant negotiation of meaning moves the interaction forward in a direction that has been determined by both participants. Both participants are responsible, therefore, for the kinds of input that are produced and negotiated in the course of their interaction.

The above transactions between Cassandra and Ali and Hamid and Joe showed that the two learners used their interactions with their NS partners as a source of input on the Fourth of July and Halloween as cultural events worthy of exploration with members of the target language and culture. Even though Hamid received support from Joe in the form of a multiple choice from which he could choose the Fourth of July to collaboratively explore with Joe, the fact remains that both learners were active participants who made decisions on what celebrations to talk about with their NS partners. In addition to choosing
particular cultural information to explore with their NS interlocutors, the two learners assumed a more active role in managing the interaction so that input can be gained on a variety of items they wanted to know more about. The elicitation of cultural information through posing questions met with different degrees of success, however. In Hamid’s case, scaffolding was offered by Joe in the form of a list of celebrations to talk about. So, Hamid’s question was fully accommodated by Joe. In Ali’s case, however, Cassandra did little to inform her partner. She mentioned that she bought candy for the kids which was not related to Ali’s question about how Halloween was celebrated in the past. Thus, the analysis revealed that Cassandra as a native speaker even though she was aware of the difficulty of Ali’s position and socially-accommodating to him at the same time, she did not accommodate Ali at the cultural level. One explanation for Cassandra’s behavior may be that she did not fully understand Ali’s question. Working one-on-one with Ali as a friend, Cassandra was more than willing to accommodate his place and performance throughout the rest of their interactions.

(c) Social bonding

The conversation partners who participated in the study had on-going relationships that were initiated by the conversation partners’ program at the research site. The ESL program paired up the conversation partners and introduced them to each other in the activity center of the university. In other words, the conversations that were recorded for the purpose of the study were
collected from conversation partners who had a preexisting relationship, and who were interacting for the purpose of engaging in that relationship. Wong Filmore (1989) suggested that it is in the presence of social bonds ensuring ongoing relationships that language development progresses. One of the patterns that characterized these relationships was social bonding between the participants. Social bonding is defined in the study as the use of the second language to further solidify the pre-existing relationships between the participants of which the “closing with a promise to hang out” was a good example. The two patterns employed by the conversation partners to further the social relationship were (a) practical plans, and (b) humor. The next two sections elaborate on how these patterns were used by both participants in the course of their conversations.

The initiation of practical plans for future activities in which both participants were engaged was a pattern of social bonding between the participants that, in effect, worked to keep the relationship going on. It also indicated that the participants viewed the conversations not just as talk that contained linguistic input, but also as social encounters between members with common goals and interests. While they were discussing food, for example, Hamid was telling Joe that he prepared his own meals in his apartment. When Joe expressed his interest in taking a meal that Hamid cooked, Hamid invited Joe to have a meal together:

H: It's really good, and it's like Indian food. Like, you know, spices?
J: Uhm, mm.
H: It has a lot of spices in it.
J: Yeah, I like spices too.
H: → I will do it for you.
J: Ok.
H: In my apartment. I will do it for you.
J: Ok. You can do it better, right?

Even though Hamid lacked the appropriate language repertoire to perform the speech act of extending an invitation in English, he was eager to share another aspect of his identity as a language learner. Knowing how to cook dishes from his own national cuisine was a positive aspect of Hamid's identity with which he liked to impress Joe. Saying "I will do it for you" twice to Joe carried a bigger commitment on Hamid's part than the words might have indicated. The main function of the invitation, however, was to meet again and talk more probably about common topics of interest to both participants such as food.

Humor was one of the categories of social bonding that was employed by the participants to accomplish the pragmatic function of using the L2 to engage in irony, sarcasm, and making fun to maintain a lively and relaxed conversational atmosphere. In addition to practical plans, the use of humor in the conversations expressed a feeling of empathy the native speaker had toward the nonnative speaker. For example, Joe asked Hamid whether he tried cows' milk in the U.S., so Hamid replied:

H: Yeah, camel. We drink camels' milk.
H: Camel, yeah, camel.
J: → Hum! I guess you can't get that over here, can you?
H: (Laughing) ha, ha.
J: Have you drunk over milk over here?
H: No.
J: No!
H: You mean milk?
J: Uhm, uhm.
H: No actually.
J: it would probably upset your stomach, wouldn't it? Uhm-ha.., I bet it would just upset you because it is just really different.
H: Yes, it's really.

From Joe's perspective, having a laugh about U.S. cows' milk upsetting Hamid's stomach was a way to put Hamid at a comfort level in order to make sure that Hamid was oriented toward understanding that the joke was not really on him, but it was something they both could share and laugh about in good spirit.

Because Ali and Hamid shared the same apartment, they had followed the same routines everyday. One of the routines that Ali was not very proud of was the activity of cooking. Ali did not think that he was a good cook. So, he joked about it with his conversation partner:

A: Sometimes we cooked something. We try to cook something (laughing) ha-ha. But he is better than me.
A& E: Overlapping laughter.

A: I try but he do it better than me. I can't cook something that really looks good, but me the only one who can eat it.
A& E: Overlapping laughter.

The use of irony "we try to cook something" and sarcasm "me the only one who can eat it" by Ali went beyond an ability to employ the second language for verbal output. Ali was, in fact, using the language to make fun of himself and his cooking. He was bonding with his conversation partner by showing that he was not merely a language learner waiting to receive and process new L2 input from her, but rather a sophisticated person who did not lack the confidence to make
fun of himself. This form of bonding added a new dimension to the relationship in that the learner redefined himself as someone who is more interesting than a mere recipient of L2 input. In doing so, the learner furthered his relationship with the NS by pragmatically using humor and irony as an additional aspect of his personality. In sum, social bonding emerged in the patterns of practical plans and humor that were employed by the participants in such a way that they regenerated the relationship and ensured that the participants saw each other again in the future.

**Section Summary**

The participants' social relationships were characterized by the patterns of (a) receptivity to language learning, (b) collaboration, and (c) scaffolding. The patterns of the social relationship provided a context in which the learners were empowered through coordination with their NS partners to assume more responsibility over their words (output) and more control of their learning of the L2. The impact of these social processes on the quality of interactive work between the participants is the subject of the next section.
Section III

The third research question was worded as follows:

How were the participants' linguistic and social activities in the context of conversation partner talk related to one another?

The analysis revealed that the social and linguistic processes employed in conversation partner talk related to one another in three dynamic ways: (a) linguistically-motivated processing, (b) socially-mediated processing, and (c) Reciprocal processing. The patterns of NS-NNS interaction as manifested in the six conversation partners' speech revealed that linguistic processing of the second language occurred when conversation partner talk presented a context in which the L2 learners processed the input that was produced by their talk with the NS partners. Linguistic processing relied on the interaction between the L2 learner as an autonomous individual and the NS partner as a facilitator of the learner's acquisition of the formal properties of the second language such as pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge. Analysis of the data of interactions also revealed that social processing occurred when conversation partner talk was a socially constructed event that the participants created through interactive work aimed at maintaining and strengthening their social relationships as conversation partners. Social processing involved the participant's joint construction of
meaning which provided opportunities for the learners to develop their listening and speaking abilities/skills in the L2.

This part of chapter 4 is divided into three sections. Section 1 is devoted to a description of the ways in which linguistically-motivated processes were employed by both partners to focus on the second language as an object of study. Section 2 focuses on socially-mediated processes and the ways they were employed by both participants to maintain their social relationship by listening to and speaking with each other. Section 3 is a description of the ways in which social and/or linguistic processes were employed by the NS participants in alternate sequences to both communicate in and learn about the second language.

A. Linguistically-Motivated Processing

In linguistically-motivated processing the second language is either autonomously managed by the L2 learner who seeks assistance from the NS partner to help process the formal aspects of the L2, or, as observed in other cases of linguistic processing, the NS partner may focus on a specific formal feature of the learner's speech for further clarification and/or reinforcement. The primary feature of linguistic processing, whether initiated by the learner or the NS partner, is that the focus is always on the second language as a source of new input to be subsequently processed by the L2 learner. Linguistic processing takes the active involvement of a participant in highlighting the items that were produced in conversation as potential sources of L2 input. The learner, for
example, may independently focus on a new word and seek to elicit the NS partner's help in knowing its meaning or the ways it can be correctly pronounced. The observation that the learners have on several occasions been involved in trying to comprehend the L2 input on their own highlights the fact that the learner does play a direct role as an active participant in the learning process. In this way, linguistic processing done by the learner is an important first step in the learner's developing sense of autonomy in learning the L2. Conversely, constant scaffolding by the NS partner may, therefore, deprive or delay a learner's development of the capacity to manage his/her learning of the L2.

The activity of conversation partner talk occurs within the larger social context of the conversation partner program which is a highly social endeavor. The L2 learner therefore enjoys a high level of social mediation by the NS partner. The degree of social mediation, however, may vary from situation to situation. The L2 learner or the NS partner through personal initiative may focus on some formal properties of the second language and invite the other partner to explain or engage on it. For example, the L2 learner may be interested in learning more about a new word that was uttered by the NS partner. These primarily linguistic processes are related to information that is present in the L2 input that was produced in the context of conversation partner talk. Soon afterwards, the partner who initiated the process and the other conversation partner come to terms with, or agree on the information that was presented in the L2 input.

For L2 learners, activities that stem from personal initiative may be
precursors of learner autonomy. It is important for an L2 learner to manage his/her own learning to some extent, or else learner autonomy may not develop as a result of participating in NS-NNS interaction. Too much scaffolding reaches a point of diminishing returns, because learners are scaffolded without independent thinking and interest. For example, in the context of interacting with Elaine about her English pronunciation class, Hamid noticed that she used the word (required) which aroused his interest in a similar sounding word (record). Hamid wanted to learn more about the difference between how each of these words could be correctly pronounced. After Elaine finished talking about her class, Hamid asked her to tell him the difference between both of these words. Both participants engaged in finding first what Hamid wanted, and how to best distinguish between the two words from a pronunciation perspective. Hamid picked a word from Elaine’s input (required) that was interesting to him because it sounded like a word he already knew (record). This effort was done independently and was related to a formal feature of English pronunciation that Hamid thought Elaine could help him with. Needless to say, this action was tolerated by Elaine because, after all, the whole purpose of the conversation was to improve Hamid’s English. So, while the partners were talking about Elaine’s class, Hamid took the liberty of asking Elaine about English pronunciation.

The social context of conversation partner talk allows for this kind of action, but Elaine had no idea that her partner will be picking words out of her speech and trying to have a mini-lesson from her about how different her words
were from a word he already knew. Hamid’s motivation was purely linguistic. After member checking with Hamid, he reported that in ordinary conversations with other NSs (not under the conversation partners program) he would not normally pick on people’s words in the same way he did with Elaine. That’s why conversation partner talk offers learners an additional opportunity to exercise their autonomy over their own learning of the L2 by asking these questions. In this way, conversation partner talk can be seen as a special type of pedagogy where peer-to-peer interaction can improve learning because learners are cognizant of their own learning needs.

The L2 learners frequently exhibited an autonomous interest in the management of their own learning of the L2. Ali, for example, expressed to Cassandra that he will always be a lifelong learner of English. Evidence of Ali’s commitment to learn English as a lifelong student was offered by Ali when Cassandra asked him whether he was taking his last class in English as a second language:

C: It's the last English class you have to take, or do you have to take other courses like it?
A: Well, I need to learn English all the time.
C: I am sorry. I meant that do you always have to have English classes?
A: Because everyday I learn something new that I didn’t know before. Everyday I learn new vocabulary, and new ways of saying. So for me English is everyday.
C: Ok. Is it the same you are doing today.
A: Yeah. It’s like sport. If you practice, you will do well. If not... Language is like sports. You have to practice everyday to speak, to use it.
C: I see what you mean.
Ali's use of analogy to present his opinion of language learning as an activity that is very similar to sports helped him make sense of his high motivation to learn the language to his NS partner Cassandra. It is common to state that beliefs get translated into practices, and what Hamid has done in his interaction with Elaine is also a good example of a belief that was translated into action. Both learners recognized the fact that they have a responsibility for their own language learning. While Ali gave an impressive account of his lifelong commitment to learn English, Hamid's activity showed him to be a learner closely observing how a specific sound can alter the meaning of a whole word. Hamid realized that only by controlling how sounds are combined by NS partners to create words can he use these words in future use with other NSs of English.

These data sets are significant in that both learners exhibited a high degree of autonomy without being prodded by their NS partners. They were not scaffolded to initiate their activities, and they showed a willingness to assume a responsibility for the management of their own learning of the TL. If it was the case that the NS partners will always help them to learn English, the learners would not be able to develop the autonomous use of English with other NSs, a capacity they will need in real communication situations in the TL environment. Both Ali and Hamid used conversation partner talk as a context in which to engage intentionally in learning the TL, alone and with NS partners.
B. Socially-Mediated Processing

In socially motivated processing the interactive work is distributed among the conversation partners more than as a result of any one individual participant. The conversation partners produced as a team such socially-important skills as coordination and collaboration. These skills cannot be reduced to the output of any one individual partner but have to be analysed as discourse they produced together. In social processing, communication skills become necessary for managing effectively the language that is produced by both participants as a team. The learners' listening and speaking abilities can develop as an offshoot of the opportunity to speak and listen to a NS partner. Due to the developmental nature of these skills, the opportunity to enhance them is present in conversation partner talk through interactive work involving scaffolding, receptivity, and collaboration. When individual learners and NS partners enter the social learning situation of conversation partner talk, they both take away from it not only knowledge about the formal aspects of the L2 but also develop skills in how to manage such a situation including listening and speaking skills needed for interpersonal communication.

A second way in which social and linguistic processes relate to one another is socially-mediated learning. After all, it is the potential of conversational partner talk to offer both NS partners and L2 learners alike the opportunity to learn from each other that makes the conversation partner program so popular.
So, even during linguistically motivated activities, both partners need to use social skills such as coordination and collaboration to make language learning possible. For example, when Elaine was asked by Hamid about the difference in pronunciation between “record” and “required” she could not simply ignore his question. She needed to coordinate with him first to know what his question was, and later to explain as best as she could what she thought the difference was. At such moments, interaction together means that both parties need skills to manage the interaction, many of which cannot be reduced to the control of any one individual but have to do with the ways in which both conversation partners work as a team. The willingness of team members to learn from each other means that the team can be influenced by a mediating “other” who has access to the required information. This “other” might be the NS partner or the L2 learner depending on the type of information required to effect such learning. For example, Joe, Hamid’s partner, professed a lack of knowledge about the Middle East:

J: I think, of all the countries in the world, I know the least about the Middle East. I just don’t know much about it, except that it’s a lot of deserts.
H: Ha, ha... (laughing)
J: That’s what I make of it I guess.

Because Joe knows that Hamid comes from Kuwait, he was trying to convey to Hamid that he wants to learn more about the Middle East. A week later, Joe asked Hamid a series of question about the culture, the cuisine, and the educational system in Kuwait. He finally asked Hamid about the population in Kuwait.
J: What's the population in Kuwait?
H: Population! Maybe you cannot believe me.
J: It's about 2 or 3 million?
H: No, actually the immigration in Kuwait is more than the citizens.
J: Really? Just within the last three years?
H: Yeah, exactly.
J: Do most of the people live in apartments? Apartments or houses?
H: No, they live in the home.
J: Home?
H: Almost all of them. But the immigration is really big in Kuwait.
J: Is it causing problems? All the immigration, does it cause any problems?
H: Yes, there are problems.
J: What kinds of problems?
H: Like let's say about the teachers. Almost all the teachers in Kuwait are from Egypt.
J: Oh.
H: almost 85%.

In the process of sharing information and learning about each other's culture, both participants were working as a team. It can be the case that both Joe and Hamid temporarily forgot the language learning aspects of their conversation and concentrated instead on a real communication where a genuine exchange of information was taking place. The result was a spontaneous interaction in which Joe was learning more information, and Hamid was talking about an issue that he cared about. Joe's interest in knowing more about Kuwait gave Hamid the opportunity to use English, to speak with an American partner about his country. Joe was learning new information about Hamid's national homeland. These conversation partners were learning how to coordinate their efforts together to reach their common goal. In other words, they were learning on their own how to manage and jointly produce their interactions. What they were able to learn
form each other was distributed between them and unified by their common goal of talking about the population in Kuwait.

C. Reciprocal Processing

Linguistic and social processes can interact together in a spiral relationship over a given stretch of talk. The third category of how linguistic and social processes can be employed over a sequence of talk is in a spiral. At one moment, the participants may be focused on the analysis of a linguistic item, but, at a subsequent moment, move to focus on their roles as equal partners in their social relationship as conversation partners. Linguistic and social processes follow each other. The order in which both processes overlap is not consistent, however. The interaction between both processes may proceed from either a linguistic or a social process and evolve into the other process according to the participants' actions.

A third way in which social and linguistic processing relate to one another is reciprocal processing. Reciprocal processing occurs in successive turns of social mediation and linguistic analysis, with their characteristic patterns of providing input, generating feedback, coordination, and collaboration. The two data sets included in this section are intended to trace two different cycles of reciprocal processing. The first data set begins with steps taken by both partners to focus on the second language. Other steps follow in which both participants coordinate between them the direction of the conversation. These two processes formulated
a cycle of reciprocal processing in which social and linguistic processing interacted in a sequence of talk. When Elaine noticed that Ali had difficulty with a grammatical construction, she gave feedback in the form of positive evidence. After this episode of linguistically-motivated processing, both participants negotiated between them to reach an understanding about what to talk about next in the conversation. The coordination that took place between the partners was socially-mediated processing. The whole sequence included both types of processing with linguistic processing at first which was followed by social processing and finally went back to linguistic processing. The whole sequence constituted a cycle of reciprocal processing. The sequence starts when Elaine notices that Ali made a grammatically incorrect construction which prompted her to offer feedback in the form of positive evidence:

A: ... And when I went to that school, me is the only one who can speak Arabic.
E: You're the only...
A: One who can speak my language.
E: Speak that language, ok.

Because Ali knows by now that Elaine is an Italian American, and realizes that one of his closest classmates in that school was Italian, he mentions this detail to Elaine who felt that it was interesting and asked Ali to elaborate on his relationship to his Italian classmate.

A: There were many international students from Europe. A lot of them from Europe. My best friend was from Italy.
E: Oh! Really?
A: Yes. We were in the same class. We have been together for all 3 months.
E: Is that how you met at first?
A: Yes.
E: Good.

The shift from the partners' focus on the linguistic information contained in *(me is the only one) to (my best friend was from Italy) was smooth and coherent with what preceded it. Noticing that he aroused Elaine's attention and interest in the fact that she had the same background like his friend, Ali decided to continue talking about his friend, while Elaine encouraged him by expressing her interest in knowing more:

A: And when we want to go back to our country, we go back the same day. The same day. We go togethether to the airport.
E: What a coincidence!
A: So we arrive the same day, and we go back the same day. So, he invited me to Italy.
E: Very nice.

In the final part of this sequence, Ali mentioned that he kept in touch with his Italian friend by means of letters. Ali did not know how to say "We write each other," which Elaine provided in the form of sentence completion:

A: ...And we keep like contact. We write, write....
E: So you write each other.
A: Yeah. I do.
E: Good.

The last episode brought linguistic processing back to the foreground after social processing was the major factor. The sequence started by being focused on linguistic processing of what Ali said "me is the only" which was resolved by Elaine providing positive evidence to correct Ali's erroneous grammatical construction. The two participants then engaged in social precessing when Ali
became the source of new information about his Italian classmate. Elaine shared the same cultural background and was probably receptive to the idea of talking about someone from Italy. Finally the conversation moved back to linguistic precessing when Elaine provided linguistic support for Ali by completing his incomplete sentence “You write each other.” The participants smoothly moved back and forth from linguistic precessing to social processing, and vice versa until the whole conversation was ended.

Reciprocal precessing can also happen in a reverse manner from the one analysed above. Another sequence of talk between Hamid and Elaine illustrates how the partners may begin with social precessing, and out of a sense of solidarity and a non-threatening atmosphere for self-expression, the learner may feel confident enough to take a risk, and ask for clarification from the NS partner. The first part of the sequence begins when Elaine asks Hamid whether he experienced culture shock when he came to the U.S.. Seeing that Elaine was supportive and wanted him to speak freely, in addition to the open nature of Elaine’s request, Hamid wanted to bring up the topic of “homelessness” as an example of his culture shock when he first entered the U.S.. Hamid had one problem, however, which was linguistic in nature: instead of saying homeless, Hamid said homesick which caused some temporary misunderstanding until this was resolved through a negotiation of what Hamid meant. When Elaine noticed that Hamid was probably using a wrong lexical item, she offered Hamid some assistance and scaffolding to arrive at what he meant:
H: The first time I saw "homesick, people. I didn’t see in my country. Home, homesick, home,..., hom-
E: A house for sale? A house for sale?
H: No. I mean the poor people like in the street by himself.
E: You mean the homeless people.
H: Homeless.
E: the homeless people, ok.
H: Terrible. I see these homeless people, but I don’t know what happened to them. So, it’s really strange.

After the initial misunderstanding caused by Hamid’s substituting “homesick” for “homeless,” Elaine determined that what Hamid wanted to say was the word “homeless.” She reinforced the difference by repeating after Hamid when he said “homeless” for the first time. By using this strategy, Elaine enabled Hamid to use the new word in a complete sentence.

What followed this sequence of linguistic analysis and application was an attempt by both partners to coordinate how the conversation was going to proceed. Hamid wanted to hear what Elaine had to say about the “homeless.” Elaine, however, was interested in connecting the current topic of homelessness with something that was articulated earlier by Hamid.

H: How about you?
E: About me? About my reaction for?
H: You are an American and I would like to know your opinion.
E: It’s interesting that you brought it up. I’m gonna go back to what you were saying earlier about the time when parents think that their children can go out and they’re on their own. How the American society very much encourages that and believes that. It is very nice to hear you say that we need parents at all ages.

Elaine was paying Hamid a big compliment by acknowledging to him that the problem may be socially and culturally conditioned by Americans’ sense of
individualism. Elaine agreed with Hamid that people, no matter how old they become, need to be close to their parents. Elaine's social relationship with Hamid as an equal who has valid opinions about American culture encouraged Hamid to feel accepted by her as an equal, if not at the linguistic level, then at the social level.

The following turn leads both partners to go back to linguistic processing. Because Elaine introduces a new word in the context of talking about parents, Hamid feels comfortable enough to ask Elaine for the meaning of the new word:

E: That's so important. I don't know. It's, it's just comforting. It's comforting.
H: Can you explain this comforting.
E: It's uhn. I feel secure because I know that whatever happened, they will always be there.
H: Uhn, ok.

Elaine offers an informal (i.e., non-dictionary level) definition of the word “comforting” which brings both participants to focus on the language as an object of analysis within the context of conversation partner talk. What began as a socially-mediated process gradually evolved into a focus on form related to the difference between “homesick” and “homeless.” The participants went back to social processing when they both were talking and coordinating their conversation. Finally, another new word in Elaine’s input prompted Hamid to initiate a second cycle of linguistic processing when he asked Elaine for the meaning of the word “comforting.”

The above two data sets demonstrate that there is no predictable way to know when social and linguistic processing will interact to produce a sequence of
reciprocal processing. For both participants these shifts from linguistic to social processing, and vice versa, seem to take place as a function of being members of a conversation partners’ team. There is a certain amount of allowance that both participants seem to take advantage of whenever they individually feel that there is a need for linguistic processing. Social processing seems to be more interdependent than linguistic processing. Both participants share the goal of strengthening their social relationships and maintaining a certain amount of civility toward each other.

Section Summary

In sum, the data showed that social and linguistic process employed in conversation partner talk related to one another in three ways: (a) linguistically-motivated, (b) socially-mediated, and (c) reciprocal processing. Linguistically-motivated processing occurred when NS input was the focus of analysis by the participants for information that it contained about the formal properties of the second language. Socially-mediated processing occurred when interaction became a communicative event that the participants jointly constructed through interactive work which provided opportunities for learners to practice their listening and speaking skills in the L2. Reciprocal processing involved overlapping cycles of both linguistic and social processing.
Chapter Summary

The analysis demonstrated that there were three ways in which social and linguistic processes related to one another in the context of conversation partner talk. First, linguistic processes were employed when one of the participants independently saw a chance to extract linguistic information about the L2 input that resulted from the participants' talk. Second, social processes were more interpersonal and occurred whenever the participants felt a need to strengthen their social relationships as conversation partners. Third, over long stretches of talk, the interaction of both social and linguistic processes moved in a reciprocal manner to fulfill both the functions of linguistic analysis and social interaction. There did not appear to be any set order in which these reciprocities occurred. The analysis showed that in some instances, social processes may occur initially followed by steps taken by one of the participants to perform linguistic processing of L2 input items. In other instances, the reciprocal relationship between the social and linguistic processes may start with linguistic processing followed by social processing which eventually may be followed by linguistic processing. Understanding how the social and linguistic processes of conversation partner talk relate to one another can add to our knowledge of the overall context of conversation partner talk. The analysis that emerged yielded a richer and conceptually more developed picture of the interplay between the two types of processes.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND LIMITATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section presents a summary of the findings organized around answers to the research questions of the study. The second section draws implications from the findings for language teaching at the research site. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research on language interaction and a description of the limitations of the study.

Summary of Findings

The data analysis searched for answers for the three research questions of this study of interaction in a second language. The first research question was: What components of the target language were utilized and noticed by the conversation partners in the course of their interactions? In order to participate in the interactions, evidence collected for the purpose of the study suggested that the six conversation partners used the phonology and vocabulary of English in their exchanges of information. In addition, because the communications
between the participants were done through spoken interaction, the six participants utilized the communication skills of speaking and listening in English. Sustained contact on a weekly basis, between the conversation partners provided an environment in which the two L2 learners could possibly improve their knowledge of vocabulary as well as increase their phonological awareness of the sounds of English as spoken by their English speaking partners. Conversation partner talk also provided the L2 learners with opportunities to practice their English listening and speaking skills in a safe, non-threatening environment. The data analysis treated the participants' utterances as linguistic and social actions within the context of conversation partner talk. In sum, the first finding of the study indicated that the six conversation partners participated in an implicit language teaching mode in which they engaged in a deliberate effort to negotiate various aspects of L2 knowledge. There were four main components of the second language that the participants needed to negotiate in order to participate effectively in the interactions. English phonology and vocabulary were the second language components identified in the data analysis. The communication skills of listening comprehension and speaking fluency were determined by the analysis to be the most utilized skills by the participants.

The second research question was: How did the participants negotiate to make themselves comprehensible to one another, and how did they maintain their social relationships as members of the conversation partners program? The second finding was related to the patterns in which the participants negotiated
the L2 input that was produced in the course of the interactions. The basic unit of analysis was “any exchange of information involving a learner and an NS partner in using the L2”. This unit of analysis encompassed all kinds of linguistic and social processing in conversation partner talk. Analysis of the data of the interactions involved two different levels of analysis which targeted two different levels of language use (linguistic and social). At the linguistic level, analysis was focused on the data of the interactions as L2 input made comprehensible to the learner through the efforts of both participants. At the social level, analysis was focused on the data of the interactions as language produced by both participants within the context of their relationships as members of a conversation partner program.

A category system was generated to describe the roles played by the participants during the interactions. The categories included (a) learner autonomy, to describe the learner’s active participation in filtering, and processing the L2 input as indicated by the different categories of the learner’s deliberate attempts to communicate in and fully comprehend the L2, (b) the NS as a facilitating agent in the categories of positive evidence, other-repetition, and selective targeting, (c) receptivity, (d) collaboration, and (e) scaffolding. In sum, the interactions between the participants offered an acquisition-rich environment which was characterized as one that provided both those activities associated with oral communication that strengthened the social relationship and those experiences derived from linguistic activities that raised the
learners' consciousness about the formal properties of the L2 input and their function in language use.

The third research question was: How were the participants' linguistic and social activities in the context of conversation partner talk related to one another? The third finding was that the linguistic processing and social actions of the participants were related in three major ways. The first relationship occurred when the talk was primarily focused on linguistic activities designed to raise the learner's consciousness about the formal aspects of the L2, especially in pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge. The second relationship occurred when the language-teaching mode shifted to social activities intended by the participants to maintain their social relationships. This interaction started with patterns of receptivity or collaboration which are social and then focused on some aspect of the L2 input which encouraged linguistic processing by both participants. The third relationship was reciprocal in that the social activities were followed by linguistic analysis which were in turn followed by social ones, and so on. In essence, there are no clear cut boundaries between the linguistic and social activities of the participants within the third relationship.

Implications for Pedagogy

The present study provided evidence that interacting with others in a second language involved the conversation partners in the production and comprehension of messages which enhanced the oral communication skills and
the analysis of L2 input by the partners which facilitated the acquisition of new vocabulary items and phonological awareness. This mixture of experiences offered by conversation partner talk emerged in recurring patterns categorized under linguistic and social aspects of interaction. Interacting with others in a second language involved the conversation partners in negotiation of meaning related to phonemic awareness, vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension and oral performance in the second language. In addition to conveying new information about the phonological and lexical features of English, interaction between the conversation partners provided the learners with opportunities to enhance their listening comprehension skills as well as their oral performance in the L2.

In a learner-centered curriculum, it makes sense to identify learner needs, analyze them, and implement language instruction that meets and fulfills those needs. Needless to say, more research is needed for identifying learner needs in all areas of the communication continuum. Language teachers all over the world accept that the primary objective of L2 teaching is to increase their students’ overall proficiency in the L2. Notwithstanding this goal, instructional proposals from SLA researchers such as the focus-on-form movement have been putting more and more emphasis on teaching the formal aspects of the second language with the goal of ensuring that learners achieve so-called “target-like accuracy.” The findings of the present study, however, suggested that developing a learner’s overall proficiency in the second language is a complex process that involves not
only awareness of language forms but also the requisite communication skills needed for clear and fluent self-expression.

The following recommendations are, therefore, related to increasing a learner's oral proficiency for the purpose of social interaction with others in a second language. One of the findings of the present study was that interaction offered a mixture of opportunities for both communication and for language learning. These opportunities presented themselves in the course of a single interaction in the form of successive spirals of social as well as linguistic processing. Another finding was that in the context of communicating about form and meaning a NS rarely focused on form, especially in instances when form did not interfere with the meaning of what a learner wanted to say. The second language classroom should provide a context that resembles what was observed in the data sets. As Hatch (1986) put it, “the task is to find those experiences that contribute most to learning and to work out ways to bring reasonable copies of those experiences, and the ways of dealing with them” (p. 20) to the L2 classroom. One way of shaping a context in the classroom in which the learners can achieve the goal of becoming interactionally competent is therefore by replicating interactional experiences in the L2 classroom. The following are features of interaction that were identified by the data as recurrent patterns of conversation partner talk:
1. The interactions provided the learners with the opportunity to be exposed to L2 input from the NS partners’ speech that was above their competence level in the L2 (e.g., Krashen's i+1). Scaffolding was a socially-organized pattern in which both participants utilized the L2 input to make it possible for the learner to build on what was said by the NS partner. It is through scaffolding of language interactions by NS partners as proficient peers that learners were able to perform communicatively beyond their current level of language competence.

2. Learners were active participants in generating, filtering, and processing L2 input and contextual data. In other words, they enjoyed some degree of autonomy in the interactions that took place between them and their conversation partners.

3. NSs acted as facilitating agents by reinforcing the learner’s current knowledge of the L2 and correcting errors when they interfered with communicating one’s meaning.

4. Receptivity among the participants gave them a feeling of connectedness which sustained their attempts at both learning about and communicating in the L2.

5. Throughout the interactions, learners engaged in the comprehension and production of messages in the L2.

6. Learners had opportunities to nominate their own topics and to participate in the development of these topics as partners in the conversations.
It is probably true to assert that many L2 classrooms do not manifest these features of conversation partner talk and, therefore, might constitute poor environments for helping learners become interactionally competent in the L2. In many language classrooms around the world, there seems to be a persistent tension between pedagogic discourse on the one hand, and instructional goals on the other. The key feature of this tension is the incoherence between what teachers really want which is to increase their students' overall proficiency in the L2, including the ability to use the L2 for effective social interaction with speakers of the target language, and the limitations imposed by the restrictive interactional context of the language classroom. One challenge facing L2 classroom instruction is what has been referred to by Kramsch (1991) as “the order of discourse in language teaching” (p. 191). Ellis (1991) described pedagogic discourse as one in which “there is frequently a rigid allocation of turns... Turns are allocated by the teacher, the right to speak always returned to the teacher when a student turn was completed, and the teacher had the right to stop and interrupt a student turn” (p. 172).

In order to confront the problem of a restrictive pedagogic discourse, teachers should concentrate in their classrooms on creating the conditions needed for authentic communication to take place. Innovation in language pedagogy to take account of learner needs should begin with an enrichment of this one-way classroom model with discourse routines appropriate to these pedagogic goals. While the restrictions of classroom discourse that are found in many pedagogical...
settings are likely to persist, classroom activities should be designed to offer resources and materials in ways that will achieve the pedagogical goals of producing students who are competent interactionally. A classroom that promotes these pedagogical goals should, at a minimum, offer the students various opportunities to explore the uses and consequences of social interaction in the L2. The short term goal is to enable the students to engage in social interactions in ways that are likely to have fewer negative social and linguistic consequences for the learner. The long term goal is to enable learners to reach a high level of communicative ability and to interact successfully with members of the target language community.

Of course, the challenge remains that even with the most ingenious simulated natural use of language it is impossible to create suitable conditions all the time for the contextualized use of language among nonnative speakers in a classroom environment. Classroom instruction should be focused, therefore, on providing the students with richly contextualized materials that highlight specific forms and functions in the interactional use of the language. It is important to note that the primary pedagogical focus is on communicative language use, not the production of dialogues that correctly mimic real life. The teacher's task is to have L2 learners not just parrot conversational discourse but also to be creative in the realization of their communicative goals in conversation. The primary pedagogical focus should be thus on developing learner autonomy in situations of social interaction that involve the negotiation of meaning, the collaborative use of
the L2 with other peers in the classroom, and the scaffolding that characterizes authentic language use. Criteria for choosing these forms and functions of language use must be developed, taking the learner's language proficiency level into account.

In order to facilitate the gradual growth of learner autonomy, the classroom teacher must provide learners with opportunities to observe real-life perhaps videotaped conversational sequences among native speakers of the L2, and to analyze and discuss in group the goals of the interactants and how they went about trying to achieve their goals, and the degrees of success or failure they found as a consequence of their activities. Analysis should target the interactional patterns used by the participants within particular interactions. It would be beneficial to help the students as a group to construct a set of questions about each interaction. These questions can be focused on the new words, phrases, and other linguistic cues in the authentic interactions that the students as a group find interesting. In trying to meet learner needs, the teacher should organize activities that target these new items as they will most likely be the items they will need to interact in the target language. The activities should facilitate interaction in a way that encourages learner autonomy, but will still allow for the creative use of the L2 in the classroom environment. In other words, the students themselves should be encouraged by the instructor to get together and to work collaboratively, assigning roles, deciding topics, and negotiating among themselves about how they should conduct these activities. When the time comes
for each group to take its turn in front of the other groups, the whole class should anticipate and get interesting performance that may not conform exactly with what the instructor had in mind when he/she designed the activity.

Accommodating the social and collaborative aspects of interactive language use in the classroom in one sense complicates the challenge of instruction by introducing more concerns about classroom management and decisions to be made by the teacher than about group size and composition. But it also enriches the teacher's options in trying to harness the class resources for the purpose of encouraging learner autonomy. For example, allowing the students the freedom to nominate their own roles and topics in the interactional activities should provide them with the security they will often need to be creative users of the language. Engagement in interactive activities can be demanding on the students, especially in light of their limited resources in the L2.

The data from the present study demonstrated that the participants' repeated and sustained contact with each other on a regular basis was consumerate with their growing sense of confidence over their performance in the interactions, especially in these routines with which they had previous experiences. The participants, in a sense, developed an expectation of the topics and questions that are routinely asked (e.g., what is your major? How are you handling your experience so far, and so on). The teacher's selection of materials and activities should not overlook the importance of student exposure to a variety of tasks that gradually familiarize them with the different aspects of what Hymes...
(1982) termed "the ways of speaking" of the target language and its native speakers. Data from the present study also showed that the more receptive the participants were to the idea of being a conversion partner, the more they were open to learn the skills to strengthen their social relationships with their interlocutors. In addition to exposure, the activities should benefit affect among the students.

In conclusion, the direct study of interaction in a language classroom is consistent with the pedagogical goal of helping students become interactionally competent in the L2. This goal, however, would be hard to achieve if teachers did not make a principled effort to alter the restrictive classroom discourse that characterizes many pedagogical settings. More research is needed to investigate how effective instructional strategies can bridge the gap between ambitious pedagogical goals and the limitations of classroom discourse. This research should ideally contain case studies of successful teachers who have found practical solutions to coordinate their classroom techniques to achieve the goal of helping students become interactionally competent in the L2. The present study investigated the various ways in which interaction had potential benefits to a leaner's second language acquisition. Evidence from the study suggested that improvements can occur as a result of interaction in the specific areas of phonological awareness, vocabulary size, listening comprehension, and speaking fluency. Improvements in these areas should not only contribute to a learner's overall proficiency in the L2, but also to his/her ability to competently interact
with NS of the TL. In order for teaching to be responsive to learner needs, direct introduction of interactive routines should formulate an integral part of a language teacher's repertoire. These interactions can be employed by the teacher as tools learners can use to think about what they should expect and how to go about dealing with different contingencies each situation may pose. At the same time, they function as building blocks in the development of more complex and creative linguistic and interactive skills.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The study was an attempt to learn about interaction, and what elements of the second language can be acquired through interaction. The study presented findings on NNS-NS interactions in the context of conversation partner talk in a collegiate setting, particularly with respect to the participants' roles as autonomous learners and facilitators, the linguistic and social characteristics of the language that was used by the participants, and the ways in which the social and linguistic aspects of conversation partner talk were related in the course of the interactions. The study described the ways in which interaction contributed to both the learners' acquisition of the second language and their interactions in the use of English as a second language.

Further research is needed to verify the findings of this study and for other populations of language learners. In addition, further research is needed to address other aspects of interaction and to identify pedagogical and
methodological implications for college language teaching. The patterns of learner autonomy, for example, may have important pedagogical implications, which can be the subject of classroom-based research. Even though student output is a prevalent feature of many communicative activities within contemporary language classroom, exactly how it helps with language learning has often been assumed, rather than researched. More empirical investigation in this area is needed. Of interest is whether providing students in an EFL/ESL conversation class with spoken output activities followed by relevant input would facilitate more accurate approximations of target language forms by learners. Another interesting question is whether learner awareness of problems as a result of output followed by relevant input would prompt them to seek out subsequent input with more focused attention to the formal aspects of L2 input. Additionally, the data sets suggested that there was a link between topic control in conversation partner talk and learner oral performance. This relationship was observed when learners had topic control because it gave them time to plan and watch the form of what they were saying. When they had topic control, both ESL learners were more accurate in their oral performance because they anticipated what they were going to say next. Conversely, inaccurate oral performance was observed in the data set in which Hamid did not have topic control. He became confused about which question to answer and wound up trying to answer the wrong question which led to a lack of understanding on the part of Elaine, his NS partner. Thus, it would be fruitful to explore the relationship between topic
control and oral performance in a future study with a larger sample of ESL learners.

An important area of research is the content of the input to the second language learner. Although the present study only probed the cultural content of the input, other content areas may be investigated to uncover the range of topics, themes, and issues a given interaction may deal with. This research may increase our understanding of the common interests English native and nonnative speakers have about their world and may formulate useful themes for the content of English language courses at the college level. Additional areas of research may also include a controlled classroom experiment conducted to investigate the possible effect of task type on learner comprehension in conversations between NS and NNS participants. This study should include a cross-section of an English as a second language adult learner whose interaction is studied for such factors as the type of interaction, the frequency of use of interactional patterns and the outcome of the interaction on the purposes of the conversations. Another possible area of research may include case studies of conversation partners to probe their perspectives about the impact of interactions with NNS on their communicative fluency in English as a second language. Additional languages may also need investigation (e.g., Arabic as a foreign or second language). An important area still in need of investigation is the possible outcomes related to participation in interaction. For example, a longitudinal study of the impact of a conversation partners program in a college setting on student outcomes in terms of both
grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency. Due to the perceived benefits of conversation partners programs, there is a need for a quantitative, data-based study of the use of conversation partner programs in other settings (e.g., Kuwait University).

Other needed areas of investigation include studies of questions such as the following: To what extent is learner output determined by the social relationships between L2 learners and English native speakers? Do learners who have conversations with unfamiliar English native speakers participate more than those who were familiar with their English native-speaking interlocutors? What are the implications of this type of research on the L2 classroom a social setting? For example, should the composition of discussion groups be based on the proficiency levels of the participants or their receptivity to each other as friends and conversation partners outside the classroom? Questions such as these need to be thoroughly investigated, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Further research on these questions has the promise of making significant advances in our understanding of the potential contributions of interaction in second language learning.

Limitations

A major limitation in the present study is that it involves collecting data from a small number of participants. This raises the question of generalizability. If we collect a great deal of information about teaching and learning in
conversation partner talk, what does that tell us about teaching and learning in other interactional settings, with other native speakers and other ESL learners?

Having stated that limitation, one can argue that generalizability, as traditionally required in educational research, is next to impossible to achieve even in studies which use surveys and experimental designs. Known threats to the validity of data collection methods such as self-report in surveys and the lack of ecological validity in experiments call into question a researcher's ability to generalize from what subjects say in their self-reports, and do in experiments, to what people really do in everyday life. Relatedly, informed-consent guidelines, which are legally binding, require that those studied must be told the purposes of a research study before they participate in it, which may cause subject-reactivity. Reactivity can invalidate the results of survey and experimental research and limit their generalizability to classroom contexts.

Another way to think about generalizability is to consider it an empirical problem rather than a requirement which dictates research design, sampling, and statistical inference. The notion of “transferability” was proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in their attempt to place the ultimate determination of generalizability in the hands of the consumer of research findings rather than in that of the researcher. Within the present study, for example, the reader may benefit from the analysis of the interactional experiences of the two Kuwait ESL learners as they struggle to learn and use the L2 for communicating with native speakers. Knowing what it means for a couple of learners to go through the
process of achieving their communication goals and learning new L2 input from their NS partners can be quite illuminating to language learners and teachers everywhere.

Chapter Summary

The present chapter contained a summary of the findings organized around answers to the research questions of the study, implications for language teaching, recommendations for further research, and a description of the limitations of the study. The study generated three findings on interaction in a second language. The first finding was that there were four components of the second language that were utilized by the participants to partake in interaction with native speakers of the target language. The four components were phonemic awareness, vocabulary, listening comprehension, and oral fluency in the second language. The second finding was that the participants' roles were asymmetrical when they engaged in linguistic processing and symmetrical when they engaged in social interaction. The asymmetry between the participants was accounted for by the unequal access to the second language achieved by learners and NS partners. The equal relationship between the participants during social interaction was accounted for by the equal status of the participants both as students of the same university and as members of the same conversation partners program. The third finding was that the social and linguistic process of NS-NNS interaction were related in three ways: linguistically-motivated, socially-
mediated, and reciprocal processing. Implications for teaching suggested ways for teachers to overcome the dichotomy between the pedagogical goal of developing high conversational skills in the L2 and the restrictive discourse of many classroom settings. The use of scaffolding, learner participation, interactional modifications, receptivity, and topic nomination by L2 learners were suggested as ways to make the classroom an acquisition-rich environment in which teachers can help students become interactionally competent in the L2.

Recommendations for research on interactions included a series of specific research designs to test and evaluate the impact of classroom interaction on student outcomes. Finally, one of the limitations of the study was the relatively small number of research participants. This limitation will be addressed in further studies to be conducted by the researcher on this important area of research both for language teaching and second language acquisition research.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX  A

SOLICITATION LETTER TO
THE CONVERSATION PARTNERS
Dear Conversation Partner:

Congratulations on becoming a conversation partner. I am a Kuwaiti student currently working on my Ph.D. in Foreign and Second Language Education. May I ask you to participate in a study I am conducting on conversation-partners. The study will attempt to provide a rich description and documentation of developing conversational abilities in ESL by Arab students within a social context in which English is used for general purposes of communication, or in “meaningful performance situations.”

Your agreement to participate in the study means that you agree, at your convenience of course:
(a) to be audiotaped while in a session with your partner. This will take an hour and will be done only once whenever you think you are ready:
(b) to be videotaped at another session while talking to your conversation partner. This also will require an hour of recording time and will take place only once;
(c) to be individually interviewed about the above-mentioned two sessions for an hour. This session will be audiotaped.

The times of these recordings will be at your convenience and whenever you feel comfortable with being recorded. In other words, you may contact me and tell me of the time and place of your meetings. I will not talk during the first two sessions, but I will ask some questions about them in the third recording session.

I assure you of anonymity and confidentiality (i.e., That your given name will not be used in this or any future study). Finally, your participation in the study at any time subsequent to your agreement to participate.

Sincerely yours,

Sulaiman Alrabah
APPENDIX B

A SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT
Transcript #2 Hamid & Joe (Oct. 28, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NNS: Hamid</th>
<th>NS: Joe Burgesser</th>
<th>Arps (239)</th>
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<tr>
<td>J: So, tell me about this afternoon. What was the final score, 11, 10?</td>
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<tr>
<td>H: Yeah, about the boys? [J: Uhn, uhn] Eh, our game, our team was, has, uhm, has 12 [J: 12 points], 12 points, and, our game 14 has 11 points.</td>
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<td>J: Wao! That's, that's high score.</td>
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<td>H: Yeah. [J: Usually-] It is one, one point between our team and the last team. [J: Uhn, uhn] It's really like, the, the game like Gaz (xx), you know Gaz? Like Gaz, it's really difficult between that. The, another team, if you want, want to winner [J: Uhn, uhn] point, it's really was nice.</td>
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<td>J: Right. But usually soccer games that I watch on TV, usually the scores, they only score like one or two, three points on each side, and in your part, the score was 12, the 10?</td>
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<tr>
<td>H: Yeah. If, if the game was, uhn, you like tight. [J: Uhn, uhn] Everyone, eh, has 1 point, but one of them won, they will have the 2 points or 3 points. In this, uhn, and, in this game, if one of them won, one of them going to, is going to, has won the three points, and this day was, my, my, my part team has 3 points. It's really was difficult. [J: Yes.] Yeah.</td>
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<td>J: What's name of the team?</td>
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<td>H: Kuwait.</td>
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<td>J: I mean what's the name of the team though. I mean I know your country is Kuwait but the actually name of the team. [H: No, there is.] No name? [H: Yes.] Like you know how, like Ohio State, [H: Yeah.] the name of the team is Buckeyes. [H: Yeah, Buckeyes, yeah, I know.] You, they don't have the name?</td>
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<td>H: No. [J: No.] But this is good, a good idea. [J: Uhn, uhn] You make a name for, like nickname. [J: Right.] Yeah, the one goal (xx) [J: Ok] But I will think about the- (Both laughed) It's a real good idea.</td>
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<td>J: Yeah. What color?</td>
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<td>H: Eh, blue [J: Blue] Yeah. The sea water (xx). [J: Uhm!] The, that's my country got wear blue. It's really was a good opinion (xx) because if we the tight, tight [J: Uhm, uhm], eh, we will lost the game [J: Right], so we have to won the game.</td>
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<tr>
<td>J: That must be very excited [H: Yeah.] especially when you, when you team is expected to lose and then when they win that much more exciting, so-</td>
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<tr>
<td>H: Yes, I would like. [J: Uhm, uhm] I am exciting when I say KaGasz (xx) [J: Uhm, uhm]. It's very exciting. [J: Yeah.] So, how about the, uhn, the Ohio State University, the-?</td>
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J: The Buckeyes. I didn't, I didn't get to watch that game. I just heard about it on the radio. [H: Uhm, uhm] So, I didn't really get to see any of the game, so I couldn't really tell you much about it [J: Yeah.] other than that, they will win in 38 to 6, and then Iowa came back and scored, I don't know, I think it was like 24 or 38 [H: 38, yes, for the Ohio State University.] Uhm. [H: And the 28, I think for another-] Right. They came pretty close [H: Yeah.] to win, the other team win.

H: It's not bad [J: Right.] But they worry about the Michigan. [J: Oh, yeah.] I mean-

J: That's the main competitor. [H: Yeah.] Uhn-ha...

H: But this all we got not bad.

J: Right. [H: Yeah.] They still undefeated. [H: Yeah. So] So, what else you can do on this week?

H: In this week, uhn, [H: Other than the weekend?] yeah, I'm going to the Cleveland on the Wednesday. [J: Uhm, uhm], because I have appointment in Kahoti (xx) Community College, so I have to test in the-

J: Oh, ok], never (lab) test, lab test, so I have to go, in the Wednesday.

J: You guys have been up there?

H: No. I have a, I only go with my, my own way.

J: Uhn, uhn. I mean is he driving though?

H: No.

J: Flying? How, how you're getting there?

H: By, by the car. I mean.

J: Just you're driving by car? [H: Yeah.] It's not that far though, [H: Yeah.] 2 and half hours, maybe. [H: Yeah, exactly, maybe one was it] Yeah, less he thought.

H: Yeah. But Cincinnati is, about that?

J: It's closer. It's about 2 hours.

H: 2 hours, yeah. And maybe this week I'm go to watch the movie like, Slippers, you know? Did you watch the Slippers? Slippers?

J: How do you spell it?

H: Slippers.

J: Slippers. Is that the new movie?

H: Yeah. Right. Like slip- [J: Uhn, uhn], so.

J: I haven't, I haven't seen that one advertised yet, but that one was out now. [H: Uhm, uhm] What's it about? [H: Yeah. Than we are story (xx).] Yeah, what's about, yet, the story?

H: Yeah. They, their poor man, like a friends on the, he was a child and, uhn, when they grow, grow up, the like, I didn't like, shame, somebody shame to them about something I don't know what exactly, maybe like, maybe like thieves [J: Uhm, uhm]. They are three thieves and they, this say that crams, crimes, crimes or crams? [J: Crimes.] Crimes Uhn, but, they didn't do anything, but somebody change them.
J: Right. So, they go to jail. [H: Yeah. Go to the jail, or so on the story. But it's very good.] Uhm!

H: And, the main idea, eh, the lawyer, eh, the lawyers train one friend of the, for the follow people don't, the lawyer. And the lawyer, eh, change his friend. Eh, he say that you like a thief. I don't know because he, he want, he wants to confuse that bad lawyer, like joy, I think, enjoy.

[Phone rings] Uhm, before they met, and two of them, eh, still in there, train, [J: Crime.] crime, and the, they have to met. One of them like a lawyer [J: Uhm, uhm], and this man defense for them and it's really a good story, and, but they, eh, this man, this man, they didn't, they didn't defense like strong, but a different way because he, he wants, the lawyer wants, eh, concludes that, another, another lawyer, another lawyer to make it. Maybe is, he, he didn't have a good proof, eh, what, but the, his friend, but I don't know you want to me, to confuse the lawyer [J: Uhm, uhm] because eh, before they, they enter the, eh, the crime, eh, their shame because they were at like bar, and they, they just read about, like cut the, the, like beer in the, in the down row (xx) and they enter into the crime, something like hazy, hazy story, hazy, [J: Uhm, uhm], you know hazy story, like hazy story, it's not, it's not clear [J: Right, right.] Until now, I didn't understand the front of the story exactly.

J: Oh, I probably go to see it because out now [H: Yes.], you're gonna see it this weekend.

H: Slippers

J: Yeah. Maybe I will go to see it. This weekend, uhn, I went to Minneapolis, you know what's that? [H: No, help us.] Uhn, let's see. Ok, this is the United States. This is all the United States like we're here in Columbus, Minneapolis is up here. [H: Uhn, Uhn It's a city.] It's north [H: Yeah.], and it's central, so- [H: So] that's thing is city Minneapolis, and I went to an Akoncar seminar. Akoncar is my reason [H: Uhn, uhn], uhn, Akoncar is the religion of the light and sound God. Have you heard of this religion before?

H: I has just heard the one. [J: Yes.] I have heard just the one.]

J: So, I went there. That was a pretty good seminar. [H: Uhm] That's what I did over the weekend, so that's why, I didn't, I didn't get to see the Ohio State Game.

H: So, how was your study in the study in that Ohio State University? Did you have, uhn, like yesterday, this week, or -

J: This week we got the register for next term, for next quarter, and I'm gonna take, uhn, physics [H: Uhn, uhn], uhn, what else may I take? Physics, you know physics, right? [H: Yeah.] You have to take a lot of physics [H: Yeah] since you became a mechanical engineering -
H: Yeah. I was good about physics. What do you think about physics? It's, just, eh, it's odd, or do you think, eh, something odd in the physics or, or just science?

J: Well, physics itself is just science but you can use the principles, say like an architecture. In architecture consider, we could consider the art.

H: Uhn, so you will, you will use physics to design things and those things you design can be considered art. It's that what you're saying? [H: Yeah.] When you say art?

H: Yeah. I mean the something is odd in the physical, just physics because I heard somebody like professor say, "Physics is science" [J: Uhm]. It's not, eh, science is odd (art), not nuts (math). [J: Nut?] Not Math [J: Not math.] Yeah. He say like this. Physics is science. [Sulaiman brought coffee. S: Excuse me. They both have cream. This have less sugar. This have more sugar.]

J: Thanks. It has a lot of (xx) [S: Try it. I didn't find any cold pop, so-..] Ok, that's alright. [S: Ok. Take care.]

H: You said that physics is science, like art, but it doesn't mean math. I think so- [J: But you use-, you will use a lot of math-] yeah. [J: figure out the problems, but-] Yeah. I don't known because-, maybe I, I disagree over [J: Right.] this one is not. You said it's like design, art design, something like arts.

J: I, I see physics as a tool. It's a tool that you can use [H: Uhn, uhn] to build this. [H: Yeah.] Uhn, that's how I see it. I mean you, you, you will use physics to study Mechanical Engineering [H: Yeah, exactly.] to design cars, or engines. [H: Yes, like tools.] Uhn, uhn.

H: Uhm, uhm. But. I don't know why did he say it's not math. I don't know, I, because, I agree physics is science. Physics is science and like art, maybe after night, design something, maybe like, when I design something is like art, but when I work, I have to do the math. So, he said, "It doesn't mean math." That's all.

J: Just is his definition. That's all. [H: Yeah.] The other class I'll be taking next quarter is, uhn, history at Asian civilization, so I will be learning about history of Asia, [H: Yes.] and uhn, taking a one-credit hour class, uhn, it's a class that help you, uhn, write a resume. [H: Resume?] You know, a resume to help you get a job. [H: Uhn, uhn]. Uhn, it's a class to help you find a job, how to go through a interview, things like that. And I take a dance class, ball room dancing. Have you heard of ball room dancing, you know. [H: Yeah.] You know, you dance like this. I'll be taking a class-.

H: But, I mean the, but, it's like American tradition (xx) [J: Uhm, uhn] on the dance, or-

J: Uhm, actually I think the origins are European. [H: Uhn, uhn] Uhn, like the guys wear the nice tuxedo, and the women wear the long dresses
[H: Yeah.], you know. [H: Slowly like this.] Yes. [H: Yeah.] So, I'll take that class. Uhn.

H: How, how many credit hours about this course?

J: Uhn, I think I'll be taking about 16, uhn, the other class I'm taking is, it's like Asian, some about Asian culture. [H: Uhm, uhm] So, taking those 3 class worth you five credit hours, and I'm taking that one credit hour employment class, one credit hour, dance class. I might take, if I have time, I'll take one credit hour Tai-Chi. You know Tai-Chi is? [H: No.]
The Chinese, it's not Karate, you know Karate is, right? Karate, you know, [H: Yes.] the martial arts. [H: Yes.] It's not that, but it's [H: Like sports, you mean?], it's Chinese, uhn, a form of exercise. [H: Yeah.]
You know how the Chinese you've seen doing stuff like that (Maybe J's body language.) [H: Yeah, uhn-ha...] I'm gonna. That's Tai-Chi. I'm gonna take a class.

H: You know how many idea about this? Did you play before?

J: Have I ever done that before? [H: Exercise. Yes.] No, I've never done that before. [H: Yeah.] So-

H: Wait a second. Why you?-

J: Why? [H: Yeah. Why you?] It's this, it's a good exercise. [H: Circle (xx)]

Uhm, uhm. [H: Yes, but.] Exercise, just, the, I don't know, help you get into with yourself. Because you can always just go out to play soccer,

uhm, uhm-ha... So.

H: But, how you're going to go this vacation? [J: What vacation?] This Christmas?

J: Probably work. [H: You will stay here?] Oh, yeah. I'll stay here. But I mean I'll go home [H: For Christmas?] some days [H: Some, some days.] and Thanksgiving [H: Yeah.], I'll go home then, for just like two days. [H: Yeah.] But I'll probably just work, stay and you know work.

H: [H: Uhm, uhm] Uhn, so what other movies have you seen?

J: Uhm, I have seen the Chain Reaction. You know Chain Reaction?

Chain Reaction. [J: Oh, ok.] It's really, really, it was really nice. It's very good.

J: Who was in that?

H: Who, I don't know. I forgot him. That man. [J: Ok, I can't think of his name.] Yeah. You know in the, you know Speed, Speed. [J: What about it?] Eh, like, he is, you know like the man in the Chain Reaction [J: Uhn, uhn], in the same man in the Chain Reaction and Speed. [J: Oh, ok.]

You remember Speed or [J: I don't think I've seen that one.] Speed. [J: Speed.] Yes, it's really it's good.

J: Oh, uhm-ha.. I don't think so.
H: It's really, it's a good movie. How about you? Have you seen that?
J: I can't think of last movie I've seen? [H: Tallky Joe?] No, I didn't see that movie. I mostly go, I like to see foreign movies, uhn, I don't know.
H: I don't, I don't see a lot of action movie. [H: Yeah.] I see mostly like drama, stuff like that. Drama, foreign movies, some comedies. [H: Yeah.] Have you seen Multiplicity? That was a comedy with Michael Keaton? [H: Yeah.] I've seen it.
H: Have you seen the Professor, fun (xx) Professor? [J: Uhm-ha.. No.] Yeah.
J: I want to see that, but I didn't. Is that really funny? [H: Yeah. It's really funny, ha... really funny.] Uhn-ha... Uhn, uhn. I should have thought-
H: Because there, there are something strange [J: Uhn-ha...], ha...
H: So. What type of coffee you like to drink or?
J: I mostly like to drink tea. [H: Uhm, uhm. Half, our coffee in my country is really different on this coffee?] Oh, really? [H: Yeah.] What does it taste like? Hard to describe, I guess. [H: Yes. It's not, I don't know.]
H: Do you use coffee beans or something different?
J: Yeah, but, uhm, like coffee, but we just put coffee and water [H: Uhm, uhm], and that is it without sugar, without anything. [J: Right. But some people drink like that.] Yeah, without anything. It's not like sweet [J: Right..] Yeah. It doesn't sweet.
J: That's how I drink my tea, just water, the tea bag. [H: Yeah..] Herb, like I drink herb teas, nothing in it. [H: But..] That's how I like it. [H: Uhn-ha...] So, after this quarter, did you take more English classes, or you finish?
H: No. Eh, actually that's it.
J: Then what happens?
H: So, that's the problem.
J: You have to find out where you're going, uhn-a?
H: Yeah. I didn't, I didn't, I don't know until now where I will, I will go. [J: Uhm, uhm] But I think maybe in the, I will study in the Cleveland, or if I pass the Michigan Test, I will stay here. [J: Uhm, uhm] But, I will like to stay here, but I will work hard this, this and these weeks before the Michigan Test.
J: When is the Michigan Test?
H: Actually? [J: Couple weeks] Yeah, no. [J: In December, November?] In December. [J: In December?] In December 5 [J: Oh, ok..], so. [J: About another month.] I have to work hard [J: Uhm, uhm] to decide where is my, pass me or the [J: Uhm!], but?

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J: Have you seen the actual test yet? You know what’s going be on it?

H: Eh, Michigan Test, you mean? [J: Yeah.] Yes, I, I know. [J: It’s, is does it look hard?] It’s about, the part, the first part about the listening [J: Uhn, uhn], and the second part about the grammar [J: Writing], no, grammar [J: Grammar], and the third part about the reading and the fourth part reading comprehension or something like this. [J: Uhm, uhn] Like essay [J: Right.], yeah. But we have, we hope to pass the Michigan Test. [J: I think you will.] Uhn-ha., I hope. It’s really easy for you. I think so.

J: I know. I understand because at the beginning of this quarter I started taking Chinese and I have to drop because I had, it was taking of too much of my time, I have to study like 3 hours a day plus do all my other homework plus work. I couldn’t do it all, so I have to drop the class. Uhn, I’ll probably take it up in the summer time when I am not taking any other classes. I’ll take it then. [H: Yeah.] How often will you go home? About once a year, maybe? If, when you go to school? You used to go home in summer time, you think, or you just stay here all?

H: Yeah. Maybe I’m going to in this vacation and Christmas. [J: You could go home then?] Yeah. After when I decide. [J: Right.] So, what else you want?

J: What, uhn, they celebrate Christmas in Kuwait? [H: What was the?] Christmas [H: Christmas] You know how Christmas is here. [H: Yeah, but] Do they do the same thing over in Kuwait?

H: No, it’s rather different, not like this. You know the tradition is different. [J: Right] So, it’s really different.

J: I mean the, but, is this, do you celebrate something in December or is it another time? Another month or-

H: Or actually in the December, not all the people make celebration like this. [J: Right.] It’s like young people. How about the celebration here?

J: I didn’t see it? [J: Christmas?] Yeah. In the United States?

H: Well, it’s changed a lot. It, originally, Christmas was supposed to the birth of Jesus. [H: Uhn, uhm], ok, that’s what it supposed to be, it still is. But there is a lot of, lot of things that have been added, like on December 25 [H: Yes.], supposedly when Jesus was born, uhn, [H: Everything they closed on this day?] right. But there is, what people do now is, not celebrate like Jesus’s birthday, they also they give gifts, uhn, the Christmas trees. Have you seen the Christmas trees? They have a tree, [H: Yeah. Put lights like that.] right. They put lights around it [H: Yeah, around it.]. They put gifts under the trees. [H: Uhn, uhn] And they open a present on Christmas morning.

H: Eh, all this on the December 25. [J: Uhm, uhm] Ok, what about, what’s different between December 25, eh, and the first day of the year? [J: December 24?] No, I mean, the beginning of the year, like. [J: Oh, New
Year's Eve.] Yeah. [J: New Year's Day?] Yeah, what's the different? All of them did?

J: Ok. Christmas is just supposed to celebrate the birth of Christ. [J: You mean the January 1] No, no December 25 [H: Uhn, uhn], and then Jan, and this January 1 [H: Uhn, uhn] is the first day of the year. [H: Yeah.]

That's all it, just to celebrate the new year because it's a new year. [H: Uhn, uhn. So the Christmas on the December 25] Right. And the week later, the New Year, January 1 [H: Uhm, uhm], they just celebrate the New Year.

H: Yeah. So, we did. [J: It doesn't have anything to do with Christ, or Jesus or anything like that.] Yeah.

J: So people go out and drink and get crazy and- [H: And they do something strange.] Uhm-ha...

H: How about the gap (xx) some days, the days between the 25 and Jan. 1?

J: Nothing really, just nothing really goes on. [H: The stores is open or?] Yeah, they are open. [H: Yeah.] Just the only day that stores usually close is Jan. 24, which is the day before Christmas, some, uhn, business is closed but stores don't because stores sell a lot of things because people still try to buy gifts. [H: Uhn, uhm] So, stores usually stay open, but usually everything closes down December 25 except to say hospitals. Hospitals will stay open [H: Yeah.]. Then on New Year's Day, usually things closed too. Everything closes down. [H: Oh, January (xx) all the days.] on Jan. 1. Now coming up at the end of this month is Thanksgiving [H: Uhn, uhn], and Thanksgiving is where everybody, the families get together and have a big dinner with Turkey. You know Turkey is? [H: Yes, chicken.] Right, just like chicken. [H: The man.] And basically, the reason we celebrate Thanksgiving, is when the European first came over to, to the new world, you know before when there were Indians still living here. Supposedly there was like celebration between the Indians and Pilgrims, you know about, a little bit about the history, the United States. Do you know the history at all? [H: Yeah. I know something.] Just a little bit. [H: Yeah.] Well, supposedly the Indians that were living here and the Europeans that came over they were called pilgrims. [H: Yeah, yeah.] They got together as the head of the harvest. They planted all these food and had harvest, and they just- [H: I think to the South.] Right, and they had like big dinner, because they were thankful and grateful that they got to eat [H: Yeah.]. That's where all started. That's the tradition of Thanksgiving. [H: Thanks.] And, and the Spring time we have Easter, which is like a Christian holiday, suppose to celebrate, uhn, the resurrection of Jesus [H: Uhm, uhm] like in the Spring time. Uhn, in May, [H: Uhm, uhm] there is a memorial day, which is the day where we recognize all the
people who have died in the pastime. [H: Uhn, uhn] Then in July, the
fourth of July is Independence Day. [H: Yeah.] That's United States set
up birthday. [H: It's called the birth of the Untied States.] Right. And
then, beginning of September [H: Uhm, uhm], it's Labor Day. That's
another holiday that's uhn, you just recognize all the people that work.
[H: Uhn, uhn] That's what the holiday about?

H: I want to talk about, you say the birth of the Untied States? [J: Fourth of
the July?] Yeah, there was a colony by the, the British. [J: A colony]
Yeah, colony by the British. [J: By the British, yes.] How many states?

J: There was 13 [H: 15] 13 original colonies. And what happened was, is the
British, the people that were living here [H: Uhm, uhm], the
pilgrims and things like that. They didn't like how the British, they
didn't like all the rules because they're made, they made them pay a lot of taxes. [H: Who, who did that?] The British. [H: The British.] No, the
British over England [H: Yeah, uhn] were making the people that were
living here in America [H: Uhn, uhn, in the North exactly.] Right, 13
colonies, they were making them pay like taxes [H: Uhn, uhn], and they
didn't like that. So, the people that were living here is called, I don't
know, you can't really call them Americans because they weren't
Americans yet. This, they, uhn, Thomas Jefferson, he was the second
president wrote up the Declaration of Independence [H: Uhn, uhn].
That piece of paper basically said that we are not gonna be a part of
British colony anymore. We're gonna form our own state. [H: Yeah.
There is all the men he write to it.] Right. That was called the
Declaration of Independence. That happened on July 4, 1776. [H: Ok.]
That was the formation of the United States.

H: Why the British choose the North exactly? Why they choose the Boston,
and?

J: Well, it's because when they sail over [H: Uhn, uhn] from England cross
the Altaic Ocean, that's what they end it up. Because they kind of like,
it's kind of like the straightest line between England and United States.
It just kind of where they end it up [H: Uhm, uhm] when they sail over,
so that's, that's why.

H: What, what do you think about the, the accent and the people? [J: The Indians?] I mean the people for these in the most (xx), like Boston [J:
Uhm, uhm] or South Carolina. What, what's, what change about their
personality? [J: Oh, between the states?] No, I mean the people [J:
Right.] colony (xx). You know, you know and the British [J: Uhm,
uhm] colonize like, this is Boston. I mean people who live in the Boston
[J: Right.]. You know, uhn, something like, eh, the accent that happen
in the city. Is there something change in the people? In the, in his, in their personality? [J: You mean today?] Yes, say, not today, eh, that
time. Like the accent, like in the British colonize this. I mean that their

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personalize (xx), they personalize with change about them. It's, it's still
like before, eh, their personality is still like, eh, their personality after
that colonize, [J: Change] or change, [J: Ok.] and change to the best, or
change to the-?

J: The whole reason, the whole reason that people from England came
over to the new world, United States basically, north America [H: Uhm,
um], the whole reason that came over to America is because they
wanted to practice their own religion. In England, the king of England
said, "You have to practice this religion called, it's called that was a
church of England. It was just Christian religion and, so people didn't
like that. They wanted to practice their own religion, so they came over
to the United States to practice their own religion. That's why they
came over in the first place. [H: In the Boston, you mean?] But when
they came over, they started to grown their own food. They started to
make their own business, so they started to form all their own cities.

H: So you mean, it, Boston was a good or has a trade. [J: Right.] There is a
reason?

J: So, people from Boston they were making things, and sell them back to
England. [H: Uhm, uhm] See England will give them supply, like raw
materials [H: Uhn-ha.], and then the colony will grow things and take
those raw materials and make things out of it and sell them back to
England. For what the King was doing in England, he was making them
pay heavy taxes, and these- [H: The England] Yes, the King was making
the people over America [H: Uhm, uhm] pay heavy taxes [H; Uhm,
uhm]. And the people didn't like that because they want, you know,
they didn't think it was fair [H: Yeah.]. They had, they would, you
know, making all, all the money was going back to the King, so that's
why they want to form their own country, independent from England.

H: So, about the people [J: Now.], they, they made something like batest
(xx), they made something like baretest, about the, you said, it was, it
didn't, it was not fair. [J: Right.] How are the people who live in the
Boston? [J: Right.] They didn't live baretest [J: Spell it.] Bre, bertest
(xx) (protest?), like I didn't agree with you like some group, group
people and walk in the street and say it's not fair, it's not fair like this.

J: Right. You mean how do they go about it? How do they protest?

H: I mean, eh, did they make a protest?

J: Oh, yeah, the people that were living here [H: Yeah.], the colonists [H:
Yeah], they protested it. [H: Protest that.] Have you heard of the
Boston Tea Party? [H: No.] That was the form of the protest. They, they
took out this tea. They dumped it into the Boston Harbor [H: Uhn, uhn.
So-] That was one of the protest.

H: I don't know if they protested that, protest, when they said that the King
of the Eng-, for the British [J: Uhm, uhm], they made them to pay the
taxes [J: Right], and you said it's, it's not fair. [J: No.] So, what they
did, they did something like protest for the King of British.

J: Well, they started a war [H: Uhn, uhn]. It's called the Revolutionary
War [H: Uhn, uhn, revolution] Uhn, uhn [H: There is the (xx)] And
there was, there was a war between American colonists and British [H:
Uhm, uhm], and of course, American colonists won and form the Untied
States [H: Uhn, uhn, the 13]. Right, there was 13 colonists [H: Yeah.]
and then they became the Untied States [H: Uhn, uhm]. Now the
reason why they have different states, instead of just, it's all one
country, but you know, we have the different states. The reason why
they want the different states is because each state wants to make their
own rules. [H: Yeah.] Like down in the South, they wanted to keep the
slavery. [H: Yes, in the south.] Right. And the North, they don't want
slavery, there is other things too. [H: Yeah.] But each state wanted to
make its own rules, eh.

H: So, I just want to ask about the people who live in there, the Boston, or
who live in the any city [J: Right.] that is , that was colonized. What
their change about them, is there something change after war or before
the war about their personality? Like, I don't know, [J: Why mean
what?] ok, let's say, like, the discovery of the gold. [J: Uhn, uhn] You
remember people became rich, [J: Right.] so if you look before the
discovery, they were not rich, they were poor [J: Right.] like (xx), so
this change their personality and the populations go to -

J: Ok. When they came over, they were looking for religious freedom, but
they're also looking for gold. That was another thing they were looking
for. When they came over, they didn't find any gold but the thing that
was, that was bad, that was happening was, is they were spending all
the time looking for gold, they were starving to death because they
won't plant any food. Eventually a lot of them died because they
wouldn't work and plant food. But the ones would work, the Indians
taught them like how to plant food and stuff like that, and they, after
that, they started forgetting about the gold. They started to plant food,
so they can stay alive. So, their personality change then when they
realized that they were gonna die, if they didn't start planting food and
stopped looking for gold, because a lot of them want to just get rich.
They were looking for religious freedom and they also were looking for
money, too. Uhn, is that answer your question, or-

H: Yeah. I said that this for the example about the Boston about the people
who live in the Boston, so what about their personality before the war
and after the war? Something change to the best, something change to
the bad, like, we said about the discover, people is to become rich,
became rich, and do you think it was become, going to the best after the
discovery. So how about the people who live in the Boston?
J: How do they change? [H: About the essence, ethics, like ethics more the people the war. What the war did?] Well, before, they were being controlled [H: Uhn, uhn] by the British. [H: Uhn, uhn] That's why- [H: How was, How was-] Like me give you, like in Kuwait [H: Uhn, uhn] when Sadan (xx) coming, started taking over [H: Sadan, you mean Iraq.] Yeah, when the Iraq came in [H: Uhn, uhn] and started taking over your country [H: Yeah.,] that's the best I can describe it. That's, the British were controlling them, the Americans didn't like that. They had a war and kicked them out, and afterwards, how do you feel? You feel free, you feel freedom [H: Uhm]. You can do the things you did before. Have your businesses grow, you know, economics prosperous, all of that. It's the same thing. It's, that's repeated throughout history, throughout every country. There is always somebody who wants to control somebody else. [H: Yeah.] That's why people have wars, because is always somebody, someone want to control somebody, so people fight to have the freedom. That's, that's always the bottom line whether it's economic freedom, religious freedom [H: Yeah.]. Uhn, a lot of times is over land, which has to do with economics. I don't know if I answer your question or not [H: Yeah.] [Tape A finished].

J: We were talking about the American colonists [S: Uhm, uhm] and particularly in Boston. He's wanted to know the attitudes of the people before like revolutionary war [S: Uhm, uhm], and afterwards. [H: Yeah.] But I'm, I'm, I just don't know if I getting through.

H: Yeah. I don't know but.

S: This is interesting. What was your question?

H: He said about my question because [S: What do you mean about the people?] he said-. I mean the people, their personalities [J: The Bostons, people who live in the Boston.] [S: What people? Do you mean like American people] I mean the American people. [S: Ok.] He said about the discovery, the gold, and they sold the gold [S: Uhm, uhm]. The people before the discover, they was poor but they still looking for the gold, but after that when they find that, when they found the gold, they became rich. [S: Uhm, that's the gold, in California was gold, 1849]

J: Ok, right. People was in Boston did not- [H: This is example for my question.] ok. [S: Oh, ok.]

H: In this, this case [S: Uhm, uhm], the gold change [Solomon's agreement to skip this portion regarding involvement from his part.]

J: What, uhn, after Kuwaiti graduate from high school, what path will he follow then? We go to college, learn to trade, go to work. Like first, you came over here, [H: Uhm, uhm] you will go further in education, in school, in English.

H: You mean what the students'- [J: Right. In Kuwaiti, the ones stay, what
do they do?] After the high school? [J: Right.] Uhn, actually there is, there are a lot of method. He will do like, the student can enter the university [J: Uhm, uhm] if he wants that. At the same time, he can work and became like, enter to the college.

J: Can he join the military?

H: Yeah, yeah. He can go to the military. So, if you finish the high school in Kuwait, you have like, uhn, university and college, and, uhn, the join any (xx), like military, [J: Right.] or anything. So, most of the students go to the, the university, and what about a percent (xx) go to the or work, and the company or something like for the military. But if you do will in the high school, you can go to the United States, and you know United States, or the Britain, British [J: Right.], yeah. You have the good score, but I don't know about the students, but the most of the students go the university in Kuwait [J: Right.], but there are still some of them go to the, like the company, and military.

J: Uhm! What's the population in Kuwait?

H: Population? Maybe you cannot believe me.

J: It's about 2 or 3 million.

H: No. Actually the immigration in Kuwait more than the citizen. [J: Really?] Yeah. [J: From, from Iraq?] Not, not from Iraq, like from Palestine [J: Uhm, uhm.]and Pakistan [J: Oh.] So Iran, Iran, so-, but- [J: Just within the last three years.] Yeah, exactly, exactly before the 19, exactly in 1990, the population is one million and 500. [J: Right.] And after that, and in 1992, the population was 2 million, 2 million something, but more than, almost the population was from immigration, [J: Right.] but the citizen, I can, maybe 1 million, or less than one million.

J: Uhm! Do most of the people live in apartments? Apartments or houses?

H: You mean what Kuwaiti or you mean immigration? [J: Kuwaiti] No, they live in the home. [J: Home?] Almost of them, but the immigration is really big in Kuwait, like Egypt, and Palestine [J: Uhm, uhm], and Pakistan and Iraq.

J: Is it causing problems frequently (xx)? All the immigration, does it cause any problems?

H: Uhm, there is, there are problems. I don't know. There are problems but at the same time, it's not, it's good. [J: Good.] Yeah. Like lets go to say about the teachers [J: Uhm, uhm]. All teacher in Kuwait from Egypt [J: Oh!] almost, not all, almost that 85% [J: Wao!] But this for, eh, educated one (xx), if you look to the Iran, Irani, uhn, these people is, there are some problems about them because I don't know. Because I don't know exactly what to say? [J: They have different religion.] Not about the religion, about their work. All of them, before the, before he
enter the Kuwaiti say, "I will work in something, but before." But after
when he enter Kuwait, he work another work, job, like not the same job
he say before, so it's really make a problem. [J: Right.] At the same
time, like Egypt, some of the people from Egypt and from Pakistan. [J:
Uhm!] So, this make a lot of problems about the exactly for the, uhn,
the interior of the, ministry, what is called like police, what is called the
Ministry? Ministry which work for the safe, inter or - [J: How much
(xx)] If you work in the police [J: The police?] Yeah. If you work in the
police, what's your ministry, what's called? [J: The old?] Yeah. Petrol
ministry, like the, uhm, uhm, education ministry like education, or high
education ministry.

J: What's the name?

H: The police, the interior like this. But the publication is, the problem is
that immigration. Really, you cannot see the citizens or Kuwaiti places?

J: What is uhn, what do you go on vacations? Like in Kuwait, is there, not
outside the country, but inside the country, is there vacation spot, like
down the golf? Is there beach down there or anything?

H: Yeah. There is a beach and there is a good places in Kuwait, like, uhn,
go to the beach, front to the, front to the sea, it's really a good place for
the people [J: Yeah.] visit Kuwait. And you know, there is Towers of
Kuwait, Tower Kuwait. It's a really nice building [J: Uhm!] to see all the
city, [J: Oh, ok] yeah. So, I think the population in Kuwait now is 2
million and something like 2 million 200 thousands. [J: Uhm.] Uhm, but,
you know that Kuwait is a really small and the publication, the
population is going to go up, so it's a really problem [J: Right.], but your
child over there, they will live, you know this problem for the living, to
have a home [J: Right. Uhm. Is there a lot of Americans and Europeans
working in Kuwait? I mean that's kind of noticeable.] Yeah. [J: You
might see one here, see one there] Yeah. [J: Just a few or-?] Yes, just a
few really. Just a few to see American people or British people, [J:
Right.] but you will see the people from Egyptian more than Kuwaiti [J:
Oh.], really [J: Wao!] in every place you go to.

J: Can you, can you tell the difference between somebody from Saudi
Arabia, and somebody who is from Egypt? Can you tell the difference
just by looking at them?

H: Yeah, you would, because the tradition is different. [J: Oh, because the
clothes] Yeah, clothes and- [J: But physically, just looking at their face, I
mean if they just dress like you, you cannot tell them apart, right?] I
mean if, if somebody from Saudi wear like this [J: Right], and somebody
from Egypt wear like this, you will know where is, he is from what and
from like Egypt because his face, he looks like Saudi Arabic, but, and
the, you can know what the different between, eh, between people from
Kuwait and people— [finished.]