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Native-nonnative speaker interaction:

Negotiating identities and symmetry in the target language

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1. Introduction

This study focuses on Japanese English speakers' (NNS) use of the L2 to communicate with native speakers (NS). The main point of interest is observing how NS and NNS jointly negotiate identities while using the target language. *Critical discourse analysis* (Billig, 1999) forms the central methodological approach of this study, for it a) examines the minute details of discourse practices, and b) provides a critical angle on the links between language use and larger social realities. At this stage of analysis, a *post-structuralist* perspective helps focus attention on the effects of power asymmetry unto the processes of negotiation of identities and language learning. An additional focus is placed on the impact of context unto NS and NNS's performance of identity through discourse.

2. Redefining identity as discourse performance: a more complex view of EFL in Japan

A deeply entrenched belief within the Japanese EFL context holds that NS — NNS interaction is fundamentally asymmetrical. This means that some NNS may feel at a disadvantage when communicating with NS, which can lead to feelings of detachment, non-involvement, even resistance, and a general sense of inadequacy while using the L2. Because NS possess more linguistic and communicative competence in the target language, the contention is that they are bound to exert more control throughout NS — NNS interaction. Consequently, NNS stand on the periphery, hopefully trying to move closer towards a more assertive role by observing how NS use the L2. The intended purpose here is for the NNS to learn NS behavior and eventually assert this new knowledge in meaningful situations. In other words, NNS can claim their own voice in the L2 only through contact with — and monitoring by — the NS, who then acts as gate-keeper between the learner and successful mastery of the L2. Indeed, this follows tenets of the Oral Approach (Fries &

Lado, 1957), with its emphasis on mimicking NS, habit formation, and the development of L2 grammar knowledge.

However, the body of research on NS — NNS communication, some of which will be discussed in the next section, stands in sharp contrast. One reason for this is that the popular perception of NS — NNS interaction described above overlooks three crucial *social constructionist* aspects of discourse and language use (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Hall, 1996; Kroskrity, 2000). These are: 1) language as field in which identity is a negotiated process that takes place within interactional events, 2) identity as a plurality of identities, and 3) negotiation of identities as cooperative process. Stated simply, the social-constructionist approach emphasizes the *act* of, the *performance* of, or the *process* of identity formation. Individuals do not have a single unified identity. Instead, they negotiate a plurality of identities, an act which is constantly performed through discourse. According to Luk & Lin (2007), "we speak the way we speak because of who we are, and we construct who we are by the way we speak" (p. 139). This argument borrows from Pennycook's (2004) concept of "*performativity*", which is diametrically opposed to the notion of fixed identity. Within those parameters, people's identities are never the essence of who they are, but rather the product of their performances of identities.

Post-structuralism (Foucault, 1980) provides a fourth crucial element in the equation: identity as process that is always embedded in social practices. According to this view, social structures are also represented and constantly negotiated through discursive acts. By integrating the notion of *indexicality* (Silverstein, 1976), which stipulates that utterances and linguistic signs have the capacity to point to aspects of the social context, post-structuralism assumes that social realities can influence the way individuals choose to act, especially as these choices are influenced by social structures and power inequality. This bears great significance to the current study, for asymmetry in NS — NNS interaction becomes one of the crucial factors in determining how language learners see themselves as language learners and how much *investment* (Norton, 2000) they are willing to make in the task of language learning.

The notion that learning a language is both a socio-affective and cognitive enterprise, part of a greater process of self-growth, is widely accepted by educators and researchers. But when such assumption is seen through a post-structuralist lens, the picture becomes more complex. Why are some language learners unmotivated? What factors raise learners' affective filter? Why do some learners never seem to claim a voice in the L2, despite years of learning? Of course, researching learner characteristics and revamping teaching metho-

dologies may lead towards viable solutions, yet due consideration for larger social factors influencing communication is needed. This then raises new questions: Why do some learners have more opportunities to learn the L2 than others (see Kanno, 2008, for an extensive discussion on unequal access to bilingualism in Japanese schools)? Are there elements — or ideologies — which position these learners disadvantageously? What are these ideologies? Can these be addressed through some form of critical analysis? What can learners gain from such analysis?

While access to language learning opportunities may differ, some language learners may actually perceive an L2 as a threat to their L1 identity. They may see such process as a form of *acculturation* (Schumann, 1986), leading to two possible stances, one weak and the other strong: 1) the L2 can contaminate the L1, and 2) learning the L2 is ultimately about choosing between the L1 or the L2 (for a discussion on subtractive bilingualism, see Kanno, 2008).

Yet, the idea that the L1 and the L2 are mutually exclusive — a *deficit* view of language learning — loses credibility when it is reframed within a social constructivist understanding of identity, one which departs from the notion of L1 identity as both fixed and threatened entity. By understanding identity as a process negotiated through discourse, one can gain a fresh understanding of the dynamic L1–L2 interplay and of language learning in general. Because people negotiate identities through discourse practices, acquiring greater means to engage in such practices should effectively enhance opportunities for identity negotiation. Yet, coming to this understanding requires one to realize that an L1 identity is never a fixed unit, that it does not reside deep within individual 'souls', and that its existence is not dependent on the exclusion of contrasting identities.

In Japan, this step can be more problematic, for a Japanese L1 identity is often *essentialized* (i.e., linguistic identity as equivalent to ethnic/racial identity) (McVeigh, 2002, Seargeants, 2009). To understand this process, the notion of *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1991) becomes useful. It refers to people's perceptions of the community they currently live in and wish to be a part of in the future, and of their place and role in such community. Kanno (2008) borrows from Anderson to explain the concept of national identity in the following way: "we forge our sense of belonging and loyalty to our nations chiefly through the power of our imagination" (p. 21). Therefore, a Japanese national/ethnic/linguistic identity can become a unified whole if it is both created and understood through the combined imagination of those who see themselves as possessing it. This combined imagination forms the backbone of a community, or to a greater extent, a nation. But while this community and its members conceive of themselves as possessing an essence, such perception can only

exist if it is maintained by constant imaginative input. Therefore, the "fixedness" of a Japanese identity is itself a negotiated process (highlighting the paradoxical nature of imagined communities).

Coming back to the concept of identity as discourse practice — the social constructionist approach — and to the notion of power underlined by the post-structuralist method, it is important to clarify that language is not merely a tool with which people create versions of themselves. While language contains a plethora of identity markers, it is also a site of resistance, empowerment and solidarity (Gal, 1989, Heller, 1992, Woolard, 1998, cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Bourdieu (1991, 1993) most eloquently discussed the relationship between language and power, especially through his critiques of traditional linguistics, which views language simply as a tool for communication. He argues that, while language is a tool, it is also a medium of power through which we pursue interests and develop practical competences. His notion of *capital* (e.g., symbolic, economic, social), and of differing access to capital, both recall and expand on Althusser's (1971) models of *social reproduction*. However, some critics have argued that Bourdieu's views are overly deterministic, claiming that his perspectives on power structures overlook the agentive role of humans and their capacity to effect changes. This paper stands in contrast from these criticisms. Arguing that people have different access to power and symbolic capital represents a social reality that can be observed in the real world. Yet doing so does not in any way diminish, much less dismiss, people's capacity to resist such conditions and work towards greater social equality. Indeed, Kanno (2008) points out that social inequalities exist simultaneously with elements that resist them. In this sense, Bourdieu's argument provides vital insight in determining how people can devise ways to re-establish more equalitarian rapports with one another.

This argument consistently surfaces in Park (2007) and in most post-structuralist studies on identity. In her analysis of NS — NNS interaction, Park maintains that, because asymmetrical structures in such interaction are negotiated to meet specific purposes, they are therefore fluid and subject to change. Interlocutors of different status — who hold different symbolic capital — can therefore achieve greater interactional symmetry if they desire it.

The important issue here is that, if power and asymmetry are constantly in motion between NS and NNS, it is possible to speculate that the type of interaction which foster such motion creates the ideal conditions in which NNS can develop target language communicative competence. If asymmetry was non-negotiable, it would be more problematic for NNS to engage in target language communication with NS, learn to master communicative

strategies to get their meaning across, and ultimately develop their own voice in the L2. The following section will discuss relevant research on NS — NNS interaction in English.

3. Relevant research on NS-NNS communication

In one of the earliest researches on NS — NNS communication, Long (1983) argues that comprehensible input is possible if NS speech's interactional structures are modified. He points out that NS modify their input by following three devices: *strategies* (avoiding conversational trouble), *tactics* (repairing discourse when troubles occur), and *strategies and tactics* (serving both functions). It is worth noting that these three methods can only be effective if both NS and NNS are mutually involved in active negotiation of meaning, or again in the joint construction of interactional structures. Thus, Long's comprehensible input hypothesis does not appear to position NS at an advantage over NNS for control of the interactive event. The kind of modifications he describes can only be successful if they are made in mutual and cooperative ways, once again highlighting Pennycook's (2004) notion of *performativity*.

In a similar vein, Chun, Day, Chenoweth & Luppescu (1982) report that, in NS — NNS conversation settings, only 9 percent of NNS errors were corrected by NS. These corrective feedbacks involve mostly problems with vocabulary use and discourse formulation. They find that syntax and errors of facts are less corrected by NS. These results demonstrate that NS do play the role of language expert and point of reference. But while NS actively shape NS — NNS interactions, and at the same time help NNS fulfill their communicative purposes, these researchers observe that NS do not appear to overextend their advantage much, as the low percentage of grammar correction occurrences seems to suggest.

Perhaps the strongest suggestion for NS — NNS interactional symmetry in the literature comes from Zuengler & Bent (1991), who observe whether content knowledge influences conversational participation when NS interact with NNS, and also whether NS tend to participate more actively than NNS in NS — NNS interactions in the L2. Analysis of conversations from 45 NS — NNS pairs for amount of talk, fillers, back-channels, interruptions, resistance to interruptions, and topic moves does not reveal any clear overall tendency for NS participating more actively than NNS in conversational exchanges.

Nakamura (2008) observes teacher-student talk outside the classroom setting, and how both interlocutors deploy strategies to keep the conversation going. The results show that teachers often "*recipient-design*" what they say (i.e., tailor their utterances to fit the perceived competence of the NNS), echoing Long's (1983) *strategies* device. NS do so in order to give

students an opportunity to use the L2 more confidently. This demonstrates that, once teacher-student talk focuses on fluency and less on accuracy, interlocutors' roles and identities shift from *expert-novice* to *co-participants*. In other words, once teacher-student talk moves beyond the traditional classroom instructional context, interlocutors' roles and identities are cooperatively renegotiated towards symmetry. This mirrors results from an earlier study by Poole and Patthey-Chavez (1994, in Luk & Lin, 2007: 121) which suggests that student-teacher interaction can include more negotiation of meaning in different contexts or settings.

As mentioned in the previous section, Park (2007) argues that the alignment of NS — NNS participation is asymmetrical. She notices that *requestor-requestee* identities in word search situations are common, and also that *assessor-assessed* identities emerge often as means to evaluate learners' linguistic performance. In contrast to this, Park adds that NNS "develop an NNS identity in the course of socialization through which they learn how to function as competent members of a community despite their limited linguistic abilities" (p. 354).

These two contrasting observations exemplify Kanno's (2008) argument that asymmetry exists simultaneously with forces resisting it. Yet, they also suggest the possibility that a debilitating imbalance can be created if interactants come to believe in the fixedness of unequal rapports. The next section focuses on such beliefs and their impact on discourse practices and the process of identity negotiation.

4. Interpreting NS — NNS interaction from the perspective of language ideology

Redirecting the current discussion back onto the Japanese EFL context, a few questions beg to be asked: Why do so many Japanese NNS feel at a disadvantage when interacting with NS? Why is it that, after years of studying the language, so many of them remain reluctant to communicate in it? Is it because Japanese people are "shy", as so many are tempted to believe? There are, of course, many possible explanations available: differences between L1 and L2 linguistic and discourse strategies, outdated EFL teaching methodologies, overemphasis on language assessment, and of course lack of opportunities to use the L2 in real-life contexts. Needless to say, all of these factors can directly affect learners' successful mastery of the L2, thus deserving close attention. A large portion of the current study focuses instead on the influence of *language ideologies* in shaping learners' views of the target language and how they ultimately choose to position themselves in rapport to that language.

Silverstein (1979) contends that, "ideologies about language, or linguistic ideologies, are any sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure or use" (p. 25). Woolard (in Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998) pursues this line of reasoning by arguing that: "ideologies of language are never solely about language, but instead about the ties between language and other social factors (such as gender, class or nationality)" (p. 4). As such, the notion of language ideology recalls arguments made earlier about language as both containing identity markers and as site of resistance, empowerment and solidarity.

Furthermore, this type of interpretation becomes crucial when dealing with nationalist ideologies, which, as argued above, are prevalent in Japan. Blommaert & Verschueren (in Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998), Tsui & Tollefson (2007), and Seargeants (2009) extensively discuss the impact of nationalist ideologies onto language learning and policies, especially as they pertain to the Asian EFL context. While also asserting that language is not merely a tool for communication, these researchers argue that it can become the strongest marker of national identity. Simply stated, a nationalist ideology of language holds that every word of a language is testament to the culture that creates it, and that the very use of such words determines one's allegiance to that culture. Also, a nationalist ideology of language depends on the belief in fixed and essentialized identities.

Needless to say, such ideologies can negatively affect the teaching of foreign languages. In Japan, despite the influx of English loanwords into Japanese, the extensive use of English in the media, and the sheer size of the EFL business, an ideological division between local and target cultures exists (Seargeants, 2009). The unfortunate result is that, not only do many Japanese EFL learners see themselves as unsuccessful and illegitimate English speakers, they also have difficulty envisaging non-Japanese people as potentially fluent Japanese speakers. In other words, the type of ideology described here holds that an L1 identity forms an "essence" which can never quite be transcended.

Furthermore, this ideology positions NS as ideal models for successful mastery of the L2. It also positions NNS in the ambiguous role of "illegitimate L2 users", which then places unrealistic expectations onto them. Interestingly, this condition is not limited to Japanese EFL learners living in Japan. In a study on racialization in post-secondary classrooms in Australia, Ellwood (in Kubota & Lin, 2009) comments on how complex classroom discourse structures can lead to Japanese EFL learners' silences, and further reports that "the discursive constructions of the Japanese students [she observed] position them strongly as non-native speakers" (p. 111). This dichotomization between NS and NNS — one holding the

key to target language symbolic capital, and the other struggling to gain access to such capital — actually "perpetuates the idea that monolingualism is the norm, when, in fact, precisely the opposite is true of the world at large" (Holliday, 2005: 5). Canagarajah (1999), Kachru (1992) and Pennycook (1998) seriously (and rightfully) question the notion of NS as ideal role models, describing it more or less as a "self-inflicted hurdle" English learners need to overcome in the path towards the development of L2 communicative competence.

Unfortunately, Japanese EFL institutions persist with the conviction that NS are "the rightful owners" of the language. This effectively positions learners and NS at opposite ends of an imaginary spectrum. For the majority of Japanese EFL learners who are inculcated in that belief, English becomes a language beyond their reach. To successfully master it requires one to transcend "Japanese-ness".

This particular language ideology influences the shaping of language policies in the country (see McVeigh, 2002, for an analysis of language policies in Japan). It permeates throughout the various revised plans proposed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) from the early 1990's to the present (MEXT, 2003, 2011). These plans emphasize the importance of Japanese nationals being able to use English to exchange with foreign cultures and promote Japanese culture to the world. However, a closer inspection of the proposed policies reveals a strong emphasis on the dichotomization of local and target languages and cultures referred to above. For one, the very idea of foreign cultures — and of foreign language learning — takes root in the belief that the outside world *is* the western world, especially the United States and England. Thus, gaining access to this world requires mastery of these two specific varieties of English. In addition, the underlined objective is to promote Japanese culture to the world, and not to promote the concept of Japanese learners as world citizens. While learning English may provide Japanese learners with a window into the world, the idea is quickly overshadowed by the notion that the rest of the world needs to understand Japan more. This subtle yet significant ideological shift becomes easily excusable because, in the end, English is the tool with which both of these contrasting objectives can be achieved. Sadly, none of the MEXT policies come close to addressing issues of English as an international language, of Japanese EFL learners' own place among the more than 1.4 billion English speakers currently populating the world, and of communication in the L2 involving other NNS. To sum up, foreign language learning policies in Japan follow a particular language ideology which places both native and target languages (and cultures) in a fixed and mutually exclusive relationship. No wonder the task of learning English appears daunting to so many.

Coming back to the study, this intense focus on *native-speakerism* (Holliday, 2005) may solidify an unequal distribution of power/symbolic capital between NS and NNS. However, it is important to refrain from reaching overly deterministic conclusions. After all, changes are always possible. For example, if educators pay closer attention to a) the impact of contextual settings onto NNS's ability to deploy L2 communicative competence, b) language tasks design, and c) the importance of addressing language ideology issues in the classroom, they can effectively encourage learners to claim a voice in the L2.

5. The study

While the 3 sections above provide a theoretical background, the following five sections focus on more minute details of NS — NNS interaction. More specifically, analysis will try to demonstrate how NS and NNS negotiate identities throughout ongoing interaction, with a special emphasis on how asymmetry is negotiated. Special attention will be paid to instances when learners' attempts at negotiating various identities are limited.

With these objectives in mind, data collected will be observed through *critical discourse analysis* (Billig 1999). This methodological approach emphasizes the importance of context to discourse and identity processes. Furthermore, it borrows from post-structuralism in that discourse is understood to include a) negotiation of identities, and b) the imposition of power structures upon individuals and groups through dominant discourse practices and ideologies. In other words, CDA privileges the analysis of ideological stances in the formation of identities by concentrating on how these are negotiated through discourse, and how this process is related to social factors.

However, observations made throughout this analysis are not meant to define all Japanese EFL learners, nor are they meant to be representative of all NS — NNS interactions. The goals are instead to uncover the processes at play in NS — NNS interaction in the Japanese EFL context and locate potential problems which may impede NNS's ability to negotiate identities in the L2.

This study focuses on two types of NS — NNS interactional contexts: one NS with two NNS, and one NS with one NNS. Perhaps the biggest difference between both settings is that the NNS in the latter samples did not have to speak in English with, or in the presence of, another NNS. Both types of interactions were evaluative in nature (the communicative tasks themselves were part of an end-of-semester course assessment), yet special care was given to rendering the interactions as natural an as relaxing as possible.

6. Participants

One first year Speaking class from the Humanities Department at Hokkai Gakuen University was observed. This class was ranked 3rd best among six groups of first year students, based on their average TOEIC score (480). This first year group had 18 students (7 males and 11 females), who received instruction via teacher-produced materials. The commercial four skills book *Touchstone* (McCarthy et als., 2005) Level 2 was used. At the time the data were collected, this group had received 13 Speaking classes (one class a week lasting 90 minutes each, for a total of 1170 minutes of instruction).

When asked about their own L2 communicative competence, most concluded that they did not possess sufficient skills for successful interaction. Their main point of interest in the Speaking course was to talk with friends and classmates about various topics, either in English or Japanese. As such, unless specified by the instructor, the L2 was not automatically used to communicate. In other words, a "target language community" had yet to be created. Nevertheless, having just begun their tertiary education a few months earlier, their desire to behave well and generally be "good students" was rather strong. As a result, these students were quite willing to follow the teacher's instructions to the best of their ability. Above all, students did in fact have plenty of opportunities to interact with classmates and the teacher in the target language, making the Speaking class a rather successful one.

Most of them believed that English is an important language in the world, and that their access to symbolic capital — which according to Bourdieu (1991) is transferrable to *linguistic, economic and social capital* — is to a certain extent dependent on their mastery of English. This was perceived to be native speaker-like mastery. Most of them enjoyed learning the language, especially when taught by an NS teacher.

Nevertheless, for the large majority of NNS in this study, English use was limited to the language classroom context, and remained marginal to their immediate lives. Also, when learners were asked to use English in the classroom with their classmates, a feeling of uneasiness could be felt at times. One possible explanation for this is that L2 interaction between two NNS challenged their identity as Japanese L1 speakers. For them, exhibiting one's full range of English speaking abilities in front of other Japanese L1 speakers was a face-threatening act. While using the L2 actively in class would ensure good grades, it was also interpreted as "showing off" in front of other NNS. In some instances during in-class target language interaction, students exhibited a kind of behavior Joseph (2004, in Kamada, 2011: 9) calls "*Englishing*". This strategy of "acting out" English was manifested in very

different ways: a) use of very strong American pronunciation, overuse of back-channels, disregard for target language pragmatic rules of politeness, etc., or b) overuse of *katakana* English. This strategy is perceived to be the affirmation of an L1 identity, and a way to mitigate the threat of L2 use unto this identity.

7. Instructional approach

Throughout the 13 weeks of instruction, students in the Speaking 1 class learned through common CLT methodologies, i.e. introduction to grammar and vocabulary, pattern recognition and manipulation, occasional vocabulary and phrase translation, dialog practice, speaking strategy development, and reading/controlled discussions. Instruction periodically focused on greetings and basic conversation management strategies. From a functional perspective, students were asked to engage in L2 interaction with both NS (the author — instructor) and NNS (classmates) by:

- starting a conversation with someone they don't know or don't usually speak with;
- asking questions to get to know people;
- talking about themselves, family members and friends, and about things they like;
- finding common points with their interlocutor(s).

The central pragmatic awareness-raising strategy was to have learners devise their own strategies for initiating and maintaining the flow of conversation. For that, short video samples of TV shows which included greetings, apologies, requests, and compliments were shown. This approach is justified by Tatsuki and Nishizawa's (2005) comparison of compliment and compliment responses in television-produced communication and naturally-occurring data, which demonstrated that the type of communication found on television is a reliable source of pragmalinguistic behavior. The compliment samples are especially useful pragmatic teaching elements because they help learners understand compliments — not just greetings — as effective conversation openers. While viewing the video samples, students were asked to take notes on what caught their attention. Then, a general discussion based on their notes followed. After that, students were asked to role-play short conversation exchanges using the information collected. This particular activity extended textbook content towards a pragmatic analysis of authentic target language production. Furthermore, this activity was specifically designed to shift learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge from awareness to procedural knowledge. In addition, DCTs were used to focus learners' attention more onto contextual information (differences in interlocutors' roles and relationship, etc.) and how such information influences word choice and pragmatic strategies for speech

act rendition.

Throughout the semester, students had been instructed on greetings, on how to initiate conversations, and how to maintain conversational flow by reacting to each other's comments. The instructor consistently brought learners' attention to the importance of listening closely to their partners' comments. The underlying objective was to emphasize the need to develop both active speaking and listening skills throughout L2 interaction. A common activity involved groups of three students: one student would begin a conversation, and the subsequent utterances by other speakers could not be in question form but only in statement form. The interlocutors would rotate, continuously adding to a statement made by the previous interlocutor. Gradually, a conversation would build up on a single topic. This exercise not only departed from the question-answer conversation pattern so common in CLT classrooms across Japan, it highlighted the need for learners to acknowledge the illocutionary force of interlocutors' utterances so as to jointly construct meaning in more natural and dynamic fashion. It was believed that this strategy would convincingly demonstrate learners that they could express genuine ideas and find their own voice in the L2.

Moreover, a teaching element that was often brought up throughout the semester concerned the interactional structure of interviews. It was often argued that this type of interaction usually tilts the power balance permanently into the interviewer's favor. This is because interviews are fundamentally shaped by questions from the interviewer, which forces the interviewee to respond in particular ways, thereby limiting the kind of fluidity needed for more democratic types of exchanges. As a result, students were encouraged to avoid asking series of questions to one another because doing so would limit their creativity and reduce opportunities to negotiate interactional symmetry.

8. Method of analysis

While this study includes analysis of micro-identities (interviewer, interviewee, meaning clarifier, etc.), it also attempts to observe macro-identities (language learner, teacher, Japanese national, Canadian national, etc.). In this sense, a link between the minute events that unfold in discourse and those larger identities (connected with ideologies, cultural values, and a deeper sense of self) is required. For that, Norton (2000) provides a model of post-structural analysis and of ethnographic studies that reveals how language learning experience and context affect learners' investment in the language learning task and their sense of agency while using the L2. Norton argues that "how a person understands his/her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how

the person understands possibilities for the future is the real focus of studies on identity" (p. 5). Parallel to this, Kramsch (1991, cited in Luk & Lin, 2007: 36) states that, "there are possible sociocultural forces behind interlocutors' language practices in cross-cultural settings, and understanding these forces is best done by investigating the spoken words."

The theory of *Language Socialization* (LS), conceived and developed by Ochs and Schieffelin (in Dufon, 2008), provides additional grounding for the current study. LS theory is inherently developmental. It focuses on the process of language acquisition over time by examining language use between experts and novices in naturalistic interactive contexts. Microanalyses of this language use are then linked to macro-level analyses of cultural values, beliefs and practices in informal and institutional contexts (Ochs, 1993). According to LS theory, the relationship between language and socialization is two-fold: socialization to use language and socialization through the use of language. Socialization to use language refers to those instances when learners are taught what to say in a given context. Socialization through the use of language refers to the process by which learners acquire knowledge of the culture in question as well as of their status and role and their associated rights and obligations as they learn the language. Dufon (2008) points out that,

> "as part of the process of socialization, each person develops both individual and cultural identities, which are associated with his or her beliefs and values, and which manifest themselves in the ways in which language is used and social roles are enacted; likewise the ways in which language is used and social roles are enacted reinforce those identities and their associated values and beliefs." (p. 28)

The concept of socialization should not be understood as a version of Althusser's (1971) notion of social reproduction. Instead, it refers to a process of mutual legitimization performed by interlocutors throughout the communicative act. For example, in teacher-student talk, performing a teacher or a student identity requires the input of both interlocutors, which makes this process of legitimization possible. In other words, interactional roles are never imposed by one interlocutor on another, but rather negotiated and validated by both.

9. Data analysis

Section 9.1 focuses on 3 of the 18 2NNS — NS samples recorded. Each conversation involved one student from the third group, one from the second group (another first year Speaking class), and one NS (a 60 year old female American EFL instructor). The NNS in

most samples did not know each other. These conversations took place in a room adjacent to a large computer room where all the students were engaged in online listening and speaking tasks. For each conversation, two students were asked to move to the adjacent room and have a 2-minute casual conversation with the NS.

Section 9.2 follows with the NNS — NS samples. Again, 3 of 19 sample recordings collected are analyzed. These were recorded one week prior to Samples One, Two and Three. Each conversation was conducted by one student from the third group (none included students from the second group) and one NS (the author, a 35 year old male French Canadian EFL instructor). Each took place in a remote corner of a large computer room where all the students were engaged in online listening and speaking tasks. For each conversation, a student was asked to come and meet the NS and have a 3-minute casual conversation.

Finally, the two types of samples are analyzed comparatively in Section 9.3. For that, analysis of both types of samples focuses on the same students, so as to see how specific NNSs use the L2 to negotiate identities in different contexts. Samples One and Four focus on the same student: an 18 years old Japanese male student. Samples Two and Five focus on the same student: an 18 years old Japanese female student. Finally, Samples Three and Six focus on the same student: also an 18 years old Japanese female student. In order to facilitate a comparison between the NS — 2NNS and the NS — NNS samples, Samples Four, Five and Six were cut short after the second minute.

9.1 The NS — 2NNS samples

In the transcripts below, the code "v-L1" refers to the use of Japanese. "//" are used to include interjection made while someone is speaking. "..." denote a pause.

9.1.1 Sample One

NNS1: Hello.
NS: Hi.
NNS1: Hi. My name is (first, last name).
NS: Oh, (repeats first name).
NNS1: (says first name).
NS: OK. My name is (first name). Nice to meet you.
NNS2: (shadows) Nice to meet you.
NNS1: (turns gaze to NNS2)
NS: My name is (first, last name). (bows head)

NNS2: Oh...nice to meet you.
NNS1: (shadows) nice to meet you. (slight head bow)
(silence)
NNS2: (v-L1 to NNS1, smiling and wondering what to do)
NNS1: (looks away)
NS: It's hot today, isn't it?
NNS1: (mumbles and bows head) I'm very hot.
NS: (bows head in acquiescence)
NNS1&2: (look at each other and smile, look in many directions)
NNS2: (v-L1 expressing confusion)
NS: (looking at NNS1) What would you like to talk about?
NNS1&2: (mumble and look in all directions; v-L1 as filler)
NNS2: What movies do you like?
NS: Oh. I like science fiction.
NNS2: Science fiction.
NS: Yes. I saw the Star Wars movies. And I like, uh... Oh, I like action/(NNS1 bows head)/, like Die Hard.
NNS1: (gestures towards his chest) I like...
NS: Oh.
NNS1: I like Die Hard, too.
NS: You like Die Hard, too?
NNS1: Yeah.
NS: Oh ... They're very good.
NNS1: Yeah.
(long silence, both NNSs are bowing and smiling, NS looks at NNS2, and looks back at NNS1)
NS: How about you? What kind of movies/oh/do you like?
NNS1: I like horror movie.
NS: Oh...(gestures with hand to show negation)
NNS2: (looking at NS) I don't like horror movie.
NS&NNS1: (laugh)
NNS1: Japanese horror is very scary/NS: scary/yeah.
NS: (looking at NNS2) How about you? What kind of movies do you like?
NNS2: Mmh... I like... suspense.

NS: Oh... What's your favorite movie?
NNS2: Mmmh I like movie=
NS: Sorry. (looking back at NNS1) That's all we have time for today (gestures for students to leave)
NNS1&2: (laugh and show surprise) Thank you. (They leave the room)
NS: (Turns around)

This sample reveals a type of NS — NNS exchange in which interlocutors' roles and involvement are negatively affected by preconceived ideas of such roles and of the language task itself. During the greeting phase, NS bows to NNS in an attempt at bridging a perceived cultural gap, which is seen as an impediment to communication. When the conversation seems difficult to get off the ground, the NS initiates small talk about the weather, but this fails to meet its objective. When it is clear to everyone that talk is problematic, the NS assumes control and asks "What would you like to talk about?", which reminds the two NNS that they are being evaluated within a limited time frame. NNS1 and NS do manage to bridge the gap when expressing a mutual taste for the *Die Hard* movie series, but this initiative is short lived. NS tries to revive the conversation again, but chooses to do so in collaboration with NNS1. NNS2 seems to be rather detached and uncommunicative. At the end of the conversation, he gains more of a footing in the conversation, but his attempt at expressing a personal idea is interrupted by NS, who calls for the end of the conversation, thus asserting her authority over the two NNS. Overall, the two NNS fail to claim a voice in the L2 by willfully choosing a passive role, which forces the NS to assert leadership on many instances during the 2-minute long conversation.

The greeting sequence automatically leading to a silence deserves attention. Prior to the data recording session, the NNS were specifically instructed to be active in initiating the exchange. In preparation for this, explicit pragmatic instruction strategies focused on English greetings, and there was ample opportunities for in-class practice. Also, at the beginning of the recording, the NS is careful not to initiate talk. Nevertheless, the greeting fails to successfully initiate interaction. This can mean two things: in-class instruction on L2 pragmatic strategies does not always lead to learning and actual behavior if learners do not perceive an immediate need for such instruction, or simply that bridging the gap between in-class language learning and actual language use was, in this case, unsuccessful.

We can also see quite clearly that all three interlocutors have trouble establishing rapport. There doesn't seem to be much that the participants can share. The age differ-

ence between the two NNS and the NS is rather wide, so this may explain why the interlocutors have trouble finding something to talk about. But since Samples Two and Three do not appear to contain such problem, this explanation may not be viable after all.

The two NNS had been suggested prior to the recordings to inquire who was a Nippon Ham Fighters fan (a local baseball team) and who liked the Harry Potter series. These possible questions provided possible avenues towards which the interaction could be directed, yet the two NNS simply do not bother to go into these subjects. They do show surprise and confusion as to why the conversation seems so hard to develop, but do so in their L1 with one another. They also avoid the NS's gaze quite often. This indicates that they do not see much value in engaging in L2 interaction with the NS. Moreover, it shows that they put the responsibility for the conversational thrust unto the NS. In short, they perceive the interaction not as a context in which they can express personal ideas in English with an NS but rather as a task in which they are required to produce basic utterances for evaluative purposes (the NS acting as the evaluator). When they realize that time has run out and that they had not spoken much, they look at each other and laugh somehow derisively. To them, the whole experience appears to have been a waste of time. The two NNS may have failed to understand the purpose of the task. But they do not show any willingness to clarify such misunderstanding. Thus, they choose to be passive and bond with each other in the L1.

Understanding the two NNS's reluctance to speak and their expectation of the NS to demonstrate leadership — i.e., investment — requires a look at ideology. For these learners, the use of English to communicate genuine thoughts and feelings is fundamentally awkward, even culturally inappropriate. They are not convinced of the need to use the L2, probably because they have yet to conceive of themselves as belonging to an L2 community. This interpretation recalls the notion of imagine communities. Yet, at the same time, they expect the NS to make things easy for them, to facilitate interaction in the L2. Because they see the task as lacking genuineness, and because NS does not appear to have met their expectations, their motivation to use the L2 is negatively affected. As a means to deal with the awkwardness, the two NNS assert their language learner (as opposed to language user) identity in a mutually cooperative fashion by a) code-switching, b) intensifying the "foreigner accent" (something not transcribed here, yet present in the recording), c) engaging in "acting up" in English, and d) "bluffing" the L2 communicative act. These moves consequently force the NS to assert her own institutionally assigned role as teacher and language expert. The end result is that neither the two NNS nor the NS conclude the interactive task with a sense of satisfaction.

9.1.2 Sample Two

NNS2: Hello

NS: Oh, hi, hi.

NNS2: How are you?

NS: I'm fine./Uh/Yes. Uh huh. My name's (first name)

NNS2: Oh, my name is (first name)

NS: (bows to NNS2)

NNS1: My name is (first name).

NS: (looks at NNS1) Oh, Nice to meet you.

NNS1: Nice to meet you, too.

NNS2: (looks at both NS and NNS1) Oh (laughs)

NS: (looks at both JES 1&2 to see who is going to speak first)

NNS1: Do you like baseball?

NS: Baseball? Oh, sometimes I watch it...on TV.

NNS1: Do you know Nippon Ham Fighters?

NS: Oh yes yes.

NNS1: Are you a...fan?

NS: Yes, uh huh.

NNS1: Ah (laughs and looks at NNS2)

NS: (looks at both NNS1&2, then at NNS1) Did you go to a Nihon Ham Fighters game, at the Sapporo Dome?

NNS1: No I.../Oh/I...My father likes Nippon Ham Fighters /Oh/and he (inaudible) goes to.../I see/(inaudible)

NNS2: Have you ever seen Harry Potter's movie?

NS: Yes, I/Oh/have, yes, yes.

NNS2: Uh...new, new movie...last Harry Potter

NS: (nods in acquiescence)

NNS2: Do...did you see?

NS: Well, I want to see it. It will come out on Saturday.

NNS2: Oh. (laughs)

NS: Uh, July 16th. So/Uh/I'm looking forward to it. How about you? (gestures towards NNS2) Do you like Harry potter movies?

NNS2: Mmmh...so so./mmh/I watched first Harry Potter...but (gestures) no...other movie no, I didn't (laughs)

NS: Oh, I see.
NNS1&2: (laugh, look at each other and at NS)
NNS1: (looks at NS) Where are you from?
NS: I'm from the United States, I'm from America
NNS1: Mmh. (pause)
NS: OK, that's all we have time for. (gestures for students to leave) Thank you.
NNS1&2: Thank you (laugh and wave hands)
NS: Bye bye.

This sample shows a more active type of NS — NNS exchange, especially when compared with the previous one. The most obvious sign of this is how they try to include the NS in the conversation. However, what strikes most here is the sudden topic shifts. Neither of the NNS use the conversational management strategies discussed in class (introduction of topics, use of back-channels, moving away from the interview format by responding to comments with additional comments, etc.). Instead, they seem more concerned with asking Harry Potter and Nippon Ham Fighters questions to NS, thinking that this is the main communicative task to fulfill in order to be evaluated positively. Once the two topics have run their course, however, the two NNS no longer see the need to perform agentive roles.

Both NNS seem to have difficulty talking with the NS simultaneously. This trend, in fact, appears in all 18 samples collected. Speakers' roles are usually assigned when an interlocutor ends his/her verbal input, which is followed by a short silence and often eye contact, after which a different interlocutor can then initiate another communicative move. In other words, silence seems to be the main cue for turn-taking, which means that when someone is speaking the others are waiting quietly. This has the effect of dividing each sample conversation effectively into three parts: NNS1 — NNS2 interaction, NNS1 — NS interaction, and NNS2 — NS interaction. There is very little deviation from these patterns, and so it is possible to suggest that the fixedness of this type turn-taking strategy may limit interlocutors' opportunities to speak.

Near the end of the conversation, the two NNS choose to address the NS's identity as white American female. The question "*Where are you from?*" seems rather out of context, or even inappropriate, especially because it surfaces abruptly after a discussion about personal tastes in movies and sports. Therefore, it is clearly a strategy to deal with two significant sources of tension: 1) an inability to pursue an ongoing topic of conversation, and 2) the ethnic dilemma raised by the NS. "*Where are you from?*" does not contribute much

substance to the interaction, and the NS simply responds to the inquiry by providing the information required, a move which is then met with the response “Mmh”, followed by a pause.

9.1.3 Sample Three

NNS1: Thank you. (looks away from NS, then looks at NNS2 entering the room)
NS: (gestures at both students to begin without her)
NNS2: Hello.
NNS1: Hello.
NNS2: My name is (first name, last name).
NNS1: My name is (first name, last name).
NNS2: Nice to meet you.
NNS1: Nice to meet you.
NNS2: (laughs) Bye the way, have you ever seen Harry Potter movies?
NS: (approaches group)
NNS1: Yes, I have. Uh... I have wa, watched uh...first movie.
NNS2: Oh...last week...uh, Harry Potter movie...uh, is uh in (v-L1 referring to television) and...(inaudible)
NNS1: (inaudible)
NNS2: You...?
NNS1: No, I was...eh...(v-L1 referring to part-time job)/Ah/(laughs)
NNS2: Oh...
NS: (gesturing towards NNS2) Do you like Harry Potter?
NNS2: Yeees. (laughs)
NS: Ah.
NNS2: I like Emma Watson.
NS: Oh, I see. Uh huh.
NNS1: Me, too.
NS: (looks at NNS1) Yeah. She’s very cute.
NNS1: (laughs)
NS: Very beautiful.
NNS2: Oh...yeah yeah.
NNS1: I have, uh...(inaudible) Actually...uh...she use...uh...(inaudible, gesturing a clothing item)

NNS2: Eeeeh.
NS: (moves towards NNS1 as if unable to hear)
NNS1: Yeah, same design.
NNS2: That sounds great.
NS: Uh, I'm sorry...what? What do you have?
NNS1: Uh...Emma Watson's...(inaudible)...uh...
NS: Parka?
NNS1: (nods)
NS: Oh, really?
NNS1: Pink, it's pink.
NS&NNS2: Oh...
NS: Nice fashion.
NNS2: (looks at NNS1) This summer...Harry Potter's...new movie...starting (looks at NS).
NS: Yes. This Saturday. It starts/Really?/this Saturday July 16th.
NNS2: Really?
NS: Yes.
NNS2: Oh... I want to see.
NNS1: (laughs)
NS: Me, too. Yeah. I'm waiting.
NNS2: (laughs)...Uh...by the way, (laughs, looks at NNS1) do you...do you...
NS: OK, thank you very much (gestures for students to leave) Thank you.
NNS1&2: (laugh) Thank you.
NS: Bye.

Here, we can see that, while the interaction begins in the L2, it gradually moves towards the L1. Only when the NS enters the conversation does the exchange return to the L2. In addition, the two NNS seem to be creating a bond based on keeping the NS outside the talk. As they actively discuss shared taste in actors and clothes, the fact that NNS1 cannot find the right English word for a particular piece of clothing, thus making it difficult for NS to know what she is talking about, doesn't seem to create a problem for the learners. NNS2 understands what is meant because of the use of the L1, which incidentally keeps the NS out of the conversation. In short, while there appears to be some genuine exchange of meaning in this conversation, when a misunderstanding comes up the learners fail to deal with it in the

L2. Consequently, the NS remains on the periphery of the interaction. Near the end of the exchange, however, the NS has become a more active participant, and both NNS recognize her presence more explicitly. But when the conversation is about to end, NNS2 asks NNS1 a question. This initiative is interrupted by NS's verbal cue to end the conversation, a move which is met with laughter and a "*Thank you*" uttered in chorus.

Code-switching between the two NNS here might be interpreted as a strategy of compensating for linguistic shortcomings. But since the NNS fail to produce an L2 repair to actually resolve the problem and bond again with the NS, such code-switching becomes instead a strategy of rejecting an L2 identity. In that respect, Sample Three and Sample One share similarities. This process has been observed by Kamada (2011) in her study of Japanese nationals from families of mixed-parentage. She argues that Japanese teenagers of mixed-parentage perform acts of Englishing — use of poor English pronunciation, code-switching, etc. — to empower themselves. By rejecting English in certain contexts, thus claiming a Japanese identity within a discourse of homogeneity, these teenagers can negotiate identities that are non-threatening and inclusive. Likewise, the process of code-switching in the current sample is geared towards the affirmation of "Japanese-ness" in the presence of an NS, and shows how language can be a site of resistance, empowerment and solidarity (Gal, 1989, Heller, 1992, Woolard, 1998, cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

9.2 The NS — NNS samples

The same rules for transcription as in the NS — 2NNS have been followed. However, non-verbal behavior could not be noted because these samples were not filmed on camera but were only audio recordings.

9.2.1 Sample Four

NNS: (v-L1, asking the NS for permission to begin the interaction, combined with laughter) Hello, Mr. Bouchard.

NS: Hey there. It's hot today.

NNS: Yeah. Eeeeh. So...what sports do you like?

NS: Uh... to watch or to do?

NNS: ...uhm...both both.

NS: OK. Uh, watching sports I would have to say soccer is one of the greatest sports/yeah/and uh I'm a huge fan of uh Fighters.

NNS: Fighters.

NS: Fighters, so I like baseball/uh/playing...I would say...jogging is number one

NNS: Jogging? (laughing)

NS: Just running... and I play baseball and soccer sometimes.

NNS: So I heard you play baseball in the morning.

NS: Yep. Yeah yeah/because/we call it (v-L1 referring to a local amateur baseball league).

NNS: Yeah where where did you uh where your position?

NS: Uh I'm uh right field/oh right field (inaudible)/right field and yeah not good/(laughing)/Usually the worst players are/(laughing)/in the right field. Yeah... I play uh my uh I'm the eighth batter number eight

NNS: Ah (laughing)

NS: So I'm not very good/(laughing)/that's right yeah/yeah/I never hit this season uh zero no hit/(laughing)/(laughing) last uh last year I had uh average of point four fifty ... last last year

NNS: Four fifty

NS: Four fifty good uh?

NNS: Yeah

NS: Uh how are you?

NNS: (v-L1 expressing acquiescence) uh so I have played baseball for ten years/uh huh/until high school. Now I play...(mispronounced word) lacrosse (laughing)

NS: Lacrosse. What position were you in in in ... baseball?

NNS: Baseball. So I my position was third/third/third base

NS: That's very difficult actually/yeah/And batting usually?

NNS: So... first one first

NS: First batter?

NNS: First batter.

NS: What was your average?

NNS: Yes.

NS: What was your average?/uhhh.../Average. Your batting average?

NNS: (v-L1 expressing that he hadn't thought about it)

In this sample, NNS plays a much more active role than in Sample One, where he was the passive NNS2. He responds quite readily to NS's input, and appears to be willing to explore a single topic in greater depth. He expresses a certain degree of interest in the

conversation, as can be observed in his reaction to the NS's self-depreciating comments ("*Usually the worst players are in the right field*", "*I'm the eighth batter*", "*So I'm not very good*", and "*I never hit this season*"). This signals that both interlocutors are engaged in the creation of a more enjoyable and relaxed atmosphere. But perhaps more significantly, unlike his choice of identity in Sample One as passive learner, he does not seem to place responsibility for maintaining the flow of communication unto the NS's shoulders alone. This is perhaps the most significant shift in his approach to negotiating identities.

However, he is still reluctant to provide personal information unless explicitly asked by the NS. Instead, he prefers to question the NS in order to make him talk. Yet, interestingly, his use of questions is not a means to gain more control over the interactional event, for the NS clearly guides the conversation. In other words, NNS is still very much concerned with performing his institutionally-sanctioned identity as student and language learner (Luk & Lin, 2007). This prompts the NS to reverse roles (from interviewee to interviewer) in order to encourage NNS's contribution to the conversation.

NNS's limited number of utterances (and their occasional recasting) hints towards the possibility that he has difficulty moving beyond the impression that he is being evaluated by the NS. So, he chooses to "play it safe", thereby limiting the creativity of his utterances. He doesn't appear interested in taking risks (e.g., interrupting and asking for clarification, commenting on the NS's ideas, more active back-channeling, etc.). The conversation, in short, is very close to a typical classroom exchange where questions are asked and answers are given, and where the real focus is not on communicating of genuine ideas but on demonstrating linguistic competence.

At the end of the sample, the NS asks "*What was your average?*", to which the NNS responds "*Yes*". Here, the question beginning with "*what*" appears to be perceived as a statement (perhaps as "*That was a good average*", to be met with an affirmative response), but the illocutionary force was clearly misinterpreted, forcing the NS to repeat the question, which seems to create further complication for the NNS, who then resorts to the L1 for a response. This could indicate that, when faced with the need to repair misunderstandings, the NNS needs to assert his L1 to position himself as a Japanese speaking English language learner for whom learning the L2 is difficult and challenging. Considering that repairing L2 misunderstandings in the L2 is a crucial part of the language learning process, such strategy greatly impedes NNS's development of effective communicative strategies in the target language.

9.2.2 Sample Five

NS: Start.

NNS: Hi.

NS: Hi.

NNS: Uh how are you?

NS: Ah very hungry.

NNS: Oh/starving/(laughing) Oh today I want to know about your educational plan

NS: Oh/uh/educational plan...

NNS: Mhhh...uh your...thinking/My thinking?/yes uh because I when when when first class/mh hmm/I was moved your=

NS: Oh... what I said

NNS: Yes

NS: I forgot what I said (laugh)

NNS: (laugh) uh uh mmh... (v-L1) Language is not important

NS: Ah...

NNS: Uh smiling (v-L1)/mhhh/gesture is more important

NS: That's right./yes/Now I remember we saw the babies

NNS: (laugh) yes yes yes.

NS: Yeah oh interesting/yes/so do you want to be an English teacher/uuuhh.../or a math teacher Japanese teacher?

NNS: I don't...I don't I don't/uh/want become teacher but I...I am be interested in English/ah/or another culture... another country's culture (laugh)

NS: Another culture uhm/yeah yeah/do you for what purpose? For jobs or...just for yourself?

NNS: Uh...yourself

NS: Oh/uh/OK interesting. So what's my...do you have questions?

NNS: Uuh

NS: My thinking I/Aahh (laugh)/don't know

NNS: Yeah...uh (v-L1, meaning "if so") uuuhhh... most important thing/uh/when... we=

NS: Communicate?

NNS: Yes yes.

NS: The most important thing when we communicate is to I think to try to know what the other person/ahhh/is thinking./uh/when you are talking you are trying to ... you talk about yourself/yeah/but you also...putting a mirror in front of the other person/uh uh/as you are trying to learn what the other person is.../uh/thinking/uh/what they like/uh/and try to connect like that/ yeah/and it's not always easy/uh/sometimes it's very very/yeah/difficult.

At the beginning of this sample, the NS's directive "*Start*" brings attention to his role as evaluator. Yet both interactants rapidly adjust to meet the task at hand and negotiate more symmetrical roles. Moreover, throughout this conversation there are very few pauses, and both speakers' right to speak is asserted without confusion or interruptions in the flow of communication.

The NNS affirms her choice of topic in the statement "*today I want to know about your educational plan*". The NS repeats the noun phrase "*educational plan*" almost as an interrogative. This is interesting because the NNS's choice of the statement "*today I want to know about your educational plan*" to negotiate an identity other than language learner appears to surprise NS. In response to that surprise, NNS then recasts her statement: "*your...thinking*". This does not seem to clarify things for the NS, who repeats the noun phrase "*My thinking?*", this time explicitly as an interrogative utterance. At this point, the NNS feels the need to provide further explanation, so she states "*yes uh because I when when when first class I was moved your =*", at which point the NS understands the NNS's intention (and even seems flattered by it). He responds "*Oh... what I said*", which is met with an affirmative response.

In this quick exchange, both NS and NNS try to embody different roles: the learner attempting to claim a different identity in the L2, and the teacher showing genuine surprise at the NNS's active push towards interactional symmetry. This is a good example of a temporary opportunity for interlocutors to momentarily assume different identities. This particular section of the sample becomes a kind of leitmotiv, or focal point, for the rest of the conversation. Even if the NS gradually reasserts his control over the conversation by embodying his role as educator/person of knowledge, a role which is incidentally legitimized by the NNS throughout the exchange, there is the impression that both interlocutors shared something meaningful, and that more symmetrical rapports have been created.

There are quite a good number of back-channels and interjections in this sample. Comparing NNS's performance in Sample Two, we can extrapolate that a change in context

(being the only NNS) and of conversation partner is of great benefit to her. The result is that she demonstrates a higher degree of communicative competence through the use of various conversation management strategies. According to Luk & Lin (2007), "for any interactions to be successful, dialogic moments displaying the process of interanimation and interpenetration are prerequisite" (p. 55). However, in the sample above, NNS uses back-channels mostly to express agreement with NS, whereas generally speaking back-channeling is based on negotiation and not agreement alone.

In the utterance "*I don't...I don't I don't/uh/want become teacher*", she repeats the negative form "*don't*" in an attempt to have NS validate her linguistic choice, appealing to the NS's identity as teacher. He approves with "*uh*". Yet, despites NNS's repeated attempts at achieving linguistic accuracy, the NS almost never corrects her. This lends support to Chun, Day, Chenoweth & Luppescu's (1982) findings that, in NS — NNS conversations, syntax and errors of facts are not often corrected by NS. This also shows that NS tend not to overextend their target language advantage. Also, NNS states that she does not actually wish to become a teacher, which establishes her own independence from NS as educator.

Throughout the conversation, NS performs his teacher identity by providing scaffolded help, which does bring asymmetry back into interaction. But the most explicit assertion of this identity occurs at the very end, when he speaks extensively about his own personal views on communication. This move is specifically aimed at educating NNS. While this is a logical response to NNS's initial indirect request "*today I want to know about your educational plan*", it goes against the agreed upon objective of the communicative task, which was originally to increase NNS's chances to speak and claim a voice in the L2. This shows that the NS values a repositioning of himself as teacher, thus fulfilling his institutional role as expected by NNS.

9.2.3 Sample Six

NS: OK. Start.

NNS: Hello/Hello/How are you today?

NS: Very hungry today.

NNS: Ah me too. By the way it's sunny/yeah/I want to play baseball. I love baseball/I know I know/Do you like baseball?

NS: Of course you know I like baseball

NNS: Oh. Do you play baseball?

NS: Yeah I do. I play baseball in the morning. Uh, Sunday morning. It's called (v-L1 referring to a local amateur baseball league).

NNS: Oh. Uh where is your position?

NS: Uh I'm uh right position right field.

NNS: Ah...

NS: I'm not very good/(laugh)/(inaudible) so...

NNS: I played baseball when I was elementary school student.

NS: Really?

NNS: I play... center

NS: Center. Center is very hard.

NNS: Uh... run

NS: You have to run a lot/uh huh.../ you have to... eye sight./Ah.../It's very hard.

NNS: I...I belong to... Hokkai High school baseball... as a manager.

NS: That's right, yeah. You're a good manager yeah

NNS: (laugh) Uh...

NS: This year at the university you're also a manager, right?

NNS: Ah yes yes... Uh. Last last week (v-L1 filler) I I had a a ... we had a tournament.

NS: Uh huh. How did how was that?

NNS: Win. Number one! (v-L1 meaning victory) Thank you

NS: Number one/thank you thank you/congratulations/thank you/that's great.

NNS: I write I write I wrote I wrote score in bench

NS: Ah... OK. So and so... now do you play or do you just coach?

NNS: Uh... just... coach

NS: Oh that's kind of sad uh?

NNS: Mmmmh.

NS: Do you want to play?

NNS: Ah yes/what's your =/Ah

NS: No go ahead.

NNS: I play baseball with brother. Brother is Hokkai high school student.

NS: What what grade is he in?

NNS: First.

NS: Ah first. He's he's young/young/you're the older sister.

NNS: Yeah.

The beginning of this conversation is marked by the NNS trying to assert her presence in the conversation almost forcefully. The greeting follows a common routine, and she does not seem to wait for the NS's response before moving on to the next step. In naturally-occurring data of NS — NS interaction a similar rapid succession of utterances can often be observed, as greetings are mostly aimed at testing the conversational field and assessing whether both interlocutors are ready for interaction. However, in this sample the NNS is less concerned with the NS's readiness to chat as with going over pre-rehearsed greeting routines. While the transcript does not depict intonation patterns, NNS often overemphasizes such patterns, making her utterances rather unnatural. Perhaps one explanation for this could be that the NNS's initial question "*Do you like baseball?*" was not aimed at eliciting an exchange of genuine information but more as a way to demonstrate her ability to utter that particular question form. Indeed, both the NS and NNS in this sample had previously discussed their mutual interest in baseball in class, so NNS already knew of NS's interest in baseball. As such, both interlocutors could easily predict what content would surface throughout the interaction. The NS's response "*Of course you know I like baseball*" might have been interpreted by NNS as an indirect request from NS to try harder at engaging in a more genuine communicative exchange. This may have also prompted NNS to use unnatural intonation patterns as a way to mitigate the face-threatening act instigated by NS.

Still, among most of the NS — NNS samples gathered, this NNS seems to be most interested in claiming a voice. Her limitations in linguistic competence do not appear to create any significant hurdles in the expression of ideas. As the conversation unfolds, however, she grows quieter, paying more attention to the NS's utterances. Her responses become shorter and truncated. But she nevertheless manages to hold her ground and maintain a more symmetrical identity in par with NS, this perhaps even more successfully than the NNS in the other samples.

Near the end, NS asks the question "*Do you want to play?*", to which NNS responds "*Ah yes*". Immediately after that response she remembers that she does play baseball on occasion. So she makes the statement "*I play baseball with brother*". Yet, before she can initiate that statement, the NS interrupts with another question "*what's your =*", which he chooses to cut sharply to allow the NNS to successfully formulate her statement. This demonstrates a concessional strategy, whereby the NS as target language expert and instructor yields the floor to allow the NNS to claim a voice in the interaction. The NNS responds well to this strategy by successfully formulating her thought clearly and adding an extra piece of information: "*Brother is Hokkai high school student*". In the institutional context of

classroom language learning that focuses on CLT methodologies, such concession strategies are frequently employed by language teachers as a way to encourage NNS to independently express thoughts and opinions.

9.3 Comparing both types of samples

While the goal of this study is not to compare two groups of samples to determine the superiority of one over another, a simple word count of all samples reveals an interesting fact: on average, the NS — 2NNS samples contain 171 words produced in the target language (including back channels), while the NS — NNS samples contain 256. From this, it is possible to suggest that NNS in the NS — NNS samples have more opportunities — and create more opportunities — to negotiate increasingly symmetrical rapport with NS. Being alone with the NS, they may feel more willing to demonstrate a fuller extent of their L2 communicative competence. A rapid comparison of both samples in terms of the length of NNS's utterances and their use of back-channels clearly supports this suggestion. Thus, Nakamura's (2008) claim that student-teacher interaction can include more negotiation of meaning in different contexts or settings reflects the results found throughout data analysis.

In most of the total 37 recorded samples, however, interlocutors' roles and speaking opportunities are directly or indirectly determined by the NS. This is especially true of the NS — 2NNS samples: all are initiated by the NS's non-verbal behavior (gesturing to the NNSs to start conversing without her while she finished her telephone conversation), and all conversation end when the NS says *"That's all we have time for today"*, and gestures for the two NNS to leave. Out of the 18 NS — 2NNS samples, 9 include unnatural endings brought by the NS calling the end of the conversation (e.g., unanswered question, long silence, incomplete clarification of meaning, etc.). In those samples, the NNS do not have the chance to complete a full utterance before being asked to leave. 7 of the remaining 9 end with the NS repeating one of the two NNS's final comments, and then calling for the end of the conversation. 2 conversations end with an extended silence, which is interrupted by the NS calling for the end of the conversation. In 6 of the total NS — 2NNS samples, the two NNS initiate the interaction prior to the L2 greeting in the L1, either to clarify the task or for bonding. Usually, these very short L1 exchanges are accompanied with laughter. This is significant because the two NNS appear to need L1 support to find their footing. Also, these quick L1 verbal exchanges remove all need for greeting each other in the L2, except of course when the NS comes up to talk with them. In addition, the L1 is rarely used post-greeting. Unfortunately, in all the 18 NS — 2NNS samples, the two NNS proceed to begin in the L2

through basic greetings, all of which follow standard textbook strategies, such as *"Hello, how are you?" "I'm fine, thank you, and you?" "I'm fine, too." "My name is..."*. The NNS in all those samples do not use other greeting formulas, despite having been instructed to do so throughout the semester. Some even say *"Nice to meet you"* to NNS whom they have met on previous occasions.

Many NS — 2NNS greetings follow with weather talk. In all 18 samples, the NS is in the process of ending a mocked telephone call, which allows the two NNS to greet each other in English without the presence of NS. Yet this does not always happen throughout the 18 samples. In 7 of the 18 samples, however, the NS is not automatically included in the interaction. Instead, the two NNS continue their conversation without including the NS, who listens to them while not making any contribution either through back-channeling or checks. Her integration into these conversations appears problematic for the two NNS, while the NS chooses not to interfere or impose her presence. Only when the two NNS seem to have trouble continuing their conversation further do they attempt to include the NS in their conversation. This is generally done first through glances and then through greetings and self-introduction.

From this, it is possible to deduce that the two NNS are likely engaged in the performance of a language task, with the NS acting as the evaluating observer. Of course, this has profound consequences: these 18 samples reveal a communicative context in which both learners feel restrained, thus less willing to experiment with target language use. Thus their ability to assert their own presence and negotiate more symmetrical rapports are significantly impaired. The fact that the two NNS are paired up together for the final speaking test effectively imposes the language learner identity unto them. As a result, the language teacher identity is forced upon NS. This is a clear example of how context directly affects the communicative task.

When NNS in most samples seem to take more initiatives, they produce simple questions such as "*Are you a Nippon Ham Fighters fan?*", "*Have you ever seen Harry Potter's movie?*", and "*Where are you from?*". Yet, these are likely rehearsed utterances. As such, these conversations feel more or less awkward and culturally inappropriate. It is likely that most NNS are more conscious of making grammar mistakes, and whether these are being noticed by NS.

Sample Four to Six, however, contrast quite significantly. On occasions, it is the NS who uses the NNS's L1. He does so not only to negotiate misunderstandings but also to shorten the psychological distance between both interlocutors. This rarely happens in the

NS — 2NNS samples, where the NS consistently uses the target language. In contrast, the act of Englishing, which can be understood as a strategy to assert learners' L1 identity, appears to be more characteristic of the NS — 2NNS samples. This can be explained partly because, in the NS — NNS samples, the learners are not performing in front of other learners. Also, the NS's role as monitor of target linguistic knowledge and target socio-cultural norms is more prevalent in the NS — NNS context.

Yet, in all samples, the institutionalized roles of teacher/learner might have been unavoidable. This can be observed in NS's regulating the turn-taking process and exercising control through indirect requests like "*That's all we have time for today*" (the NS — 2NNS samples) and more direct ones like "*Start*" (the NS — NNS samples). Also, except for Sample Six, all the samples collected reveal that students are not willing to fully challenge their institutional roles as learners.

The next section discusses how some of the conclusions from this analysis can lead towards a redefinition of teaching practices in Japanese EFL classes.

10. Pedagogical implications

As mentioned in Section Five, results from this study cannot be generalized to a larger population. However, the structure and method of analysis offer a viable tool to gain greater insight into processes at play throughout NS — NNS interaction. Careful inspection of data can show whether language learners do in fact have ideal opportunities for negotiating a voice in the L2, and indeed if they are taking advantage of those opportunities. It can also help educators devise better language learning activities that may lead to genuine and productive learning opportunities for such learners.

The type of analysis in this study can certainly be integrated directly in the language classroom. As learners are included in the process of discourse analysis, they can see what is actually going on throughout a conversation. Gradually, they can begin to develop their own strategies for dealing with misunderstandings, negotiating identities, and generally improve L2 communicative competence. Of course, the approach here should be simplified so that learners may gain insight without being overloaded with information. Nevertheless, any discourse analysis of naturally-occurring data requires the use of a meta-language of communication. Without such language, identifying complex issues in language learning and language use may end up being overly daunting and unproductive. The main implication is that if an educator notices that a learner has difficulty negotiating a voice while using the L2 despite sufficient linguistic competence, this should then become the focus of attention.

Discourse analysis provides such calibrated focus.

Moreover, instead of assuming that a learner's difficulties in the L2 are due to an assumed cultural trait ("Japanese people as shy English speakers"), an educator may wish to look at how learners' ideological stances contribute to the problem. As such, particular ideologies may need to be directly questioned in class, so as to uncover their roots and figure out ways to transcend them. If ideologies are never brought up to the surface, they can quickly become fixed realities, and from that point they can significantly exacerbate problems. As Nakamura (2008) and the comparison between NS — 2NNS and NS — NNS interactions in this study suggest, learners' L2 communicative competence are never fixed. It is possible for language learners to exhibit different levels of such competence in different contexts. Likewise, ideologies are never fixed. Therefore, if they are addressed in the classroom, learners may come to notice them, and gradually see the value in questioning them.

11. Limitations

The study does not include a contrastive analysis of in-class versus naturally-occurring data of NS — NNS interaction in the L2, nor does it include a pre-test/post-test comparative analysis. Such analyses would reveal valuable information as to the effects of instruction unto the development of L2 communicative competence. Also, data were not collected over an extensive period of time, which might have rendered the dynamic fluidity of NNS's L2 discourse even more obvious.

Concerning the data collected, time limits could have been extended beyond the two or three minute margins, and more participants could have been involved in the interactional tasks. These steps would certainly have revealed more complex discourse structures. In current Japanese EFL practices, there is a need to extend learners' understanding of NS — NNS L2 interaction as more than a one-on-one event involving a person who knows the L2 and another who strives to attain such knowledge. Multi-interlocutor interaction is more challenging because finding a footing requires more complex strategic knowledge.

While the NS — NNS dichotomy provided this study with valuable cultural insight into NNS's use of particular communicative strategies, attention should also be paid to NNS — NNS interaction in the L2. This would at least be a departure from the problematic native-speakerist ideology pervading throughout the Japanese EFL context, and would constitute an important shift towards addressing the reality of the English speaking world. A study on NNS — NNS interaction in the L2 could address issues concerning the influence

of shared *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1977) and socio-cultural knowledge on how L2 communication is shaped.

The basis for the current study is, of course, concerned with the need for Japanese EFL learners to claim a voice in the L2 and demonstrate greater agency throughout interaction in English. However, this necessity must be questioned from a cultural perspective: do these learners actually desire such a voice? Is the notion of agency simply the imposition of a western approach to communication? Once the focus of study moves towards the cultural and social spheres, one must be cautioned against assuming that western linguistic ideologies — which center on the self and on individual agency — can be applicable to all cultural contexts. Educators and researchers should always consider that, "the centrality of intentionality [...] is rooted in Western conceptions of the self" (Woolard, in Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998: 15). In critical discourse analysis, considering local means of meaning production and of identity negotiation is imperative. Unfortunately, the current study does not explicitly meet this need. The next section discusses how the current study can be extended.

12. Possibilities for further research

An important notion that has become gradually more apparent throughout this analysis is NNS's perception of themselves as English speakers. This self-perception certainly has roots in cultural constructs. But more specifically, it originates from how communities come to define their members and establish expectations and codes of conduct. These members have the choice to adhere to these parameters (in order to cement their presence in these communities) or not. These choices are never permanent, always pragmatically oriented, and always negotiable.

This particular angle of analysis draws on the notion of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991), which forms an integral part of Norton's (2000) study of 5 immigrant women in Canada, and of a more recent study by Kanno (2008) on bilingual education in Japan. Norton focuses on the individual learner, and argues that learners imagine the kind of community they wish to integrate, and that this image has a great impact on how they will ultimately approach the language learning task (i.e., their investment in language learning). Kanno approaches the issue from a different angle: that of institutions of learning. She argues that Japanese schools' institutionally imagined communities create unequal access to bilingualism. Both of these arguments are rooted in the post-structuralist approach: power indicates who will have access to what and who will not. It also determines how individuals see the kind

of choices available to them and what they are "entitled to". Furthermore, once a limited range of possible identities are made available to learners, it can be very difficult for them to resist such identities.

While this is a rich topic of analysis, the current study does not delve into it. Yet, framing the study of NS — NNS interaction and of NNS's access to L2 symbolic capital within the notion of imagined communities certainly has its merits. The correlation between institutionally and individually-produced imagined communities would certainly provide a great deal of insight into issues dealing with learner investment and their ability to negotiate identities throughout L2 interaction.

13. Conclusion

The data collected for this study were analyzed in terms of the "micropolitics of teacher-student classroom interaction" (Luk & Lin, 2007) in which power plays a major role in the process of identity negotiation. It was revealed that, in NS — NNS interaction, the NS tends to yields power temporarily to increase opportunities for NNS to play a more active role. While asymmetry was almost always observable, it was always jointly negotiated between NS and NNS, as opposed to being imposed by a more powerful interlocutor.

Hopefully, this study revealed a realistic picture of NS — NNS interaction, and of language learners' ability to negotiate identities while using the L2. It is also hoped that the cultural interpretation of speakers' language behavior (Scott, 1996) in this study highlighted some of the prevalent ideologies that position English within Japanese society, especially how learners perceive the task of language learning, and how they ultimately choose to invest in the learning process. These ideologies are important factors in a post-structuralist understanding of NS — NNS interaction.

The study has also argued that the performance of teacher and student identities can become fixed processes if prevalent language ideologies persistently position the language learner as "illegitimate L2 user". It was also suggested that, if the struggle for NNS to gain a voice in the L2 remains unsuccessful, a closer look into such ideologies may provide a way out of the deadlock.

Perhaps the clearest conclusion that can be drawn from the current study was stated by Park (2007) in her own analysis of NS — NNS interaction, stating that the asymmetrical structure in such interaction is a) negotiated to meet specific purposes, and b) fluid and subject to change. In the samples above, it is clear that power is never fixed. It is always momentarily owned, and both yielded and appropriated by each participant. This reinforces

the view that language is a site of resistance, empowerment and solidarity (Gal, 1989, Heller, 1992, Woolard, 1998, cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

The study has also refrained from making overly deterministic observations in regard to the Japanese EFL context, arguing that conditions can change if both NS and NNS see the need for them to change. As Kanno (2008) rightfully points out, "unequal power relations that reflect inequality in the larger society coexist side by side with practices that strive to counter it." (p. 29)

Readers of the current study are encouraged to observe their own data through critical discourse analysis. Luk & Lin (2007) argue that "the ways that different students take up speaking roles are believed to have a decisive impact on their development as language users and their orientation towards the language that they are learning." (p. 189) More than a decade prior to the publication of that statement, Fairclough (1995) called for the democratization of discourse, which is the "reduction of overt markers of power asymmetry between people of unequal institutional power" (p. 79). In the current Japanese EFL context, it is important for both NS and NNS to question their traditionally assigned roles by observing how language is actually been used to perform those roles. Ultimately, the goal of such analysis — and of any language curriculum in fact — should encompass the pedagogically-sound goal of encouraging learners to speak their true minds and be the authors of their own words in the target language, so that they can eventually claim it as their own.

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