

Interactional Modifications between ESL Learners in The Specification of Negotiation of Meaning and Negative Feedback

Lam Tsz Ching Jasmine

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Abstract

This project is designed to analyze the interactional modifications in English conversation between two adult Hong Kong ESL learners with varied language proficiency levels. A consensus task relating to the cultural topics was assigned, and the participants were required to come up with an agreement within a limited time. The host has taken an observant role in the interaction and rarely interfere with the discussion. The speech data is recorded and transcribed. It is hypothesized that (1) the subjects could attain the intended communicative goal and (2) the subject with relatively higher language proficiency would take an initiative role during the negotiation of meanings. The analysis session focuses on investigating three main types of interactional modifications: clarification requests, recasts, and explicit correction while the emergence and the effectiveness of different types of interactional modifications are also evaluated. It is observed that implicit feedback like clarification requests and recast appear more frequently compared with explicit feedback in adult communication. Nonetheless, a recast might sometimes be omitted if the recipients tend to focus on the content instead of the form of English or when a long recast is involved. Hence, it is reflected that a short and precise recast should be adopted to give effective feedback in the communication.

Keywords: applied linguistics, applied English linguistics, L2 acquisition, language acquisition, language learning