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LEARNERS’ ABILITY TO NEGOTIATE MEANING IN INTERACTIONAL CONVERSATION

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**Abstract**

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Negotiation is one kind of ways in order to interact with other people. Doing negotiation means that participants are able to reveal what they feel and think. For this study, observation was done before recording. Audio recording is the primary data besides there was also note. The note is about the class’ situations that were not included in the recording. Then, the data is transformed into transcription. After the transcript is made, the data is able to be analyzed. Results indicate that the learners mostly negotiate well. They produce statements in compliance with mood elements. They also have various kinds of mood types in the conversation. The ways that the students negotiate meaning in order to get the meaning across are countering the interlocutors’ responds, responding the teacher by giving statement that exactly suit to the teacher’s questions, and having equal turns reciprocally to convey their ideas in a conversation. In order to compensate their language problems, the students use some strategies such using minor clause, speaking in their native language, and doing non-verbal communication. In addition, there are also some grammatical problems hinder the negotiation of meaning. They ellipse a certain element of the clause. Another grammatical problem is that the students do not use fit correspondence between Finite and other elements.

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## INTRODUCTION

#### English is one of the foreign language subjects in Indonesia. According to my experiences, when I got my first English lesson in elementary school, I had difficulties in both making meaning of words and pronouncing words. In junior high school, I had my first English course in which I started to learn about using English in daily class conversation. Unfortunately, it did not work well because not only me but also some of my friends sometimes stopped talking. The teacher should give clues in order to guide students to continue their talks. When I joined practice field experience program, it also showed that some students find it difficult to understand English as their foreign language.

#### Students who do not understand yet about what people say in English will not be able to get people’s intention. When it comes to students to take their turn in a conversation, they are just quiet because they run out of words or use their mother tongue to respond their counterpart. Eggins and Slade (1997: 6) argue that negotiation is very helpful in delivering our thoughts and opinions about our feelings. Negotiation also helps us in taking turns when we are in a conversation. Why the researcher uses this definition? Goal of conversation is not always to get

#### something. Conversation has aims both to build a connection between people and to keep conversation going. So, negotiation is a capability in responding to any statements to get the conversation going.

#### Brown & Yule (1983) suggest that conversation has two different objectives. It is about exchanging information and focusing on the things being exchanged. On the other hand, the conversation has a purpose in maintaining social relationships and personal attitudes. It relates to speakers’ interaction. The first is called transactional, whereas the second is referred to as interactional.

#### This study is going to investigate the students’ ability in negotiating meaning in casual conversation. Process of negotiation refers to a role among students in which they take turns and exchange turns in a conversation to convey their ideas so that the conversation keeps going. The conversation is followed by question and answer, giving opinion, or adding arguments in order to make the conversation alive.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

#### This study is going to have an audio recording for the primary data. Then, the data is transformed into transcription so that the analysis can be done.

#### Observation

#### The researcher should observe the class before recording. The observation is about the condition of the class such as the amount of students, the class’s rules and the class activity. The students are divided into a small group or in pairs. The teacher gives assignments to them based on the instruction in the book. Then, each groups or pairs have to make a conversation or dialog. After that, they practice their dialog in front of others. In order to have a good object for the study, the researcher needs to let the class’s situation as natural as possible. The students are free to talk so that the interaction happens naturally.

#### Marshall and Rossman (2006) stated that observation is a fundamental and highly important method in a qualitative inquiry. It is used to discover complex interactions in natural social settings. Observation entails the systemic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study. For studies relying exclusively on observation, the researcher makes no specific effort to have a particular role in the setting. The researcher has classroom observation that is often found in education. It is going to have documents and describe actions and interactions that are complex: what they mean can only be offered without other sources of information.

#### Recording

#### The teacher permits the researcher to record in parts, only on students’ activities. The recording is an audio.

#### Taking Notes

#### The note is about the class’s situations that are not included in the recording. The researcher has to make such kind of notes for supporting data.

#### Making Transcripts

#### The researcher makes transcription based on the data recording. After the transcript is made, the researcher might move to discourse analysis.

#### After collecting the data, the data are ready to be analyzed. There are some steps in analyzing data.

#### Define the interpersonal meaning elements (Mood Elements, Residue, Polarity, and Modality) in each sentence.

#### Identify the Mood Types in each sentence (Declarative, Interrogative, and Imperative).

#### Describe its Text and Context (Context of Situation and Context of Culture).

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### This analysis deals with a conversation between students and teacher in a conversational classroom to investigate learners’ ability in the negotiation of meaning. Negotiation refers to a role of students and teacher in which they take turns and exchange meaning in a conversation to convey their ideas so that the conversation keeps going. Class interaction usually makes the teacher more dominant than students. It is because the teacher is the one who only does talking and gets to be the speaker for most of the time. Yet, class conversation makes students freer to access the speaker role. The teacher only gives clues and hints. He/ she let students talk more frequently than teacher so that there is a greater sharing of ideas from each student.

### The way that the students negotiate meaning in order to get the meaning across:

#### The students counter their interlocutors’ responses.

#### Example:

#### 559 Vaniani (i) Umm how about umm going to stadion to watch umm soccer match with main Persib and Persija?

#### NV35 ALL [laughing]

#### 560 Arvi (i) That sounds great. (ii) I bet Persija will win the competition.

#### NV36 ALL [laughing]

#### 561 Arvi (i) Why not?

#### 562 Aulia (i) But I think umm Persib win it.

#### 563 Arvi (i) Oh, no …

#### NV37 ALL [laughing]

#### 564 Arvi (i) Persija will win this competition.

#### 565 Aulia (i) I’m afraid.

#### NV38 ALL [laughing]

#### 566 Vaniani (i) Equal. (ii) I think it would be equal.

#### NV39 ALL [laughing]

#### 567 Aulia (i) No no I think Persib will win.

#### 568 Vaniani (i) Okay, see you this evening guys.

#### 569 Aulia (i) See you.

#### 570 Arvi (i) Bye.

#### The data provides powerful evidence that language being used as a resource to negotiate meaning. It involves participants who are the teacher and the students in exchanging meanings and ideas. The evidence reveals an interesting correlation between the reciprocity in the interaction and the choice of clause types. Although the overall clauses produced by both parties are almost the same amount, the students are sometimes countering other interactants’ statements.

#### Čulo & Skendrović (2012) mention about three characteristics used to negotiate as an infinite variety of negotiation.. They define in a conflict of interest between two or more parties, an established set of rules to develop their own solution, and a search for an agreement. Negotiation in such a common problem solving process is in everyone’s interest. It becomes familiar with negotiation dynamics and skills.

#### The students respond the teacher by giving statements that exactly suit to the teacher’s questions.

#### Example:

#### 313 Teacher (i) What does he do?

#### 318 Dimas (i) He is umm the chairman of Petronas Project.

#### 321 Teacher (i) What is SPE?

#### 322 Dimas (i) Umm like organization pembuatan, something like that.

#### The teacher always gives the students chances to speak in English by asking questions. The questions are in the complete form of interrogative. The students answer them elliptically or only in one-two words. The answer corresponds to the teacher’s questions.

#### This is in line with Rahnimian (2013). He says when the English foreign language learners use their second language knowledge to communicate with their interlocutors, they tend to modify their interlanguage and make it more target-like. The learners produce modified output without interlocutors’ request and appeal for clarification. The output effect and its subsequent potential modification might be a learners’ attempt to automize and gain mastery second language forms.

#### The students have the equal turns reciprocally to convey their ideas in a conversation.

#### Example:

#### 536 Lady (i) Hai, Hanny. (ii) Do you have any plans tonight?

#### 537 Hanny (i) Yaa, I’m free. (iii) Why?

#### 538 Lady (i) Wait umm let’s go get some coffee together.

#### 539 Hanny (i) Wah! That sounds good.

#### …

#### 552 Vaniani (i) Hallo, guys.

#### 553 Arvi == (i) Hai.

#### 554 Aulia == (i) Hai.

#### 555 Dimas == (i) Hai.

#### Besides, when the teacher gives them time to make a dialogue or to answer the question given from the book, the students will have good sentences. They are listening to the teacher’s instruction and their counterparts’ statements. The following excerpts are the evidence from the data. There are two groups of students. They are taking in turns so they will get the meaning across.

#### According to Maksimović, et all (2013), listening facilitates receiving and understanding the message and determining its meaning. Listening can be internal which refers to our own voices (i.e. thoughts) and external which involve the world around us. When interactants listen carefully, they show understanding for their interlocutors, care, and compassion. When the interlocutors listen actively in any kind of communication, they gain mutual trust. It will be easier to communicate and solve a problem than speech without listening

### The strategies used by students include:

#### The students use minor clauses such as *umm*, *ooh*, and *yeah*.

#### Example:

#### 174 Albert (i) Would you like to see our factory?

#### 175 Rivaldi (i) Umm sounds interesting.

#### …

#### 540 Lady (i) Okay umm do you have any favorite place like coffee shop?

#### 541 Hanny (i) Yeah of course, let’s go to Starbucks.

#### 542 Lady (i) Yaa, that’s a great idea. (ii) I’d love that, too.

#### …

#### 590 Aulia (i) Ooh, actually I want umm to (ii) I want you to accompany me go dinner in Italian restaurant.

#### 591 Arvi (i) Oh, I’m sorry. (iii) I have to accompany my mom to to go to an affair.

#### 592 Aulia (i) Oh, okay.

#### 593 Vaniani (i) Umm, and me umm, (iii) I have umm (iv) I have plan with my boyfriend now.

#### 

#### The significant example of the strategy of the language problems is found in the minor clauses produced by the students. They often use minor clauses such as *umm*, *ooh* and *yeah* in order to give additional time to them to respond their counterparts. Somehow, Minor Clauses occur in reciprocated pairs as responding contribution in the conversation.

#### The students sometimes speak in their native language.

#### Example:

#### 347 Teacher (i) Yes okay, I will play it.

#### 348 Aulia (i) Ini gimana?

#### 349 Lady (i) Tulis aja disini.

#### 350 Aulia (i) Lha ini bener?

#### …

#### 429 Teacher (i) Is that right?

#### 430 Aulia (i) Kayanya sih ..

#### 431 Arvi (i) Yaa miss.

#### 432 Adit (i) Itu kayae cara.

#### 433 Lady (i) Banquet.

#### 436 Dimas (i) Apa sih?

#### Another strategy used by the learner is that they are sometimes speaking in their native language. It is around 61 turns in which the learners use their native language. Even though they are not accustomed to speaking in English, they are trying to do it. The learners might have difficulties in translating some terms in their native language to English. But, the teacher keeps speaking English in order to wheedle and to stimulate the learners in using their English.

#### Cook (2015) states that some learners are struggling with input, though it is unclear why. They might have difficulties in understanding the sentence meaning or are enable to comprehend its structure in English. Negotiation leads the learners to modify their output. In these cases, negotiation of meaning aim to resolve problems related to these aspects of language. The students’ uses of their native language are followed by feedback in order to affect the success of comprehension.

#### The students are doing non-verbal communication.

#### Example:

#### 74 Adit (i) Let’s go to date.

#### NV11 ALL [laughing]

#### 75 Teacher (i) I’m sorry. (ii) I’m busy.

#### NV12 ALL [laughing]

#### …

#### 86 Indira (i) Yes.

#### NV13 ALL [laughing]

#### 87 Teacher (i) Just “yes”?

#### 88 Indira (i) Apalagi? (ii) Yes, I’m good.

#### NV14 ALL [laughing]

#### In addition, there are some non-verbal behaviors. The excerpt above is not a group university students chatting together. The students come from different confidence and gender. Clues to different social roles can be found in the linguistic choices interactants make. One indication of gender differences between interactants is the non-verbal behaviors displayed by Adit and Albert (starting to joke and laugh), and it might be not matched by the girls. Also, there are lots of jokes not only made by Adit and Albert, the other do also. It is because joking gives them time to think for a second to arrange sentence in speaking English.

#### Maksimović et all (2013) have stated that non-verbal signals show thoughts and emotions, attitudes and traits. They also support verbal communication or they are substitute for it. Their essay explains the three types of non-verbal communication which are conscious, unconscious, and manipulative non-verbal communication. Laughing is kinds of manipulative non-verbal communication because it is used in order to present a certain pattern of behavior that needs to seem natural and relaxed. Also, expressive gestures, like laughter or smile, make communication casual, pleasant and natural.

### The grammatical problems hindering the negotiations of meaning include:

#### The students ellipse a certain element of the clause.

#### Example:

#### 285 Arvi (i) Miss umm when the promotion test?

#### The learners are able to negotiate meaning and the conversation is going well. But, there are still some grammatical problems in it. For example, there is a student who has an ungrammatical sentence. She ellipses one element to make a good interrogative. The sentence should have been:

#### *Miss, umm when is the promotion test?*

#### The students’ utterances do not correspond to the Finite.

#### Example:

#### Next, there is a grammatical problem that appears in the following dialogue. The teacher talks about one student’s presence last week so she has a sentence in the past form. The student responds it with the sentence in the present form. It makes that the student’s statement is not in line with the teacher’s.

#### 264 Teacher (i) But anyway, you didn’t come last week.

#### 265 Aulia (i) Yeah because I umm (ii) I have umm tight schedule.

#### Another grammatical problem made by the student mentions below.

#### 533 Gina (i) Umm I don’t know about car (ii) and I don’t interested about it, sorry.

#### 535 Teacher (i) Not ‘I don’t interested’ but ‘I’m not interested’, yeah, okay.

#### Although the students have some grammatical problems, they negotiate well. They produce statements in compliance with elements of interpersonal meanings.

## CONCLUSIONS

#### This study investigates learners’ ability to negotiate meaning in interactional conversation by analyzing the students’ utterance in a class conversation both with their friends and the teacher as their counterpart. In order to answer the research problems, the conclusions are presented based on the data analysis from the previous chapter as follow.

#### The first research problem is how students negotiate meaning. The way that the students negotiate meaning in order to get the meaning across is countering their interlocutors’’ responds. At first, the students do not make their own statement. They are just waiting for the others responds and adding them.

#### Besides, the students respond the teacher by giving statements that exactly suit to the teacher’s questions. The ideas and information that the students stated are the same direction as the teacher’s questions.

#### In addition, the students have the equal turns reciprocally to convey their ideas in a conversation. The teacher always helps learners to speak in English. She gives chance to all students to say the words about what they are thinking and feeling so that the class is alive. Although the students might have such kind of difficulties in conveying their ideas in English, they still keep practicing. It makes the conversation does not stop.

#### The second research problem is that strategies used by students to compensate communication problems. The students use minor clause such as “umm”, “ooh”, and “yeah”. Those expressions are used by the learners in order to give additional time to them to respond their counterpart.

#### Also, the students sometimes speak in their native language. When it is difficult to find terms in English, the students prefer speaking in their native language to saying nothing.

#### Furthermore, the students are doing non-verbal communication. They are making jokes and laughing the most often. Even they doing so, it has a communication purpose which gives the students time to think to make a sentence in speaking English. Those strategies are used by students in order to help them in negotiation.

#### Last but not the least is about the grammatical problems hindering the negotiation of meanings. In some cases, the students ellipse a certain element of the clause. They do not put the auxiliary because they are not accustomed to using such term in their native language.

#### Another grammatical problem is that the students do not use fit correspondence between Finite and other elements. When they are talking about something happened in the past, they do not realize that they are still using Finite that indicates present time. Despite the fact that the students have some grammatical problems, they negotiate meaning well. They produce statements in compliance with elements of interpersonal meaning.

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