Tuula Hirvonen

# Children's Conversation Management

## Native Speaker - Non-native Speaker Talk


STUDIA PHILOLOGICA JYVÄSKYLÄENSIA

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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## ABSTRACT

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The present study explores 8–10-year-old children's peer talk in free play activities. The subjects are ten native English-speaking children and eight learners of English. Studies on foreigner talk have established modifications that are generally observed by adults when talking to speakers at low proficiency levels. Conversations with peers are an important learning context for child second language learners. The native speakers' ability and willingness to modify when speaking to a learner may have important repercussions for the learner's opportunities to take part in conversations.

The present study aims to explore individual variation between children talking with non-native speaking peers: context-dependent (register) variation and speaker-dependent (individual style) variation in addition to variation according to the learner's proficiency level. The data were collected in conversation dyads in free play sessions, both native speaker–learner and native speaker–native speaker interactions. The data were analysed at four different levels: interactional, sequence, exchange and functional. The interactional space, the ways in which the task and communication breakdown are negotiated, and the support given to the learners in conversation were explored using nearly thirty variables at the four levels.

The results showed individual variation between native speakers in how they initiated topics, responded to learner initiations and used strategies for avoiding conversational problems, and hence in how they allowed space for the learner to take part in the conversation. Moreover, the native speakers approached meaning negotiations differently: some children were more inclined to concentrate on the task, whereas others were interpersonally oriented, negotiating about the learner's topics and providing support. There were also indications of context-dependent strategic choices and speaker-dependent features in the use of initiations and some strategies. The study shows the subjects to have acquired individual approaches to the foreigner register, to exhibit differences in willingness to modify and to take the learner into account, and to be able to modify according to the learner's proficiency level.

Keywords: foreigner talk, discourse studies, child second language acquisition, children's conversations, peer talk, play

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*Omistan tämän työn isäni muistolle.*

## TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| * | unintelligible word |
| , | brief pause |
| (15) | pause in seconds |
| ::: | vowel lengthening |
| CAP | prominent stress |
| / / | overlapping speech |
| = | latched turns |
| "xxx" | role play, singing |
| ... | unfinished utterance |
| ('xxx') | gloss |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| aFT | advanced foreigner talk |
| bFT | beginner foreigner talk |
| aL | advanced learner |
| bL | beginner learner |
| CA | conversation analysis |
| CDS | child directed speech |
| CS | code-switching |
| DA | discourse analysis |
| FT | foreigner talk |
| IL | interlanguage |
| L1 | first language |
| L2 | second language |
| NS | native speaker |
| NNS | non-native speaker |
| SLA | second language acquisition |

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

In almost every language community people increasingly need to interact in situations where one or more of the speakers are not native speakers of the language that is used for communication. A widely held belief in our everyday encounters with learners is that when the native speaker speaks loudly enough, repeats often enough and uses simple language (for which read ungrammatical language) the learner will eventually understand. The aim of the present study is to examine children's behaviour in such situations and, indirectly, their perception of what talking to a learner means.

Research interest in such situations since the 1970s and the development of language acquisition research has led to a wealth of studies on modified linguistic input and interactional patterns. Interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers, on the one hand, and between non-native speakers, on the other, has been studied. Co-construction of meaning or meaning negotiation has become one strand of this research area, along with the study of modified input. Although both linguistic and interactional modifications have been established, it seems that interactional modifications have been more consistently observed. Modification processes have also been shown to exist also in child-child registers. Children acquire the ability to vary their register depending on their interlocutors fairly early. Little research, however, has been done on individual differences between native speakers when engaged in providing input. This applies to adult and child talk studies, although it is evident that individual differences in learners can have a great effect on the acquisition process.

Both in first language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition studies the nature of input has been one of the central questions for over two decades. While behaviourists have considered input a way to reinforce the child's operant behaviour and social learning theorists have seen it as a

model to be copied, for mentalists input has been material that is used for testing hypotheses. More recently, functionalists have distinguished between internal and external causes in the language learning process, language data being among the external causes. In the debate about the place and importance of input it has been suggested that a learner has to be exposed to comprehensible input in order to acquire a language.

Language is learnt in order to accomplish a communicative purpose, mostly in communicative situations. The process of L1 acquisition can be interpreted as the mastery of communicative competence, ie. the use of language in different social contexts. Conversation is the most immediate and determinative context of communication, since a child derives almost all of her language experiences from conversational contexts in her early years, negotiating meaning with her interlocutors. There are researchers who believe that prior to learning language a child has to learn how to carry on conversations. The communicative environment provides the child with empirical sources, against which she can then assess hypotheses about structures and pragmatic interpretations.

Not only in children's L1 acquisition but also in second language acquisition conversations provide the learner with the material and the ground to test hypotheses. Conversations with native speakers, particularly when these are other children, allow learners to explore and establish their status and role within the new community. They provide learners with opportunities to develop their skills in successively more complex environments, through interaction and negotiation with other language users. The learner progresses through several stages of communication and language skills, from establishing social relationships to correctness in the use of the language being learnt (see eg. Wong Fillmore 1976). Friends provide a child learner with important resources and support. One of the factors that complicates the issue in a native speaker–non-native speaker (NS-NNS)[1] situation is that even in a peer context a learner is unlikely to be functioning with peers of equal competence. Children who are age peers are probably fairly equal in their L1 skills, but in a NS-NNS context the NNS is at a disadvantage.

It is not only that the learner needs to converse in order to learn, but it is also important that the quality of conversations is such as to support the learning process. Quality involves questions about the opportunities presented to the learner to take part in conversation and interlocutors' willingness to accept each other's contributions and to follow up on initiations. Interaction as such minimally requires some co-operation between the interactants, and for the interaction to work well it requires that the interactants carry their share of the responsibility for making the interaction work.

Native speakers exhibit variation along a great number of variables in language behaviour. Aspects of children's sociolinguistic and conver-

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1 The acronyms NS and NNS will be used to refer to native speaker and non-native speaker, respectively.

sational skills which have been studied include turn-taking, acquisition of directives and requests, and sensitivity to age, gender and social status.

Children's conversations with age peers in a second-language learning context constitute one important source of language input for learners. Just as in NS-NNS conversations between adults, children taking part in such conversations modify their speech in various ways to ensure understanding of their intended messages. Similar modification and conversational adjustments can be found in NS-NS conversations as well, but the NS-NNS context makes problems of nonunderstanding and misunderstanding more pronounced. In many modification studies, the problem is approached from the point of view of an ideal, homogeneous native speaker population with the same competence in dealing with a NS-NNS conversation. The aim of the present study is to analyse individual differences in child-child foreigner talk (FT) interaction, focusing on the target language speakers and their ability and willingness to modify their speech when conversing with a learner. Such individual variation can be shown when two NSs are analyzed in similar situations with the same learner or learners of equal competence. Both of these approaches are used in the present study. To gauge the variation caused by a NNS interlocutor's level of language competence, analyses with beginners and advanced learners are included.

An attempt is made to answer the following questions in this study: Is there individual variation between the native speakers in their foreigner talk and native talk? Can features be identified that reflect individual, stylistic approaches to discourse and those that define context-dependent strategic choices in discourse? Thirdly, what effect does the learner's proficiency level have in foreigner talk (beginner FT vs. advanced FT)?

The subjects of the study are 8–10-year-old junior school children, native speakers of English and learners of English from various language backgrounds. The social setting for the children's conversations analysed is a play context and remains the same for all the recordings. Such a setting may be a major language learning venue for these learners in addition to the classroom. The children were recorded only once, to acquire data on their behaviour in a FT situation; therefore the data do not yield answers to questions of developmental aspects other than indicate behaviours that could be considered developmentally enhancing.

The research questions will be explored using a number of interactional, sequence and exchange level and functional variables within the framework of the interactional space, meaning negotiation processes within that space, together with local support given to the learner. The features to be used in the analysis have been chosen to clarify both the topic initiation process and the discourse roles of both speakers in repairing trouble, seeking clarification and checking on meanings. The studies referred to and to be discussed in chapter 2 have been used as sources for possible features. Some features have emerged from the data. A major language acquisition study in Bristol has provided ideas, in particular, on the use of sequences and exchanges in particular, and various foreigner talk studies, notably by Long (1981a, 1981b, 1983), have been the basis for formulating tactics and strategies as features of good input givers. The child language studies referred to have been invaluable in creating the child language viewpoint.

It is hypothesized that in many respects individual differences will be found to exist between the children in providing input: some may be more factually oriented, others interpersonally inclined, some may easily take on the role of a supporting teacher, and others continue to tease their interlocutor beyond the limits of ordinary politeness. How different in any individual child's case different interactions are will depend on a number of factors. Such differences in native speakers' language, and how they affect learners, have not received much attention in studies of input language. Differences are expected both in the range and effectiveness of the strategies used for planning the communicative situation and of the tactics used in repairing trouble that occurs in these situations. Similarly, context-free individual characteristics of conversation management and context-dependent use of strategies and tactics will occur. It is also expected that the NS's willingness and ability to provide space and support will to a large extent define the discourse.

The study can be outlined as follows: chapter 2 provides background on child language studies and input studies, and chapter 3 the discourse-analytic framework and the analysis proper. In chapter 4 conversation management will be discussed in three parts. In chapter 4.1 the conversational space between interactants will be analysed in terms of initiations and responses and as strategies for avoiding trouble, ie. to clear space for conversation and to avoid cluttering the conversation with problems. In chapter 4.2 meaning negotiation processes, which take place in the interactional space, will be considered both as task and as repair negotiation. In chapter 4.3 local tactics along with approval and rejections in conversation will be discussed. In chapters 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 the main findings and discussion are summarized at the end of each section. The results, implications and limitations of the study will be discussed in chapter 5.

# 2 INPUT AND INTERACTION IN CHILDREN'S PEER TALK

In this chapter, second language acquisition (SLA) research is reviewed as it pertains to the research problem laid out above, ie. input studies and peer talk in children's L2 acquisition. It is, however, recognised that the question of whether modified input is necessary for language acquisition or not cannot be addressed within the scope of the present study. Children's ability to modify their language when speaking to a less than fully competent interlocutor is seen as one aspect of their linguistic development, but it is the individual variation found in the use of this skill that is the subject of the study, not the acquisition of the skill. Modifications will be studied as realisations of this skill, as they are seen as a necessary feature of any NS-NNS conversation in which the learner's linguistic and interactional participation in the conversation is supported. This is so, regardless of whether modifications are necessary for language acquisition to take place. The chapter provides the background against which the modifications and conversational behaviour in children's foreigner talk can be considered.

It has been well documented since the 1970s how L1 input differs from adult-adult language in its suprasegmental, phonological, syntactic, and semantic features. Short, well-formed utterances are used in child-directed speech (CDS), it contains fewer false starts and hesitations than adult-adult speech, and it is less complex in its syntactic structures. High pitch and exaggerated intonation are employed. Semantically, CDS contains a great deal of redundancy and is characterized by what are termed "here-and-now" features. Reference will be made to this research where relevant to the issues discussed in the context of L2 input. For comprehensive up-to-date reviews of research on input and interaction in CDS see eg. Snow (1994) and Pine (1994).

## 2.1 Second language acquisition

Second language acquisition research started through an interest in language teaching, and this interest has in no way diminished (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:5). In the 1960s, however, the interest shifted from teaching processes to learning processes, and since then the field of second language acquisition research has expanded to cover naturalistic language learning and various issues in second language use (eg. Hatch 1978; House 1993; Krashen 1981, 1985; Wong Fillmore 1976, 1985, 1989a, 1989b). Language learning and interlanguage studies include studies on the development of syntax and morphology and the use and development of discourse either in a single language context or interculturally. Such research has been both quantitative and qualitative. The language use studies of special interest here are those that approach a NS-NNS language use context where modification and adjustments are required for the speakers to ensure that messages can be transmitted (eg. Hatch et al. 1978; Long 1981, 1983; Varonis and Gass 1985a, 1985b; Bremer et al.1988, 1993, 1996).

Child second language studies have looked at acquisitional sequences and other acquisition processes (eg. Wong Fillmore 1976, Hatch 1978, Cathcart 1986). Studies on immersion programs have provided a great deal of valuable information on language acquisition and bilingualism (eg. Cummins and Swain 1986). Several studies have addressed the question of the significance of learners' age in the learning process and in their ultimate attainment (eg. Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle 1978, Scarcella and Higa 1981, Harley 1986). (For a review of literature on age see Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:154-167.) Wong Fillmore's work (1976, 1984, 1989a, 1989b) has contributed to our understanding of child learners both in a naturalistic setting and at school. Especially in her early work (1976) she has highlighted the importance of the learner's social skills in generating input from interlocutors. The present study attempts to look at the other side of the issue, namely the NS's skills and willingness to provide input.

Regardless of the efforts to explain processes of SLA and form a theory of SLA, no comprehensive theory exists, although several have been proposed. No matter what particular theory of language acquisition we subscribe to, the linguistic environment of the acquisition process is a significant factor to be accounted for.

Chomsky's (1965) claims about the innateness of language acquisition and Krashen's Monitor Model (1976), and in particular one of its hypotheses, the Input Hypothesis, gave an impetus for L1 and L2 acquisition studies to take a closer look at the linguistic context of language learning. Chomsky, in presenting his theory of language, also presented a theory of language development. According to him, language learning can only be explained in mentalist terms. He proposed an independent language faculty, a language acquisition device (LAD) that contains a knowledge of linguistic universals, which are innate and form the starting point for acquiring the grammar of the language the child is exposed to. The device requires access to input, which serves as the trigger for activating it. According to Chomsky

(1965:58), it is not probable that "the degenerate quality and narrowly limited extent of the available data" that children hear spoken around them could act as the major source of language acquisition unless they are innately informed about the general character of the structure of language.

In his Input Hypothesis, Krashen (1976, 1981, 1985) has made strong claims about the importance of comprehensible linguistic input for language learning. According to him, language acquisition can be explained as a process of being exposed to language slightly beyond the learner's present capability (stage *i)* and with the help of contextual cues understanding new elements, which in the process become part of the learner's language (stage *i + 1).* Comprehension is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for moving from one stage to another. Even if input is understood, it may not be learnt, ie. become intake (Ellis 1985:159). Another distinction that Krashen makes is between learning, which occurs as a result of formal study, and acquisition, which occurs automatically in natural communication where the focus is on meaning (the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis). The Natural Order Hypothesis and especially the Affective Filter Hypothesis specify acquisition and its conditions further. Krashen (1985:4) summarizes the hypotheses in a single claim: "people acquire second languages only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input 'in'."

Krashen's ideas have been called "stimulating and frustrating", since they suggest simple, plausible explanations for phenomena that are well recognized but provide little evidence to support the theoretical claims (Cook 1993:65). Because of its plausible explanations Krashen's theory has had a great impact on the field of language learning/acquisition, but it has been criticized for not being able to explain the relationship between input and the learning process. Gregg (1984) discusses the five main hypotheses of Krashen's theory, pointing out either loosely defined terminology (acquisition, learning, LAD), lack of evidence (eg. that learning never becomes acquisition), or presenting (uninteresting) observations without explanatory power. According to Sajavaara (1987:1191), "only one conclusion is possible: Krashen's Input Hypothesis is not supported with sufficient evidence as to the interrelationship between input and the learning process." The theory cannot explain how the learner makes the leap from comprehension to acquisition. Regardless of this lack of a theory to explain the way in which input influences language acquisition, input continues to be one aspect of the acquisition process which any acquisition theory has to come to terms with. Since Krashen's ideas have influenced input studies a great deal, they cannot be disregarded in a study of the type carried out here, although for various reasons the present data cannot be considered directly from the point of view of acquisition. Rather, they shed light on one stage of the acquisition process and therefore can be used to discuss interaction at that point rather than a whole process of acquisition.

Ferguson's (1972) paper on English foreigner talk led to increasing interest in simplified speech in L2 acquisition. He pointed out that FT is generally understood to be "an imitation of the way foreigners speak the language under certain conditions" but argues that, linguistically, FT is the competence of the speech community to accommodate to the learner's

proficiency level (1972:1), ie. FT is part of the native speaker's linguistic and communicative competence. Ferguson and DeBose (1977:105) propose that there are basically two kinds of modifying processes: simplifying (modifying normal speech) and non-simplifying (clarifying and adding redundancy, upgrading or making language more standard and expressive).

Ferguson's proposals on the modifications required in FT and Krashen's theory of the necessity of comprehensible input in language acquisition originally constituted two separate areas of research. Ferguson (1972) predicted that NSs would use specific modifications when talking to a not fully competent L2 speaker, whereas Krashen's hypotheses predict a use of language which is "not simplified input but comprehensible input containing *i + 1*, structures 'slightly beyond' the acquirer's current state of competence." (Krashen 1985:6). His hypotheses do not, however, specify what modifications will take place. These two strands have met in later work done on the relationship between comprehensible input and language learning (for example Hatch et al. 1978; Long 1981a, 1981b, 1983). The types of modifications to be expected have been placed in a model of SLA, which predicts that some modification of the input data (either linguistic or interactional) will be needed for comprehension to take place and for input data to become intake. Gass (1988) has proposed a framework consisting of five levels to account for input language and learner output: **input apperception** (the process of understanding by which new observations are related to past experiences), **comprehension, intake** (attempted integration of parts of what is comprehended), **integration** of elements into the interlanguage grammar, and **output**. The relationships of the levels and the factors mediating between them indicate how complex any explanatory model of SLA will be.

In child language studies, both L1 and L2 studies, there is the additional factor of cognitive development to be accounted for: the child's cognitive development and language development are intimately intertwined, and the learner at different ages interacts in varying ways with her environment (see eg. Dore 1979, 1986; Astington 1994). In the present study it is assumed that the functionalist theories and the Competition Model proposed by Bates and MacWhinney (1979, 1989; see also Bates et al. 1982) come closest to explaining the complexity of human language acquisition in general and the way in which cognitive, social and language development are connected. According to functionalists, grammar is a secondary system, the acquisition of which is guided by "the pragmatic and semantic structure of communications interacting with the performance constraints of the speech channel" (Bates and MacWhinney 1979:168). Bates et al. (1982:64 ff.) suggest both the general process of shared social exchange (eg. imitation and shared reference) and areas in which language is used to encode specifically social content (intentionality, social feeling and social roles, and discourse rules) as areas for research. Beebe and Giles (1984) have proposed a theory called the Speech Accommodation Theory, which is a well-developed socio-psychological theory of interlanguage variation, especially in the context of multilingual speech communities. The theory predicts that speech shifts in conversation result either in convergence (speech modified to become more similar to interlocutors) or in divergence (differences maintained or

emphasized). The theory does not, however, account for developmental sequences (see eg. Ellis 1985).

The shift from teaching processes to learning processes placed the learner in the centre of language learning research. This happened to the extent that there arose a dichotomy between classroom language learning and untutored language learning, as pointed out for instance by Wong Fillmore (1989b:315). Language teaching is often seen to take place only in the classroom context and language learning outside the classroom. Wong Fillmore does not accept the claim that the only interesting results have been obtained through research on untutored language learning. Second language learners also require teaching, but teaching understood in a wider sense as "the social support for learning." Wong Fillmore's recent publications (eg. 1989a, 1989b) have looked at what goes on in the classroom. Her results show that the organization of the classroom, the relationships between the pupils and the possibilities to engage in meaningful communication all have a bearing on the acquisition process. Recent input studies have shown more interest in teaching understood in the sense above, eg. on language socialization, individual differences and input enhancement (see eg. Ochs and Schieffelin 1995, Snow 1995, Wesche 1994).

## 2.2 Input and interaction in second language acquisition

In the present study conversational interaction and the quality of this interaction is seen as one important context in which language acquisition can take place. Foreigner talk studies on input and interaction, studies on peer talk and on foreigner talk as meaning negotiation provide the framework for the present study. Strategies, tactics and meaning negotiation will be discussed to provide the background for the variables that will be used in the analysis.

### 2.2.1 Input and interaction

#### 2.2.1.1 Input studies

Views on the way in which input affects the language learning process have changed considerably over the years. Berko-Gleason and Weintraub (1978:176-177) summed up the role of input in different theories as follows: for behaviourists, language input was a way to reinforce the child's operant behaviour; for social learning theorists, it was a model-to-be-copied; and for mentalists it was data for the child's internally generated hypothesis about the structure of language. In the 1960s and 1970s psycholinguistics moved in the direction of what Berko-Gleason and Weintraub call "developmental sociolinguistics", in which the social context and interaction between the adult and the child are the determining factors. Functionalists (see eg. Bates et al. 1982) have added a new dimension to the discussion by distinguishing

between internal and external causes in the language learning process, as Sajavaara (1987:1192) points out. The external causes include the language data, although there is interaction between the environment and the learner in that the learner stimulates and the environment responds (Bates et al. 1982:49). In the course of these past few decades competence has been redefined as more than grammatical competence: it includes knowledge of society and social context, ability to carry on a conversation and knowledge of different registers (see eg. Saville-Troike 1982).

Although every L1 learner receives input from many sources, such as adults, siblings and peers, very young children normally have one main source, ie. caretaker speech. L2 learners, for their part, may receive input from many sources right from the beginning of the acquisition process: teachers and other adults, peers at school and in the neigbourhood, and siblings in some cases. Krashen (1980:8) has proposed that in studying L2 acquisition the following simple codes should be considered as part of each learner's input, especially when the learner receives formal instruction:

(1) Foreigner Talk (FT);
(2) Teacher talk (TT): classroom language accompanying exercises, the language of explanation in L2 and FL classrooms and the language of the classroom; and
(3) Interlanguage (IL): the language of other L2 learners, often the foreign student peer group.

Even if child L1 learners and adult L2 learners are in very different positions as far as their linguistic and cognitive skills are concerned, the input language addressed to these groups will be similar syntactically, while, according to Freed's (1981:33) findings, it differs functionally a great deal. Between adults, in the FT samples studied, information exchange (as analyzed by Freed) is the main function, in speech addressed to beginners and advanced learners alike. In contrast, over 60 % of the utterances spoken to children are action directives. That is, adults are considered equals, only linguistically incompetent, but children's linguistic incompetence is combined with cognitive limitations and a socially inferior status, and all of these features are reacted to. Therefore, it can be expected that in any FT situation, a range of factors will influence the amount and type of modification found.

The study of input language has covered both linguistic modifications, which include modifications in syntax and morphology, and interactional modifications. In general, it has been found that input language is well formed, not ungrammatical as was suggested by Ferguson (1972). However, some grammatical modification has been observed (see eg. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:118-120). Conversational adjustments are more consistently observed than linguistic changes. For reviews of the relevant literature see Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) and Ellis (1994), and for a comprehensive list of linguistic and conversational adjustments Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:125-6).

The relationship between input and interactional modifications and language acquisition is not clear, even after decades of research. As discussed above, Krashen's (1981, 1985) Input Hypothesis makes strong claims about the importance of comprehensible input for language acquisition. In early input research in L1 it was assumed that caretaker speech is finely tuned to

accommodate the child's proficiency level, ie. is made comprehensible for the learner at every level. It has, however, been argued that there is no such finetuning; rather, the accommodation occurs at a more general level. More recently, finetuning has been demonstrated to be a feature of CDS, when more refined research methods of inter-utterance relationships and analyses at specific lexical classes have been used (see Snow 1995:183). Gass and Varonis (1994) have considered whether there are ways to determine a direct relationship between interactional input and subsequent language production and conclude that interactional input allows learners to detect discrepancies between their interlanguage and the target language, which in turn may trigger modifications. Loschky (1994:315) found that negotiated interaction facilitates moment-to-moment comprehension relative to noninteraction. However, his results did not show that premodified input facilitates comprehension relative to nonmodification of input and his hypothesis about greater comprehension leading to greater acquisition was not confirmed.

Bremer and Simonot (1988:210) argue that anything that facilitates and encourages learner participation improves successful understanding and should be considered in NS-NNS communication studies. One such aspect is "giving 'room' to speak", ie. making sure that the weaker partner in an encounter can participate. Participation can be achieved for example by topic choice, using questions or modifying when necessary. In their review of input studies, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:143-4) conclude that neither production nor participation in conversation is necessary for language acquisition, nor are linguistic modifications necessary. They claim, however, that conversational modification may be a necessary condition for acquisition, since it helps to make input comprehensible. It seems that the most important aspect in accommodating is the interactive context of language learning, ie. the quality of conversations, the structure of discourse and the interaction patterns.

#### 2.2.1.2 Strategies and tactics

Long (1983) has proposed that interactional modifications should be divided into those that are meant to avoid conversational trouble and those that are used to repair the discourse when trouble occurs. The two types of modification are called strategies and tactics, respectively. **Strategies** reflect long-range planning and govern the ways in which entire conversations are conducted as well as concern what is being talked about. A native speaker can, for example, relinquish topic control to his or her interlocutor or choose the kinds of topics that are easier for a learner to handle. **Tactics**, on the other hand, arise from a need to repair discourse locally and govern the ways in which topics are talked about. For instance, requests for clarification or how to treat unintentional topic switches are dealt with in tactics. In addition, Long proposes a common subset for both types of modifications and calls it strategies and tactics. Devices found in this subset, such as slow pace or repetition of utterances, can be used both to avoid and repair trouble, but tend to serve one or the other function. For the sake of clarity, in the

present study the devices of the subset are included in tactics and individual differences in their use are pointed out.

Long's proposed division into strategies and tactics is accepted in the present study as a useful division for handling the fairly large number of variables identified. However, the devices suggested by Long cannot be considered to include every possible feature found in interactions where modifications are used. There are many other features of conversation, at least in child-child interaction but possibly also in adult-adult interaction, that contribute to the ways in which the learner can participate. Firstly, although the devices suggested by Long are interactional, there are other factors, such as the tone and atmosphere of the interaction, which need to be taken into account when considering the type of support or non-support given to the learner. Secondly, there is a need to consider individual differences as they emerge in a group of speakers functioning in a FT context. Long's categories and quantitative analyses of FT data in general suggest that similar features are to be found in any FT discourse, regardless of the interlocutors, their relationship or individual differences between interlocutors, which will necessarily affect interaction and interlocutors' behaviour.

Conversations are usually carried out to communicate something and to build and keep up rapport between interlocutors. In the course of any conversation, the interlocutors show context-dependent behaviours that are typical to the situation, but they also show context-free behaviours typical to them as individuals. Although in a FT discourse it may be necessary for the NS both to plan ahead to avoid trouble and to react to trouble by repairs as part of the discourse situation, different interlocutors in a similar situation may have very different agendas that will direct their behaviour. Therefore, they will show differences in the ways in which they approach the discourse, in the ways in which they allow space for the learner or support the learner in the conversation. Avoiding and repairing trouble may support the NS in her efforts to allow a learner maximum space or give her maximum support, but not necessarily. For example, treating topics briefly may not be a way to allow the learner space in choosing topics, although it may seem like a useful strategy for avoiding trouble in certain types of FT discourse. Therefore, to show the diversity of the type of FT discourse dealt with here, a range of variables are used to deal with the question of space and support. These devices are discussed in chapter 3 below.

#### 2.2.1.3 Foreigner talk as a register

Various terms have been used to define the area of input language studies. Simple codes, simplified registers and modified registers are all terms used of registers considered appropriate for use when hearers/interlocutors do not have a full understanding of the language being used (Ferguson 1972, Ferguson and DeBose 1977). There are several groups of hearers/listeners who may receive modified speech: young children, foreigners (ie. L2 learners), even deaf people and pets. The simple codes most studied are child-directed speech (CDS), ie. language addressed to young children, also referred to as caretaker speech or, earlier, baby talk (BT) and foreigner talk

(FT), ie. language addressed to L2 learners. How the input language is used, that is, its potential facilitating effect on the language acquisition process, depends on the quality of this language and the discourse in relation to the learner's linguistic and other characteristics.

CDS can be considered to be created as a conjunction of two principal components of language functions, those of communication-clarification (COMM) and expressive-affective (AFF) (Brown 1977:5). These two components can be used in defining the main and extended functions of simplified registers. According to Brown (1977:6), the one-dimensional communication register is used with "persons, animals and things whose primary characteristic is cognitive and linguistic incompetence", and the one-dimensional affective register with those "whose primary characteristic is the inspiration of affection." Both dimensions can be identified in language addressed to children: children are cognitively and linguistically incompetent and they inspire affection. Therefore, CDS can be defined as a two-dimensional COMM-AFF register. Extended uses of CDS, for instance to the deaf and pets, are often extensions of one dimension only: the deaf can be seen as either cognitively or linguistically incompetent and pets are thought of as inspiring affection. In most cases, between peers, FT is a one-dimensional COMM register, as language spoken to people who are linguistically, but in case of peer groups not cognitively, incompetent.

In the present study, the type of simple code considered is FT between children, ie. a one-dimensional COMM register used to peers who are linguistically incompetent. It is, of course, possible that a child will inspire affection in another child. In such cases the code would be a two-dimensional COMM-AFF register. The concept of modified registers is here understood in the non-simplifying sense proposed by Ferguson and DeBose. In most cases, children do not use reduced or simplified language. Rather, they use language in which clarifications and redundancy are employed to facilitate communication. To this end, relations between the linguistic constituents and the non-linguistic environment are more transparent than in native talk (consider for instance the use of references, pauses, stress and the use of attention-getting devices). The code itself may also be made more transparent, for instance by the use of deixis and redundancy.

The simplified register of the L2 context is generally called **foreigner talk** (FT). **Foreigner register** (FR) has also been proposed as a term. Arthur et al. (1980:112) argue that modifications found in various studies are not what Ferguson suggested for FT, rather they are adjustments that fit well within the rules of standard language. Therefore, the register should be called foreigner register, which is achieved by coordinated modifications in the form and content of discourse. The aim of the register is to facilitate communication. FT would mean replacements or additions to rules characterizing standard language, in fact a kind of language switching and use of ungrammatical constructions, whereas FR would imply modifications and adjustments in the frequency or frequency range of the various features of the standard language. This is register shifting and the speaker is not aware of it, whereas language switching is claimed to be a more conscious process. More recently, the term foreigner discourse (FD) has been

applied to those studies that deal with discourse and interactional modifications (eg. Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991).

The term **foreigner talk** will be used in the present study to refer to all types of FT and FD. This is the way in which it has generally been used in the literature.

### 2.2.2 Peer talk

There is evidence that child learners vary in their ability to generate input with peers (eg. Wong Fillmore 1986), but variation in FT due to a native speaker peer has not been extensively studied. To provide background to the present study, where such variation is focused on, issues specific to L2 context in children's interaction and FT are discussed in this chapter.

It was pointed out above (chapter 2.1) that classroom language learning and untutored language learning are often seen as totally separate from each other. However, if teaching is seen as "the social support for learning", as suggested by Wong Fillmore (1989b), teaching can also be found in children's peer interaction. Children can make excellent teachers and helpers for SL learners. Wiles (1985:87) reports on results that show such didactic tactics as suggestions of words, modelling whole sentences and even differentiating the help children give in a group activity (see also Garvey 1977, Cooper et al. 1982). Both kinds of teaching are kept in mind in the present study: the school context is present, since several recordings were made at children's schools and all the children receive classroom language teaching in one form or another. The study is, however, that of an untutored peer learning situation, where a great deal of teaching may take place as the children engage in play.

Similarity in age or equalitarianism in interaction styles can be used to define peer relations (see eg. Cooper and Cooper 1984:78). In the present study the term **peer** will be used to refer to age peers, who are mostly within a year of one another in chronological age. This is the age difference normally allowed for children to be defined as peers.

#### 2.2.2.1 Child-child interaction

To what extent any given child receives input from peers or adults (within the family, at school and elsewhere) will vary depending on the child learner's environment. There is, however, no reason to start with the assumption that only adult-child interaction will provide the child with the input and interaction necessary for the language acquisition process. There are cultures in which children hear language addressed to them by peers or older siblings rather than adults (Ervin-Tripp 1976:79). In western cultures children readily interact with other children and are influenced by their peers' judgements fairly early in their development. Iwamura (1980:19) points out that social pressures may be such that at some stage it is more important to be able to communicate with one's peers than with parents or other adults. In adolescent years, peers rather than adults provide models (for an extensive discussion of peer influence on language see Romaine 1984:182-195). In various studies on child-child interaction, a gradual devel-

opment of adult-like conversation has been found, as also have features typical of children's conversations, due to their own perceptual and cognitive development (Iwamura 1980:19, McTear 1984, 1985).

McTear (1985) studied the conversational development of two English-speaking children, from around four years of age till the girls were nearly six. His study deals with conversational initiations and responses, development of requests, sustenance of coherent dialogue, turn-taking and repairs in conversational breakdown. McTear's categorisation of initiations and responses has been adopted for the present study as a useful way to describe and analyse the ways in which different speakers approach the task of building up conversations. McTear's categories are based on the exchange as the minimal unit of interaction: initiations are prospective, ie. they set up predictions about the type of response to follow, and responses are retrospective, fulfilling the predictions set up by the preceding initiating move (McTear 1985:33). It is pointed out that some utterances are highly prospective: the absence of response is noticeable and is often reacted to, for instance, when requests for information or clarification are not answered (McTear 1985:39). Some utterances do not predict a response, rather they provide material for continuing the conversation. The categories as they are used here are presented in chapter 3.1.1.

The effect of child-child interaction may not always be positive: for instance, Nelson (1973) found a negative correlation between the time spent with other children and measures of language level and rate of language acquisition. Children's simpler language may provide less advanced models and less challenge. This is supported by studies on the influence of fathers and siblings on children's language development: fathers and siblings provide a bridge between mothers' CDS and the language outside the home by not modifying to the same extent as mothers do (see eg. Barton and Tomasello 1994). Therefore, children who have chances to interact with different groups, ie. peers, parents and other adults, receive input and interact in so many different ways that they are able to receive the benefit of the different types of interaction rather than be hindered by shortcomings in one or the other.

The language learner has to establish relationships with the speakers of the language: in the case of L1 learners this happens initially within the family and in the case of L2 learners with peers and teachers. Wong Fillmore (1976:726) regards the formation of friendships between children as essential for language acquisition. Teachers alone cannot provide enough input to allow children to learn effectively and therefore learners should not be segregated into special classes with other learners only. In forming friendships, it may help an L2 learner to have an outgoing personality and it is important in order to be exposed to input to share the same space with other speakers of the language. However, neither of these factors as such guarantees that learning will take place or that it is going to be an easy process. Wong Fillmore (1989b:327-329) points out two features that support L2 learners in their learning process: interacting with NSs who are willing to help, and studying in a classroom where there are enough NSs to interact with. Children in such circumstances master the language in a shorter time than those whose possibilities for interaction are more limited. On the other

hand, shy and unsociable children can also be good learners, if they are attentive and analytical and receive input from their teacher.

There is evidence that children are able fairly early to make distinctions in their speech when talking to different interlocutors (Berko-Gleason 1973:163 and ff.): infants are selective about who they talk to, four-year-olds interact differently with their parents and other adults, and eight-year-olds already have a kind of caretaker (or baby talk) register and some features of formal adult speech. Andersen (1990:64) claims that as early as by the age of six or seven children have acquired an understanding of a system of social categories with social role interactions. Although systematic accommodation effects have been observed, individual differences may be the result of different family backgrounds, eg. children with siblings may accommodate more (Foot et al. 1979). Moreover, it has been found that girls may accommodate more than boys (Langlois et al. 1978, as quoted in Gormly et al. 1979). These background variables combined with the communicative demands of a given situation and the cognitive-social status of the participants (Shatz and Gelman 1977:189) make it extremely difficult to distinguish the various influences, although the results of accommodation can be observed.

Children's early acquisition of grammatical forms in English is well mapped out, but there is considerably less information on the patterns of development of later skills, either grammatical or conversational. Romaine (1984:7) points out that although some skills are fairly well developed by the age of five and the child at that point has developed a highly differentiated linguistic system, complex structures, eg. passives and relative clauses, as well as various sociolinguistic skills, are still developing.

Since the subjects of the present study are age peers they can be expected to have reached a similar level of cognitive development. At the same time, their linguistic skills in L1 are comparable. However, the children are not peers in the sense of having equal competence in the language that they use for communication, since only one child is able to use her L1 and the other uses her L2. Thus there is some measure of inequality and asymmetry. Another source of asymmetry may be the fact that, although by the age of eight children may have reached a similar level in their linguistic and cognitive skills, they still continue to develop (see eg. Phillips 1985).

#### 2.2.2.2 Children's foreigner talk

Apart from some early child-child input studies (Hakuta 1978, Wong Fillmore 1976, Hatch 1978, Peck 1978) there are few studies that could be called FT studies in child-child interaction. One of those is Katz's (1981) article on a Hebrew-speaking girl acquiring English and the FT addressed to her by an age-peer. The features found in the studies mentioned above that characterize children's conversations in FT include the following: use of expressive words and use of sound effect; use of FT to signal certain types of attitudes; use of utterances as precursors to dramatic play; copying behaviour; limited lexical choice; use of repetitions and careful contextualization; and simple syntactic patterns. Sudden shifts of topic can

also be expected (Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz 1978). Children use repetitions and incorporations for securing turn-taking, keeping conversation going, in bragging and arguments, and for making deals (Hatch 1978). Katz (1981:62-63) observed a clear-cut shift in the use of functions over time: fewer imitations and descriptions and more conversation management and expressions of self-intent or attitude were used as the learner's skills increased. Also in child-child conversation it is clear that children are able to impart the type of metalinguistic information that can help the learner. Language is separated from its communicative function and is used for teaching and correction activities, ie. for providing words, modeling for repetition, answering questions, etc. (Wong Fillmore 1976, Iwamura 1980).

The data used for the present study have been analysed using surface structure variables and some discourse variables (Hirvonen 1984). The results largely supported the children's FT studies discussed above. Differences were found in some features between NT and FT and between FT addressed to beginners and advanced learners (see Table 1). The surface syntax variables (1-8) described the complexity of the surface syntax as a function of the length of utterances and constituents as well as the occurrence of copulas and ungrammatical utterances. The surface discourse indicators (9-19) were features that in some way reflect discourse functions, eg. the distribution of surface sentence structure as a functional choice, the use of elliptical structures and the proportion of non-present tense marking.

It was hypothesised that FT would show less complex and shorter structures than NT and that in FT there would be fewer elliptical structures and more fragments, attention-getting devices and vocatives. The hypothesis about the differences between FT and NT (Table 1, Column I) was supported by some of the results, ie. by the difference found in the occurrence of some discourse indicators (9, 13, 14, 18). The results of the comparisons of the surface syntax variables did not support the hypothesis about syntactic modifications. However, some variables attained near significance as hypothesized: there was a tendency to use shorter verbal groups (6) in FT than in NT. The results are shown in Table 1 (the levels of significance are expressed as follows: $p<.05$ nearly significant, $p<.01$ significant, $(p<...)$ significance against the hypothesis, $p<.001$ very significant and *ns* non-significant).

As shown in the table, the type of language addressed to beginners and advanced learners (Column II: beginner FT = bFT and advanced FT = aFT) differed more consistently in surface syntax structures than in discourse indicators: there were fewer coordinated and embedded structures (1) in beginner FT than in advanced FT. Similarly, the beginners heard shorter utterances (3) and utterances with fewer full verbal groups (2). Among the discourse indicators only the surface sentence types (9) differed significantly and the use of vocatives (14) nearly significantly between beginner and advanced FT. The learners were perceived as learners in that all of them were involved in modified interaction patterns as far as the discourse indicators show, but in addition to this, the beginners were perceived as linguistically less proficient, and therefore the language addressed to them contained more syntactic modifications, as shown by the surface syntax variables. The result is supported by similar findings by Freed (1981).

The comparisons discussed above do not distinguish between the different play contexts used in the present study. As the data includes only the free play interactions, the differences between the contexts are discussed at this point with reference to the results in Column III. The dyads of children recorded were assigned in random order either to free play (eg. Lego) or to game instruction (see chapter 3.2.2). The NSs' use of several surface syntax variables and discourse indicators differed significantly between the two contexts: there were more coordinated and embedded structures (1) in game instruction, and the number of full verbal groups/ utterance (2) and the length of utterance measured in words (3) was higher in game instruction, as hypothesized. The length of the subject constituent and of the verbal group differed nearly significantly but against the hypothesis: they were longer in free play than in game instruction. It was hypothesized that free play requires more modification, since the learner's attention is not directed at the other speaker as constantly as in game instruction, where the expert role does not need to be negotiated.

There are several discourse indicators that differed significantly between the two contexts. It was hypothesized that the distribution of surface sentence types (9) would differ between free play and game instruction: commands would be more frequent in game instruction and questions in free play. Commands were, however, more frequently used in free play than in game instruction: instructions were often given as statements. This may be equally efficient, since the learner's attention is directed at the NS, and it may also be felt to be more polite. However, more questions were employed in free play than in game instruction. This reflects a difference between the structure and functions of the two task types: the learner's point of view and opinions are probably solicited much more in free play and there are more chances and more need for information exchange on various topics. There were more fragments (11) in free play, in which more explanations and more modifications are needed. There were significantly more vocatives (14) in free play and nearly significantly more attention-getting devices. The free play and game instruction contexts differed sufficiently to justify treating them separately. Free play provides for more information exchange and opportunities for learners to participate more equally, since the knower position can be negotiated.

To sum up, in Hirvonen (1984), the native speakers were able to produce the type of interaction suitable for different task contexts, play and game, and for different interlocutors, ie. learners as opposed to other native speakers. The learner's level of proficiency affected the type of modifications used to the extent that advanced learners were involved in conversations very much like NS-NS conversations. In addition to the results shown in the table above, some discourse variables were studied. Metacommunicative side sequences were used as one indicator of the type of discourse. The learners were involved in conversations in which clarifications and repairs were frequent. Conversations with learners were characterized by a higher frequency of exchange of text-contingent information and requests for action or services as opposed to exchange of information, and control mode (commands and requests).

**TABLE 1** Summary of the sentence level variables in Hirvonen 1984

| VARIABLES | I FT/NT Foreigner Talk/ Native Talk | II bFT/aFT Beginner FT/ Advanced FT | III Play/Game Free play/ Game instruction | IV bL/aL[1] Beginner/ Advanced learner |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The surface syntax variables** | | | | |
| 1. The number of coordinated/embedded structures | ns | p<.001 | p<.001 | ns |
| 2. The number of full verbal groups/utterance | ns | p<.01 | p<.001 | p<.05 |
| 3. The length of utterance in words (LUW) | ns | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 |
| 4. The length of the subject constituent | (p<.001) | ns | (p<.05) | ns |
| 5. The length of the complement constituent | ns | ns | ns | p<.05 |
| 6. The length of the verbal groups | p<.05 | (p<.001) | (p<.05) | ns |
| 7. The number of copulas in the total of verbs | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| 8. The number of ungrammatical utterances | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| **The discourse indicators** | | | | |
| 9. The distribution of the surface sentence types | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 | p<.001 |
| 10. The number of elliptical structures | ns | ns | ns | - |
| 11. The number of fragments | ns | ns | p<.001 | - |
| 12. The number of stock expressions | ns | ns | ns | - |
| 13. The number of attention-getting devices | p<.001 | ns | p<.05 | - |
| 14. The number of vocatives | p<.001 | p<.05 | p<.001 | - |
| 15. The distribution of the types of textual boundness of the object constituent | ns | ns | p<.01 | - |
| 16. The number of the object constituent mentioned in the previous utterance | ns | ns | ns | - |
| 17. The proportion of non-present tense marking | ns | ns | ns | ns |
| 18. The number of utterances with non-immediate reference | p<.001 | ns | p<.05 | (p<.01) |
| 19. The learner utterance dependency | - | - | - | p<.001 |

1 The differences between beginners and advanced learners will be discussed in chapter 3.2.1.

In the above analysis of the present data, surface structure features mainly were studied. Some discourse features were, however, included, and the discourse analysis of these data is continued in the present study.

It has been suggested that children may have an opportunity to practise different skills in conversations with adults and with each other: syntax and phonology with other children and syntax and semantics with adults (Peck 1978:394-7; Cathcart-Strong 1986). Children tease each other about pronunciation and syntactic errors, and this may lead to correct forms, whereas with adults children have an opportunity to learn how to express themselves. Use of questions, requests for clarification, and topic nomination differ: children use rhetorical questions and do not necessarily answer when an answer is expected, whereas adults rely on questions to sustain conversations. Children's language is more playful, not as informational and so concerned with referential meaning as that of adults (Peck 1978:391-2).

Topic nominations constitute one area where child-child and child-adult language differs: topic nominations are easier for the child in adult-child conversations, because the adult is likely to help the learner (Cathcart-Strong 1986:525); between children anything may function as a topic (see also Ochs and Schieffelin 1983). In adult language answering a question, for example by starting to sing, would be considered unsocial speech. It was for such reasons that children's language was earlier largely considered to be unsocial. However, in children's language such a phenomenon hardly exists, because the range of relevant responses is much wider, including singing and sound play (Peck 1978:392-3). At the same time, children receive more negotiated input from NS peers than from adults (Cathcart 1986:130-5), although the learner has to take a great deal of responsibility for generating input from a NS (Cathcart-Strong 1986:526-7). In general, then, child-child conversations may provide a wider variety of input than child-adult conversations and chances to practise in more varied ways that contribute significantly to the learning process. Shugar and Kmita (1990:296-9) have shown that when the participant structures of conversational dyads change (child-adult and child-child dyads), differences can be found also in participation dynamics and topic sharing. Children tend to draw partners into their own actions. Adults support such behaviour and, at the same time, welcome child-initiated topics. With peers, there may be conflicts of interest, since both partners have the same goal, ie. drawing the other into their own actions. The roles of peers and adults can be seen as complementary: in the early stages adult input and support helps in conversational structuring, whereas with peers children can learn to deal with conversational breakdown (see eg. MacTear 1985:73).

## 2.3 Meaning negotiation

One approach to NS-NNS discourse has been to treat it as meaning negotiation, ie. as a process whereby speakers come to a common understanding of the meanings they create together (see eg. Jordan and Fuller 1975, Varonis and Gass 1985a and 1985b, Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, House 1993, Kalin 1995, Piirainen-Marsh 1995, Tyler 1995). Any discourse can be seen as meaning negotiation, but negotiation features become highly prominent in NS-NNS discourse. Repair sequences, especially, can be analysed as negotiation. Repair negotiation centres on communication breakdown, ie. nonunderstanding, which can cover both not understanding and misunderstanding. Misunderstanding is likely to occur in intercultural and multi-ethnic contexts (see eg. House 1996a) but is not limited to them: people sharing the same language and culture are also prone to misunderstanding each other, as shown by Tannen (1986) and Taylor (1992). In children's play talk, disputes may be a way to reach shared agreement in play, especially when making distinctions between real/ pretend situations (Corsaro and Rizzo 1990:64). Although agreement is not necessarily reached, Corsaro and Rizzo see disputes as important elements in developing children's ability to organize play events.

Ochs (1979:5 ff.) points out that communication can break down in every dimension of language as a result of gaps in the child's competence (syntactic, semantic, lexical and phonological structure). To this we have to add communicative or strategic competence (see eg. Tarone and Yule 1987) and the child's knowledge about the world in general. Reasons for not successfully negotiating an encounter, more specific to the encounter itself than to the speakers, are discussed by Grimshaw (1981:50-1): what is said may not be heard, because the signal is either inaudible or undecipherable, or misheard, for any number of reasons. A non-understood or partially or ambiguously understood item may lead to a request for a clarification. Misunderstanding may sometimes be seen as separate from nonunderstanding, but in practice it would be difficult to distinguish them in all cases. Differences in cultural norms, as discussed by Nyyssönen (1990) in terms of framing and symbolising patterns, can also be a cause of misunderstandings

Candlin (1987:22) treats misunderstandings as miscommunication in multi-racial and multi-ethnic societies, where citizens mutually dependent on each other share neither the same language nor the same world-view. Unintelligibility may be the immediate cause of such misunderstandings, but they derive from unint[illegible]tability, which in its turn results from alternative and conflicting value and belief systems, and which Candlin (1982) sees as a more complex problem than intelligibility. Misunderstandings are especially frequent in the gatekeeping encounters typical of our industrial societies (see chapter 4.2). With increasing diversification misunderstanding and communication breakdown easily turn into antagonism. Therefore, for society at large, Candlin regards the study of misunderstandings as very important. Meaning negotiation is required because neither the discourse strategies nor the language behaviour of the other

speaker can be interpreted to mean what it would have meant in a monocultural situation (Candlin 1981). Candlin (1987:22) refers to meaning negotiation as a societal phenomenon affecting people's lives at all levels as follows: "successful living depends on individuals' capacities to negotiate successfully the varying encounters in society." Collaboration is also emphasized by Thomas (1995:208), who considers the process of making meaning in interaction a joint accomplishment between speaker and hearer, and by Clark (1996), who sees language use as a joint activity, which can be analysed at various levels and which includes layering of activities similar to those in any other social actions.

The amount of shared knowledge is seen as crucial for collaborative encounters by Bremer and Simonot (1988:258).[2] There are several levels of context in developing shared knowledge in conversation: (1) the broad context of social structure (reflected in the interaction and further constructed by it), (2) the local context of the interaction itself and (3) the linguistic context provided within an utterance (Roberts et al. 1988:11-2.) Problems may develop at all levels. Usually a great deal of effort goes into establishing a situation where communication can take place, although people in close relationships with extensive shared knowledge may communicate with very little actual speech.

In addition to mishearing and not understanding and gaps in the learner's linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge system, other factors may contribute to communication breakdown. For example, the learner may not want to cooperate in the encounter. Especially in child-child interaction it is possible that children may not feel pressured to cooperate just to be polite; they may use an argument for other ends (see eg. Corsaro and Rizzo (1990) on children's disputes). The NS's knowledge system and expectations complete the picture: if the NS is not knowledgeable about the learner's culture, she may misunderstand more easily than if she had this knowledge or she may expect the learner not to cope, thus fulfilling her expectations (cf. Wong Fillmore 1989a and b). Also, inappropriate strategy choices and manipulation of the situation by one of the interlocutors may cause pragmatic errors. In this context, it can be argued, as do Heikkinen and Valo (1985:225-6) in their study on slips in interaction, that in interaction all parties are inter-dependent on each other and on the situation: linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world are one as are "the inner happening (e.g. the knowledge) from the outer happening (e.g. incoming information)."

House's (1993) proposal for a model with which to analyse inappropriate learner responses aims at integrating various approaches in the field: social, intercultural, pragmatic and information-processing approaches can all be used to identify possible causes of misunderstanding and resulting inappropriate responses. The model shows the complexity of interacting in a foreign language and can also be applied to NS contributions in NS-NNS interaction. House's (1996a) model of misunderstandings in intercultural communications further integrates different approaches to the study of

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2 The criticality and, especially, the concreteness of the notion of shared knowledge is extensively treated by Sperber and Wilson (1986).

misunderstandings and sets up five dimensions along which different preferences and expectations can be displayed. The dimensions are directness/indirectness, orientation towards self/orientation towards other, orientation towards content/orientation towards addressees, explicitness/ implicitness, ad-hoc formulations/verbal routines. The dimensions have been used to analyze encounters between Germans and English speakers (British and Americans) and the results indicate that the dimensions are valid instruments for explaining misunderstandings. Cultural differences have been observed by Corsaro and Rizzo (1990:64) also in children's styles: in children's disputes, Italian children were involved in disputes more often than their American peers; for them participation in *discussione* is important and emphasis is placed on the style of the dispute

In the L1 acquisition literature, Wells (1987:115) has used the notion of meaning negotiation to explain a collaborative approach to teaching that would encourage children to learn and "make knowledge their own". Such collaboration he defines as "a willingness to negotiate meanings". Learning, as well as linguistic interaction in general, is understood to be an interactional process and negotiation of meaning, not its unidirectional transmission (Wells 1985, 1987).

The collaborative approach used to explain first language acquisition can be applied to conversation and sense-making in general, as can Jordan's and Fuller's (1975) concept of the joint use of a common language. But the collaborative approach can also be applied specifically to L2 acquisition situations. Meaning negotiation can be seen as the way in which difficulties with understanding can be jointly resolved (Roberts et al. 1988:4). Understanding is interactive, achieved through co-operation between the interlocutors (Roberts et al. 1988:8). Negotiation can then be seen as a means of providing the learner with the necessary comprehensible input for the language learning task, as suggested by Long (1983:131). He finds meaning negotiation in terms of "the negotiation of comprehensible input" to occur in those modifications that are required in NS-NNS conversation either to avoid conversational trouble or to repair the discourse when trouble occurs. According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:126), such requirements of NS-NNS conversations result in quantitative, not qualitative, differences between NS-NS and NS-NNS conversations. Also Derwing (1991b:17-8) points out that it is not enough to consider the rate of conversational adjustments: appropriateness of the adjustments can only be evaluated qualitatively.

In these terms, the use of the concept of meaning negotiation in the area of speech pathology to study the effectiveness of speech therapy in a group discussion seems especially fitting (Klippi 1990). Leiwo (1990) argues strongly for communicative speech therapy, which would allow the learner to make initiations, would make it possible for the learner and the therapist to negotiate the patient's intentions and meanings, and would exploit all possible means of expression in the interpretation of the patient's meanings. Neither are children exempt from the requirements pointed out by Candlin: the importance of conversational skills in becoming accepted in a peer group and the difficulties encountered by the learning disabled in this

respect have been demonstrated (see Donahue, Pearl and Bryan 1980; Donahue and Bryan 1983; Bryan 1986).

What is meant by meaning negotiation seems to cover somewhat different aspects of discourse or conversation. Candlin refers to the whole of the discourse as a potential negotiation field (in talking about discourse strategies and language behaviour), whereas Long concentrates on trouble sources and repairs within the SLA context. Certain features of NS-NNS conversations, like repetitions and expansions, "result from a process in which negotiation of meaning takes place between NS and NNS" (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991:126).

Both aspects, overall discourse skills and problem solving, are covered by Tarone and Yule (1987:50-51) in their definition of strategic competence as (1) the overall skill of a speaker in successfully transmitting information to a hearer and (2) the use of communication strategies when problems are encountered in the process of attempting to transmit information. Problems occur in both L1 and L2 contexts, but are especially observable in L2 contexts, which may also require skills slightly different from L1 situations. Sajavaara (1988:254) considers the view of communication as the transmission of messages rather limited and argues for defining communication as "negotiating relevant information between two or more interactants", the purpose of which can often be "to establish social contacts or to present oneself in a particular social situation." In this view, uncertainty reduction strategies and speech accommodation are also related to the meaning negotiation process (Gudykunst 1985, Beebe and Giles 1984).

Meaning negotiation is generally considered to enhance L2 learners' language acquisition by aiding comprehension and providing opportunities for modifying interlanguage output (Pica 1996:14). Whether meaning negotiation, as part of modified input and interaction, can really make a difference and what type of difference in second language acquisition remains an open question that merits a great deal of empirical research in at least the following areas suggested by Pica (1996:15-16): effects over time, learner's needs for both positive and negative feedback, quantitative and qualitative differences between negotiated input and free communication, and how learners can utilize the negotiated meanings in their acquisition process.

# 3 THE PROBLEM, DATA AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS OF THE THESIS

In this chapter, the discourse analytic background and the research problem of the thesis, the subjects, data collection and the data will be described. Secondly, the features used in the analysis and the criteria for conclusions to be drawn from the data will be defined.

Input for language acquisition is one facet of the language learning process that any theory needs to account for, whether modified input is required for language learning to take place or not. Since it occurs, it must serve a function. As discussed above in chapter 2, it has been shown that NSs tend to modify their linguistic input when speaking to learners. At the same time, more recognition has been given to the role of conversation and interaction with speakers of the target language in emerging SLA competence, and in this way discourse phenomena have received more emphasis. There are qualitative differences, as shown by Wong Fillmore (1976, 1985), that have a bearing on the acquisition process (the organization of the classroom, the relationships between the pupils, and the possibilities to engage in meaningful communication). Interactional modifications have also been established for child-child language, but individual variation in providing modified input has hardly been studied. The purpose of the present study is to investigate individual variation between NSs in child-child interaction and examine the NS's role in providing input, not only the learner's role in generating input.

Children acquire early on the ability to vary their register depending on their interlocutor. Since one important source for child L2 learners is peer talk, it was chosen as the learning environment to be studied. Although the discourse context is free play, in the present study peer talk is seen as analogous to teaching, in the sense of providing social support for learning. In the NS-NNS conversations the context of the free play discourse is a learning context in that one interlocutor is a learner of English. The NSs are speakers of English and the learners' target language is English. The subjects

of the study are age peers and can be expected to have reached a similar level of cognitive abilities and L1 skills: differences are expected in the way in which they approach a foreigner talk situation with different interlocutors. Special attention will be paid to the NSs' linguistic behaviour and the support that they can give to learners when they participate in a foreigner talk conversation. Differences between the NSs in giving space and providing support to learners in their interaction in free play and in their approaches to meaning negotiation with learners will be analyzed.

The social setting chosen for the data collection (recordings of children's play), which is peer dyad speech in a play situation, and the subjects' age are the constant variables in the study. For reasons to be discussed below (section 3.2.1), social class is not used as a variable, although it is known that both the NSs and learners have varying social backgrounds.

## 3.1 The approach in the present study

### 3.1.1 Discourse-analytic background

Modification (foreigner talk) studies and discourse analysis in general provide the framework within which the analysis of the present data has been carried out. Both deal with linguistic interaction, the modification studies in a particular context, ie. the NS-NNS context. FT studies have for the most part dealt with isolated features, readily identifiable in a NS-NNS setting. There is a need to look at interactions of this nature in a wider perspective, combining FT ideas, meaning negotiation and discourse analysis.

The analysis is discourse-analytic: both the discourse structure of the conversations and, especially, the interaction that emerges in the conversations are studied. It has become apparent that the type of interaction and the type of data dealt with here cannot be adequately described from the viewpoint of separate communicative acts only, ie. as a collection of repairs or negotiation sequences or control acts. None of these can give a reliable analysis of the totality of the interaction in a particular conversation. The aim here is to highlight those behaviours that sustain interaction and support the learner's efforts to participate in conversation at different levels. The task is to draw up a picture of the conversation using various interactional and discourse features. Strategies that are used or not used in each conversation are discussed to analyze how each NS and learner approaches the task of carrying on a conversation in a NS-NNS situation. Batteries or clusters of features, rather than single features, will emerge to define each speaker's strategies.

The two main approaches to the study of conversation have been **discourse analysis** (DA) and **conversational analysis** (CA) (see eg. Brown and Yule 1983 and Levinson 1983). Levinson (1983:286-287) considers DA and CA as two distinctive, and according to him, largely incompatible styles of

analysis. Both, however, aim at an analysis of the production and comprehension of coherent and sequential organization in discourse. Conversational analysis is characterized by meticulous attention to the details of conversation, and data are studied with as little preconception of the analysis as possible. The methods are inductive and the attempt is to establish recurring patterns in records of naturally occurring conversations. Emphasis is on "interactional and inferential consequences of the choice between alternative utterances," not relying on intuition but on what actually occurs in the text. Discourse analysts employ techniques similar to those used in linguistics, extending them beyond the unit of the sentence: basic categories are isolated and the co-occurrence of those categories are analyzed in the data to establish rules differentiating well-formed discourse from ill-formed discourse. Levinson (1983:286) claims that discourse analysts tend to use limited sets of data, often wholly constructed by the analysts themselves. In this respect, however, the last decade has brought changes. There is a large body of discourse-analytic research that employs data much closer to naturally occurring conversations than short stretches of discourse constructed by analysts. In the present study, for instance, the data have been collected from children in situations very similar to those that they encounter outside experimental conditions, and they can therefore be considered to be semi-experimental in nature (see chapter 3.2.2 below).

Other inherent problems observed in discourse analysis by Levinson (1983: 286 ff.) are the following: how to analyse the multiple functions found in almost any utterance, and the possible conflict between illocutions and perlocutions; identifying and analysing relevant utterance-units vs. relevant actions; presenting conversations in terms of sequencing rules and specifically regarding conversations as being constituted by such pairs as questions and answers or offers and acceptances, since, for example, questions can be followed by partial answers, rejections of the presuppositions of the question, statements of ignorance, denials of the relevance of the question, etc. According to Levinson, when a question is put an answer is deemed relevant, and responses can be expected to deal with this relevance (conditional relevance). Regardless of such criticism, discourse analysis has not lost its appeal over a decade later. Moreover, for the present study it offers tools for analysis not available elsewhere. The approach is basically that of a modification study, where a certain number of pre-established features can be expected to appear. In the course of the analysis the variables may be changed and the analysis modified. For the present purposes, the discourse analytic approach is adequate, since it provides a framework within which the data can be set.

The present data have been analysed using discourse features that have been found in various modification, input and language acquisition studies. No attempt is, however, made to define what would be well-formed children's FT; rather, an attempt is made to define some of the interactional properties of such discourse using previous research as a guide. On the other hand, the analysis is also data-driven in the sense that features found in the course of the analysis have been included. An attempt has been made to find those instances of language use that support, or do not support, the learner's participation in the conversation, regardless of whether a

characteristic found in the data fits a preconceived category or not. However, the data have not been coded for detailed CA analysis. Discourse analysis, as opposed to conversation analysis, makes it possible to compare the results obtained with other FT and input studies. CA has not been used as an analytical method in NS-NNS data till recently (see eg. Kalin 1995). The findings of CA, which was developed from ethnomethodology, have helped clarify, for example, turn-taking and repairs in conversation and have led to the development of adjacency pairs. In the present study these findings are employed for instance in the discussion of initiations and responses.

The structural analysis of the conversations in this study conforms to the principles of the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) type of discourse analysis, since it allows the possibility of choosing the level at which the analysis can be carried out. The present data can be described within the generally accepted hierarchy of discourse scale (Coulthard 1977, Sinclair and Coulthard 1992). Although these are not school data in the same sense as the Sinclair and Coulthard data, discourse scale categories can nonetheless be recognized here, too. Since these are not school data, INTERACTION will be used instead of the category LESSON: interaction is defined as one recording session of a given task type (free play or game instruction). Similarly, instead of TRANSACTION, SEQUENCE will be used to describe a longer stretch of conversation with a unitary intent and purpose (Wells 1975:38). EXCHANGE, MOVE and ACT are used according to Coulthard (1977:101). The rank scale of grammatical organisation below presents the linguistic rank levels according to which a sentence corresponds to an exchange in discourse organisation and a clause to a move.

| **Discourse organization** | **Grammatical organization** |
|---|---|
| INTERACTION (lesson) | |
| SEQUENCE (transaction) | |
| EXCHANGE | sentence |
| MOVE | clause |
| ACT | group |
| | word |
| | morpheme |

The levels form a hierarchical structure, where "each rank above the lowest has a structure which can be expressed in terms of the units below" (Coulthard 1977:100). The highest level, INTERACTION, has no internal structure of its own. It is employed to describe the context within which the other ranks can be placed. SEQUENCES are formed of EXCHANGES, and are marked in various ways at the boundaries (eg. by change of topic or frames). The sequence, however, just like the paragraph in grammatical organization, does not have an internal structure of its own in the present data. Coulthard (1977:103) discusses the structure of transactions as exchanges: boundary exchanges and a succession of informing, directing or eliciting exchanges. These are the functions found in classroom data, but exchanges in free play conversation may vary more. MOVES combine to form

exchanges and consist of one or more ACTS (see also Coulthard and Brazil 1979).

Conversational structure, on the one hand, may reveal something about the participants' rights in the conversation, and, on the other, something about the interactants' abilities and willingness to draw their interlocutors into the conversation and allow room for a less competent speaker to take part in it. Following McTear (1985), the structure of these conversations will be discussed from the point of view of initiation and response type and their rate of occurrence. The following categories will be used:

| **Initiation type** | **Response type** |
|---|---|
| Question | No response |
| Request | Inappropriate/irrelevant |
| Statement | Minimal predicted |
| Miscellaneous | Response + additional content |
| | Other appropriate |

There are a number of assumptions embedded in the categories chosen. First of all, it is assumed that in children's conversations, as in adults', initiations require responses. It is considered impolite not to answer a question or to acknowledge a statement, at least in adult behaviour. However, even at this age (8-10) children may not find it necessary always to answer, and non-response is not considered deviant. This is certainly true for younger children. Cathcart-Strong (1986:524) reports that kindergarten children respond from one third to two thirds of the time in child-child (NS-NNS) interaction, whereas adults in similar interactions respond to nearly all learner initiations (see also Ervin-Tripp and Gordon 1986, Peck 1978, Shugar & Kmita 1990). It will, however, be assumed, following McTear (1985:54-55), that the level of responsiveness reflects a child's conversational development and that a noticeable lack of responses at this age can be considered to indicate "conversational immaturity or disability." Also an exclusive use of minimal predicted responses would reflect a similar unwillingness or inability to participate in conversation or, as in the present data, to help the NNS interlocutor to participate. On the other hand, a response which includes additional information, or any other appropriate response, would help the learner participate and would on each occasion continue the topic initiated. The last initiation type listed, miscellaneous, includes all initiations that cannot be identified either as questions, requests, or statements, for example simple vocatives, sentence fragments, and expressive utterances. This category is included, since in L2 data some NSs may find it necessary to resort to a variety of initiations, for instance to attract the learner's attention.

Some of the discourse terminology employed in the present study can be found in studies on children's first language development that have been conducted in connection with a longitudinal research project in Bristol in the 1970s and 1980s (see eg. Wells 1975, Wells et al. 1979, Wells 1981). This terminology is used here as it was employed in the analysis of the present

data for the previous study referred to earlier (Hirvonen 1984). The Bristol Project draws heavily on Halliday's systemic-functional theory, where utterances are seen as simultaneously realizing selections from three major areas of meaning, which are the interpersonal purposes of communication (command, inform, etc.), the topic to be communicated and the textual meaning (the organization of the meanings to be communicated as messages) (see eg. Halliday 1984). Systemic-functional theory is rooted in the discourse-analytic tradition rather than conversation analysis. In the Bristol Project, talk is divided into categorised segments called sequences (eg. control, representational), each of which has a unitary topic and purpose. The three areas of meaning are reflected in the choices that the speakers have in their discourse **roles** of either initiating or responding (the interpersonal meaning), in the discourse **commodity**, which is either goods & services or information (the topic), and in **incorporating** their own and the other speaker's material in the discourse (the textual meaning). If necessary, the analysis can be refined to cover minute details of these areas. For the type of data used in the present study, NS-NNS conversations, modification strategies need also to be taken into account.

As was stated above, discourse analysis has been chosen as the analytic method for the present study. Discourse analysis provides a framework within which the results can be set and allows for comparability with other studies in the field. In addition to choosing DA, another major choice concerns the presentation of the results. It was decided that in the first part of the study (chapter 4.1) conversational pairs would be discussed as case studies. Two of the native speakers included in the study, Katja and Caroline, showed, at least on the surface, radically different behaviours with the same learner (Interactions 7 and 8 with Matsumi, a beginner). Their sessions are used as a starting point for the analysis. The rest of the data are also analyzed in detail and will be used to verify the different styles identified in Katja and Caroline (see further in chapter 3.3).

It is evident that at times there is a need for analysis at many levels. The children are from different cultural backgrounds and this makes the interpretation particularly difficult. The aim is, however, to interpret the linguistic data alone and to avoid conjectures as to what the speaker might or might not mean. As in ethnomethodology, common sense knowledge has to be used but used knowingly.

### 3.1.2 Unit of analysis

The data of the present study are recorded children's conversations. The definition of **conversation** proposed by Levinson (1983:284) is used: in the everyday sense of the word, conversation means the kind of talk that we hear around us all the time outside specific institutional settings, where participants freely alternate in speaking. Technically, Levinson (1983:318) defines conversation as a form of talk characterizable in terms of overall organizations, such as opening and closing sections and their internal structure, and in terms of the use of conversational activities, such as turn-taking. Conversation implies interaction, as pointed out by McTear (1985:5),

but interaction does not imply conversation, since speech may not be needed at all. Therefore, interactional analysis requires a wider range of features, especially non-linguistic, to be analyzed. The present data are on audiotapes only, and thus the possibility of interactional analysis is excluded. Each recording session represents one **interaction** (altogether 15 interactions).

For the purposes of the present analysis, the **exchange** was chosen as the unit of analysis. The exchange is the basic element of conversational structure, consisting of an initiating **move**, a responding move and possibly, especially in the Sinclair-Coulthard type of school data, a follow-up move. (A turn may consist of many moves, but in its simplest form one move = one turn.) The exchange as a unit can be combined into bigger units (sequences and interactions), as discussed above and it can be broken down into smaller units. An analysis based on exchanges implies that in conversation each speaker has his/her turn in relation to the other speaker(s), and therefore the speakers' contributions are looked at together. Edmondson and House (1981:38) stress this aspect of analysis by describing an exchange as a unit "in which both partners together reach a conversational *outcome*." McTear (1985:33, 39) discusses the prospectiveness and retrospectiveness of each move. Initiations are prospective, since they imply predictions about the kind of response that is possible, whereas responses fulfil predictions set up by preceding moves and are therefore retrospective. When a speaker uses a move that is strongly prospective in character, eg. a question, she ensures that her initiation will be answered. A speaker's choice of move type, whether eliciting, informing or acknowledging, can then have an effect on the character of the conversation: in the present study it could imply something about the NS's willingness to involve the learner or even about her expectations as to the level of learner participation. An analysis based on **utterances** would consider each speaker separately and thus an important aspect of the co-operative nature of conversations would be lost. Using utterances as an analytic unit would add another difficulty, especially if an utterance was defined as speech by a given speaker occurring between pauses. For example, in the present study both short and long pauses occur within one speaking turn. It would consequently be very difficult to decide which pauses occur at utterance boundaries and which within utterances.

### 3.1.3 Research problems

Broad similarities within a group of speakers and differences between groups, such as adults and children, can explain some differences in the kind of input learners are exposed to. However, in many respects individual differences between children in providing input can also be expected: some children may be more factually oriented, others interpersonally, some may easily take on the role of a supporting teacher, while others continue to tease their interlocutor beyond the limits of ordinary politeness. How different in any individual child's case different interactions are depends on a number of factors. Differences in native speakers' language, and the way they affect learners, have not received much attention in studies of input

language. The aim of the present study is to show possible differences between child NSs in their behaviour in a FT register.

Furthermore, differences are expected both in the range and effectiveness of the strategies used for planning the communicative situation and of the devices used in repairing trouble that occurs in these situations. As the NT conversations occur between participants of equal competence and status, it is hypothesized that those differences that can be found in these subjects' NT conversations as regards the variables studied are the realizations of context-free individual characteristics as opposed to the context-dependent use of strategies and tactics common to FT.

It is also expected that quality of interaction is determined not only by the input generation capacities of the learner but that the NS's willingness and ability to provide space and support will to a large extent define the discourse of the particular dyad. Again, there will be variation in that in some dyads, the NS's role will be more important. Beginner learners are assumed to be more dependent on the NS's role than more advanced learners.

The research problems can be summarized in the following three questions:

1. Is there individual variation between the NSs in their NT and FT?
2. If individual variation is found, can we identify the features that define speaker-dependent stylistic approaches to discourse and those that define context-dependent strategic choices in discourse?
3. What effect does the learner's proficiency level have in FT (beginner FT vs. advanced FT)?

## 3.2 Data description

### 3.2.1 Subjects

Data were gathered from 18 subjects, ten NSs and eight learners (see Table 2 below). Six of the NSs were girls (F) and four boys (M). Of the eight learners, five were girls. The learners were either beginners (bL) or advanced (aL), four of each. The children will be referred to by their first names in the text. In the data samples, which are numbered consecutively, the children are referred to by their initials, as given in Table 2. The data were collected in Cardiff, Wales in South Glamorgan local authority schools and one independent school, also in Cardiff. The subjects were sought through various channels, including a search in those Cardiff schools that the education authorities indicated as most likely to have learners of English (some of these schools have special language units for teaching English as a second language) and other contacts. The learners came from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds, mainly from the Asian continent. They were mostly children of foreign students studying in Cardiff; others came from immigrant families, and some children's parents had been sent to

Britain by their companies. Further information on the children's ages, languages, and family background is given in Appendix 1.

Whenever possible, a NS informant who played with the learner during play time, who sat next to the learner in class or whom the learner was otherwise acquainted with, was selected. If the children did not know each other, they met once or twice before the recording session. This was done to eliminate the possible use of "stranger talk." Either the teacher at school introduced the children to each other or they were taken to visit each other. Only in case of one learner, Mei Kien (number 18 in the list), this was not possible without putting too great a burden on her family's time and good-will. In this case, the beginning of the recording session is excluded from the analysis. Mei Kien turned out to be an outgoing, sociable child, and the fact that she had not met her playmates before did not seem to dampen her curiosity and initiative.

**TABLE 2** List of subjects

| NATIVE SPEAKERS | gender | LEARNERS | gender |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Vance (vn) | M | 11. David (dc)/bL | M |
| 2. Katja (kw) | F | 12. Maisa (md)/aL | F |
| 3. Caroline (cw) | F | 13. Matsumi (mt)/bL | F |
| 4. Farah (fa) | F | 14. Aedy (aa)/bL | M |
| 5. Barry (bb) | M | 15. Mona (ma)/aL | F |
| 6. Christine (cc) | F | 16. Chazal (ca)/bL | F |
| 7. Joanne (jn) | F | 17. Yasushi (ym)/aL | M |
| 8. Anthony (at) | M | 18. Mei Kien (mk)/aL | F |
| 9. Sanjay (sh) | M | | |
| 10. Nia (nl) | F | | |

Because both the learners and the native speakers had quite varied backgrounds, it was not possible to match the learner's and the native speaker's socioeconomic status. However, in cases where the children in a particular dyad went to the same school, it can be assumed in the British context that their families are not vastly different in their circumstances. Even where the children go to different schools, such a discrepancy does not necessarily exist. For example, Maisa, an Iraqi Kurd, came from an academic family, and she was matched with a bilingual girl of a similar background. Maisa's parents were teachers and her father was studying for his doctoral degree in education. Katja's mother was a teacher and father a university lecturer.

In general, it is not clear what the effect of social class would be for situations of the type dealt with here. In relation to British studies of L1 acquisition Wells (1987:142-144) presents a forceful argument against the stereotypical belief that "there are strongly class-associated differences in the ways in which parents talk with their children." Neither does he see any justification for the expectation that the children's parents' social class membership defines the children's oral language abilities. In a large developmental study, carried out in Bristol, no clear differences were found up to the age of five between middle- and lower-class groups of children in their rate of development, in the range of meanings expressed, in the range

of functions for which language was used or in the quality of their conversational experience. This does not mean that there were no differences in the children's conversational experiences, but the variation found in the amount and quality of conversation was not significantly associated with family background. However, class-related differences were observed at school in children's ability to cope with tests and test-like situations, which are measures concerned with literacy. High literacy scores were obtained by children whose parents read to them more often, who were more likely to show an interest in literacy, and were more likely to spend more time on activities associated with reading and writing. In general, Wells (1987:146) points out that the concept of linguistic disadvantage can be used when it is understood as "relative unfamiliarity with the significance of literacy and with its forms and functions." The aim of the present study is to analyse interaction patterns in children's conversations, and children, like adults, often find themselves in conversation with people from different backgrounds. Therefore, the fact that the children were not matched for socioeconomic status is not considered a major drawback.

Gender variation has been found in the use of certain variables in the speech of children as young as four or six years old (Andersen 1990:47), and it would also present an interesting topic for analysis in relation to the type of data used in the present study. The majority of the interactions recorded were, however, single sex. Since there are not enough data for comparison from mixed-sex dyads, no gender variation analyses are included in the study.

The children were matched only in terms of age, not for social class or gender. The subjects were junior school children, aged 8 to 10 (nearly 11) years; it was possible, in all cases but one, to match the children in age within a year and a half (mostly within a year) of each other's ages: only in the case of Barry (NS) and Aedy (bL) was there a gap of two years. One of the learners was younger than eight, 6;6, and her NS interlocutors were 7;0 and 7;8.[1] It is assumed that using informants close in age ensures that they are reasonably well matched in cognitive status as well. There may still be variation, but for practical purposes the fact that they are attending the same form can be equated with age matching. Matching ages avoids the mixed-age effect in children's speech (see eg. Gormly et al. 1980 for the effects and uses of mixed-age groups in education and Gormly et al. 1979 for accommodation in mixed-age social interaction).

The learners' competence in English ranged from complete beginners to fairly advanced. Half of the learners in the study were from the lower end of the scale (beginners) and half from the upper end (advanced). To confirm teachers' assessments of the learners' proficiency levels, the proportions of certain surface syntax variables and discourse indicators were checked using chi-square ($\chi^2$) tests of significance (see Table 1 in chapter 2). This was thought adequate since only relative differences were required to be ascertained, rather than, for instance, proficiency level for placement. Tests

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1 All ages are given in years and months as follows: 7;8 = 7 years and 8 months.

were performed on the variables and were expressed as proportional relative frequency data, as a proportion of all utterances in the particular group studied, either beginners (bL) or advanced (aL). Of the twelve variables used (1-9, 17-19), four attained significance ($p<.01$ or $p<.001$). These were the length of utterance measured in words (LUW) (3), the distribution of surface sentence types (9), the number of utterances with non-immediate reference (18) and learner-utterance dependency (19). The two variables that attained near-significance ($p<.05$) were the number of full verbal groups per utterance (2) and the length of the complement constituent (5). The results indicate clear differences between the two proficiency levels among the learners and verify the teachers' assessments of the learners into two groups, beginners and advanced students.

The learners came from a variety of language backgrounds (eg. Chinese, Arabic, Japanese). One was bilingual in Kurdish and Arabic, well on her way to being trilingual after learning English. Others were monolingual. At the time of the recordings, half of the learners were attending special language units designed to facilitate language acquisition and to acquaint newcomers with the British school system. All but one of the learners had been in Britain for less than six months at the time of recording. Mei Kien had spent 18 months in Britain, but she was selected as a subject because she was still attending the language unit.

One characteristic that the children, the NSs and learners, share is that children in the age group of interest here, 8-10-year-olds, were in the second major phase in their socialization process, according to the following categorization: **infancy** (the basic sensorimotor rules for social interactions, eg. turn-taking, are learnt in this phase), **childhood** (the concrete social categories) and **adolescence** and **early childhood** (more abstract notions of social categories that compose complex networks) (Andersen 1990:57).

Another characteristic that the subjects share due to their age is that by the age of eight certain registral variation has been established in their language (according to studies of English as L1). Further changes in learning social categories take place at the age of 10 to 11, and still others later in the teenage years (Fischer et al. 1983). Ervin-Tripp and Gordon's (1986) and Andersen's (1990) studies on children's use of requests and directives show that there are systematic changes in learning social categories, use of instrumental language and awareness of the perspective of others right before or around the age of eight. Children below eight, when making a request, assumed that the adult addressee had what was being asked for, eg. they would ask for a marker saying *I need a blue marker* or *Where's the marker?* Older children take into account the possibility that their request may not be complied with or that the request may be intrusive and will say eg. *Are there any more markers?* or *She told me to get a letter for my parents*. After the age of eight, the hearer's viewpoint is taken into account, intrusiveness is acknowledged as a social issue when a request is made, and options for noncompliance are acknowledged (Ervin-Tripp and Gordon 1986:86-89). The development of sociolinguistic patterns and discourse skills continues well into adulthood, but it can be assumed that the subjects of the present study have by the age of eight reached a similar level. Those below eight are few and their interactions constitute a minor portion of the data.

Children and adults alike find themselves in asymmetric interaction when engaged in FT interaction, whether with age peers or not. In adult NS-NNS interaction asymmetry can be perceived basically as linguistic but there are other factors involved, such as status differences resulting from employer-employee relationships and immigrant-native situation. Child-adult talk is asymmetric at least along the dimensions of age and linguistic competence. Between children and adults some of the resulting asymmetry can be compensated for by affective factors, for instance by emotional closeness. For instance, Camaioni (1979:328) sees interaction among age peers as interaction among equals and among children of different ages as asymmetric. The following underlying inequalities in the NS-NNS relationship have been suggested by Bremer and Simonot (1988:253): the gatekeeping role of the NS (power),[2] NS command of the code (linguistic) and the NS's pedagogic role. According to Cathcart (1986:130), age and authority relationships hold also between child NNSs and their NS interlocutors and influence the type of control exercised. In the present data, the NSs and learners are school mates or friends and age peers, but their relationship is probably not completely equal due to differences in language proficiency (linguistic inequality), and possibly in some cases, to lack of cultural experience.

### 3.2.2 Data

The data analysed for the present study consist of 15 **interactions**. For the present purpose an interaction is a recorded conversation and session between any two children of a given type of task. Each recorded session was approximately 30 minutes but produced varying amounts of speech, from 100 words per NS to 1150 words per NS. It was decided that the number of words, instead of utterances, would be used to measure the amount of speech in the data. There was no reliable way to analyse an utterance in data of this type, where a speaker's turn could last a long time but could also include lengthy pauses and other activities, not expressed verbally.

For the purpose of data collection, triplets of children were established to yield three different speech samples, clustered around one learner. The sample types were a native talk sample (NT), and two foreigner talk (FT) samples from two different NSs with the learner, as shown in Figure 1 below. For each interaction the children were chosen rather than randomly picked from a large population and therefore the data consist of a number of case studies.

The recordings were done using a portable tape-recorder (Nakamichi 500 or JVC) and standard 90-minute cassettes. The recordings took place at the children's schools or homes. When possible, a child's home was chosen, but a few sessions were arranged in the researcher's house. In one case, the recording was made at University College Cardiff Psychology department.

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2 Gatekeeping exists in situations where interviewers hold conflicting roles. They simultaneously act as guides and as monitors of progress for an individual's career, typically in social, economic, and educational institutions (Erickson 1976, as cited in Fiksdal 1990:4).

This, of course, was not the best possible arrangement but was one of the factors that could not be controlled. Each case had to be assessed separately, and each time it had to be decided where it was most feasible to meet the children. In general it seemed that the children were used to visiting new places and were interested in each other's homes. The child's family was visited beforehand when the recordings were done after school hours. The family was informed about the study and at the same time the child could be observed briefly at home. This was felt to be necessary to check possible untypical behaviour during the recording session. Even when the recordings were done at school, the parents were contacted to tell them about the study and ask for their permission to allow their child to participate in it.

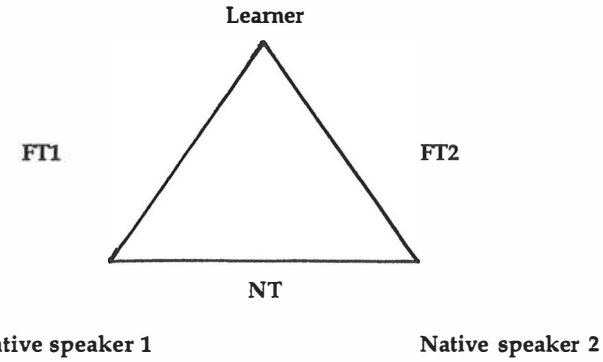



**FIGURE 1** Data samples collected from three speakers

The children were recorded in free play either playing with Lego, dolls or play-dough. Lego was chosen, since it had been used in research projects by psychologists, who suggested that for children of this age Lego was generally acceptable for both girls and boys, and it turned out that in most cases the subjects of this study liked playing with Lego. It could, of course, be questioned whether children from all cultures are familiar with Lego, but the second language speakers did not show any unfamiliarity with the material. When a dyad preferred to use other toys or materials, it was usually the NS who made the choice.

Each dyad received the same instructions for their recording session: the children were told that the purpose was to study how children play with each other and that their play needed to be recorded to be studied afterwards. They were shown the toys and materials available, and they were also told that the researcher would stop in the room from time to time to check the tape-recorder, but that otherwise they would be on their own. This was felt to be necessary to ensure that the children would produce as natural and spontaneous child-child conversation as possible. With an adult present they might have reacted to her as a teacher or as a stranger, which could have influenced their conversation. Also, such an arrangement would have placed the children in different positions, since some of them were better acquainted with the researcher. It was clear from a few pilot recording

sessions that the presence of an adult interfered with play and especially speech production. In these cases, several factors combined to produce the worst possible environment for free speech: children were not familiar enough with each other, they met in an environment unfamiliar to them (the psychology department observation room), and a stranger was watching over their play. It is quite possible that children talk differently, and obviously the interaction patterns are different, when they interact in different groups, in this case child dyads vs. child-child-adult triads. Because the aim was to collect samples of peer talk, it was decided that this consideration would override any others, mainly the fact that without personal observation valuable information was inevitably lost. As useful as video recordings might have been, it was not possible to arrange for them to be made in all the locations where the recording sessions were held.

As was pointed out above, the children were told that their play, ie. their conversation, would be recorded. The effect of the tape recorder being visible and switched on cannot be accurately assessed but the impression was that it was quickly forgotten. If later on the subjects talked about the tape recorder or the situation that they were in, it was only briefly. Altogether their speech seemed free and uninhibited. In most interactions, about the first ten minutes of the conversation were not used for the analysis. In this way, any possible awkwardness at the beginning of the interaction was avoided and the data were collected after the children had settled into their play and felt comfortable in the situation.

The total data base consists of the recordings of eight sets of three sessions or about 12 hours of audiorecorded children's native talk and foreigner talk conversations in free play and game instruction situations. Only free play interactions, the 15 interactions listed in Table 3, are included in the present study. For each interaction, its type, whether beginner FT (bFT), advanced FT (aFT) or native talk (NT), and the number of words produced in the interaction, are indicated. Similarly, the number of words produced by each speaker is indicated after the subject's name. Conversations shorter than 30 minutes in length are indicated as *short*. The control data are NT conversations between the same native English-speaking children who were recorded with learners, and are presented in the NS-NS section of the table. All but two of the interactions are single-sex, the exceptions being interactions 12 and 13.

The length of the interactions measured in time was roughly equal. However, the number of words produced in the NT interactions ranged from about 900 to 1,700 per interaction and in FT from 200 to 1,200. Since such varying amounts of speech were produced, quantitative comparisons between the interactions would be problematic. For the present analysis, this should not pose a problem, since the quantitative analyses done (see chapter 4.1) rely on proportions rather than absolute numbers, and do not include statistical analyses. The length of an interaction cannot be used to predict the number of initiations and responses, since for example in a NT interaction turns tend to be much longer than in FT and therefore, although the number of words may be high, the number of initiations may not be any higher than in a much shorter interaction, as is the case in interactions 35 and 38: in the NT interaction (38) 1,162 words are produced and 38

initiations made, whereas in the FT interaction (35) 51 initiations are made in 511 words. The number of words in the interactions between which the main comparisons will be made range as follows: bFT 600 words, aFT 900-1,200 words, NT 1,200-1,400 words. The number of words produced by individual interlocutors will be indicated in the course of discussion where necessary.

**TABLE 3** Native talk (NT) and foreigner talk (FT) interactions and the number of words produced

| INTERACTION | | PARTICIPANTS/number of words | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | type/number of words | NS | NS | Learner |
| 1 | bFT/404 (short) | Vance/324 | | David/80 |
| 5 | aFT/1213 | Katja/667 | | Maisa/546 |
| 7 | bFT/590 | Caroline/391 | | Matsumi/199 |
| 8 | bFT/650 | Katja/605 | | Matsumi/45 |
| 9 | NT/1,432 | Katja/722 | Caroline/710 | |
| 10 | bFT/364 | Barry/318 | | Aedy/46 |
| 11 | bFT/186 (short) | Barry/102 | | Aedy/84 |
| 12 | bFT/772 | Farah/574 | | Aedy/198 |
| 13 | NT/1,682 | Farah/1,159 | Barry/523 | |
| 15 | bFT/412 (short) | Christine/280 | | Mona/132 |
| 18 | bFT/536 | Joanne/531 | | Chazal/5 |
| 35 | aFT/511 | Anthony/338 | | Yasushi/173 |
| 38 | NT/1,162 | Anthony/733 | Sanjay/429 | |
| 44-45 | aFT/934 | Caroline/542 | | Mei Kien/392 |
| 46-47 | NT/890 | Caroline/437 | Nia/453 | |
| 48 | aFT/1,158 | Nia/595 | | Mei Kien/563 |

The size of the sample would not be adequate either for statistical analyses between individual speakers, or for gender-related comparisons, as pointed out earlier. It is, however, adequate for group analyses (Hirvonen 1984), for comparisons of trends and for qualitative analysis of discourse structure.

The data were transcribed using standard orthography, with notes in phonetic transcription on special cases, such as strongly exaggerated or deviant pronunciation or intonation. Prominent stress and high pitch are marked where relevant for interpreting the data. Vowel lengthening, slow and deliberate articulation and voice quality indicating attitude on the part of either speaker, eg. impatience or aggression, are also noted. Length of pauses over one second is marked indicating the number of seconds the pause lasted. The transcription symbols used are listed on page 7.

It has to be recognised that there is always a need to simplify and to decontextualise linguistic data for analysis. How detailed the transcription is reflects the level of simplification. The present data have been transcribed using standard orthography and at a level adequate for the type of discourse analysis done. As stated above in chapter 2, the transcription would not be suitable for detailed conversational analysis.

## 3.3 Analysis and principles of interpretation

The analytic context of the present study and the comparisons made will be discussed in this chapter. The context is summarized in Figure 2. The **interactions** in which the children are engaged are conversations between two speakers in free play. Strategies and tactics are concepts used to cover two different areas of conversational management: *strategies* are used to avoid trouble and *tactics* to repair trouble. Strategies for avoiding trouble function along with initiations and responses as management devices which define the topic decision process and the amount of **space** allowed to the interactants in nominating and treating topics. To engage in a conversation, a speaker will need preliminary space for the entry into the conversational space, just as in the case of entering a physical space.

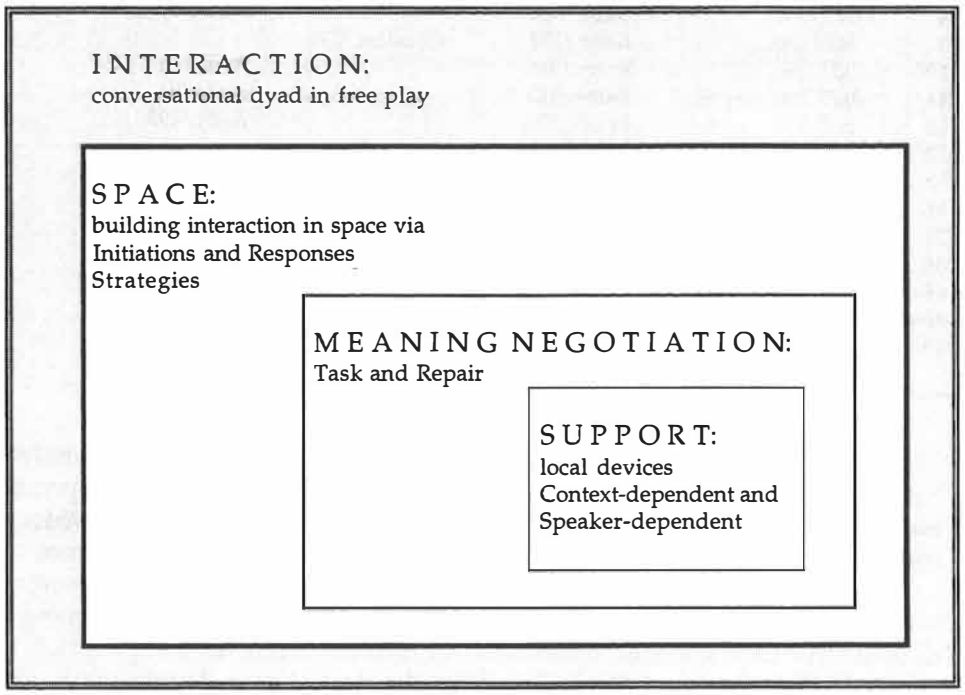


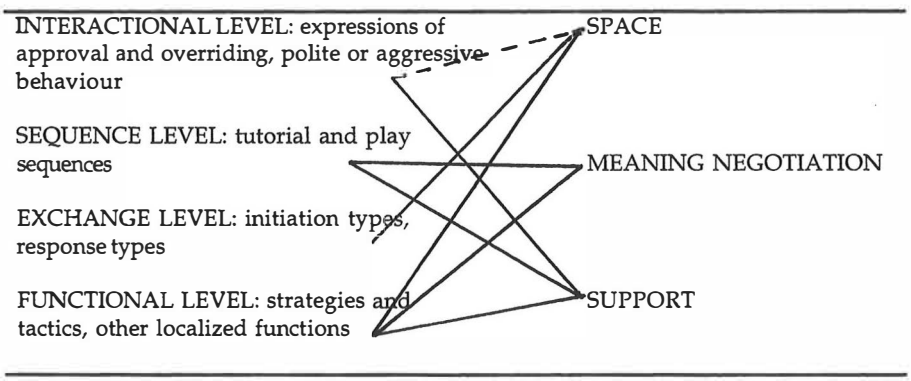

**FIGURE 2** Schematic representation of the context of the analysis

**Meaning negotiation** is a process in the interactional space in which the speakers engage either to negotiate tasks or to repair miscommuni-cation. Tactics are used to handle trouble locally, once it has occurred, either irrespective of the strategic efforts to prevent it or because no strategies were attempted. Meaning negotiation can dictate the use of some tactics, eg. repetitions or modelling.

The tactics used define the type of **support** or non-support given locally to an interlocutor or provided by both interactants in a dyad to each other. There are both context-dependent (eg. FT vs. NT) devices and speaker-dependent devices. It is expected that NNSs in particular require overt support realized as tactics. How much space and what type of support a learner is allowed will to an extent depend on the interaction of the NS with the learner. It is the variation in the NS behaviours in different discourse contexts, NT and FT, and with learners at different proficiency levels, beginners and advanced learners, that is the main focus of the present study.

The analysis of the conversations in which the learners are involved is based on a number of features of both input language and conversational interaction. The features used in the analysis show the contribution that both interlocutors make to advance the common goal of the conversation, creating a shared meaning. The differences between the conversations can be seen in the ways in which any given speaker uses these features to provide space, to negotiate meanings, and to support the interlocutor. The features used in the analysis are those used both in child language studies (eg. McTear 1985) and in input and modification studies (eg. Long 1983). The features used in the analysis incorporate elements from different levels, thus indicating an overall approach at the interactional level (eg. aggression, approval), sequence level characteristics, which describe the structure of an exchange (initiations and responses), and functional level elements (including strategies and tactics and other localized functions). Realizations of interactional space, meaning negotiation and support can then be analyzed at different levels: for example, the support given to an interlocutor can be found at the interactional, sequence and functional level. Exchange and functional level features help to create the interactional space, as shown in the table below. Some features can, depending on the speakers' individual choices, affect both the space allowed to the learner and the support given. (For a full list and definitions of the features see Appendix 2.)

**TABLE 4** Outline of the analytical features




If a given feature occurs in a particular interaction, its occurrence is labelled either "+" or "-" with regard to space or support. Non-occurrence of a

feature can also be significant (McTear 1985). An example of non-occurrence would be never requesting clarification of any kind, which may be indicative of the speaker's behaviour in the context, ie. unwillingness to try to understand the interlocutor.

The interactions are not very long, but they are long enough to contain many modification features. There are conversations which exhibit a very low use of any kind of interactional strategy, and others that have a high frequency of use. It was decided that a minimum of three occurrences of a feature in an interaction was required for it to be recorded among the features for that speaker. Some NSs' interactional behaviour will be described by means of speaker profiles created on the basis of the analysis.

The comparisons are carried out as shown in Figure 3. The initial comparisons are made between two NSs of English, Katja and Caroline. Their FT conversations with the same learner, Matsumi, whose L1 is Japanese, are compared (interactions 7 and 8). The girls, who went to the same school, were recorded at Katja's house. Caroline and Matsumi did a jig-saw puzzle and played with Lego, whereas Katja and Matsumi played with paper dolls. Katja's and Caroline's NT interaction (9) (playing with dolls) was recorded on the same occasion.

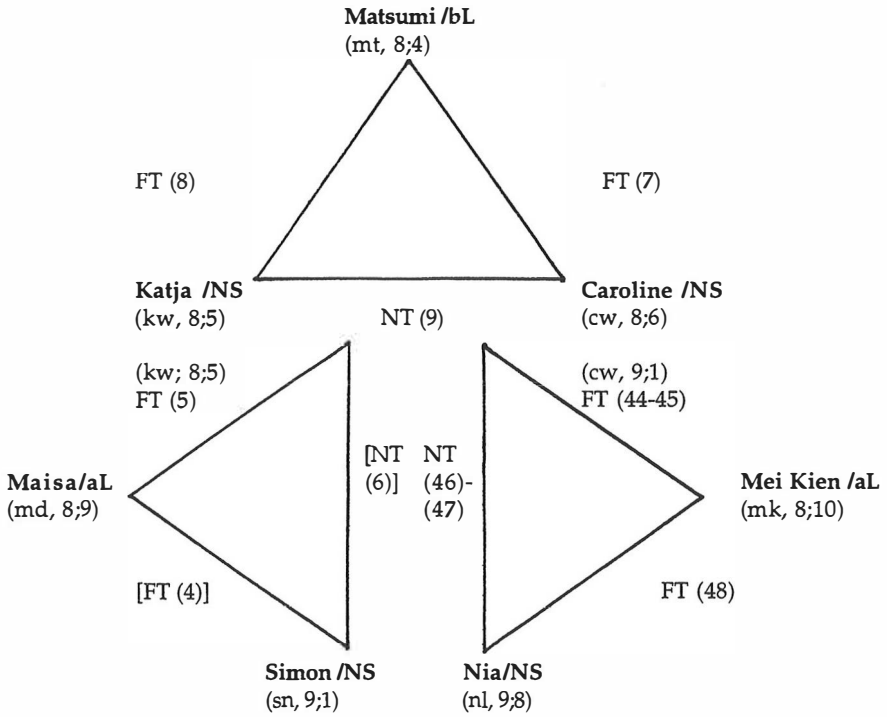



**FIGURE 3** Triads with three learners: Matsumi, Maisa and Mei Kien

The comparisons between Katja and Caroline are extended to further recordings with the same NSs, Katja and Caroline, in conversation with two advanced learners (interactions 5 and 44-45). Katja was recorded at her home

with Maisa, whose first languages were Kurdish and Arabic. Caroline (by then 9;1) was recorded with Mei Kien (L1 Chinese) at the researcher's house. The other NSs involved in these triads were Simon and Nia. Simon's interaction with Katja (6) and FT interaction with Maisa (4) were game interactions, not included in the analysis. Nia was recorded in play with Mei Kien (interaction 48) and with Caroline (interaction 46-47). The other triads were arranged in the same way. All ages, as indicated above, are given in *years;months*.

As stated above in chapter 3.1.1, two NSs, Katja and Caroline, and their NT and FT interactions were chosen as the starting point for the present analysis. The other interactions will be analyzed using the same methods, and data from them will be used as examples. However, it was considered justified to approach the analysis through the two case studies, to be extended to cover the rest of the data, because Katja's and Caroline's interactions seemed to offer more versatile data than the other interactions. Katja and Caroline exhibit an illuminating opposition of interactional styles that is clearly marked with respect to willingness to negotiate and the deployment of a wide range of features of value in the analysis of differences. Hence the choice of these two interactions as starting points. The two case studies thus form the base of the analysis, which could then be supported and verified using the other interactions. It was expected that the clear-cut differences found between the two NSs would highlight the possibility of NS influence on the interactions (which also turned out to be the case). All the NSs use some of the features found in Katja's and Caroline's interactions, but none equally clearly.

# 4 CONVERSATION MANAGEMENT

## 4.1 Conversational space

This chapter will be concerned with the building of the conversational space. The first question to be taken up is that of conversational initiations and responses. Both the NS's and learners' initiation moves and responses to them will be discussed, and it will be seen how the learners either receive, or do not receive, space for their contributions. In this way the NS's attempts to draw the learner into the conversation, the learner's ability to respond and to initiate openings, and the NS's willingness to respond to the learner's initiations can be evaluated. Secondly, the native speakers' foreigner talk strategies with a beginner and an advanced learner will be considered in the light of their native speaker characteristics. NT strategies that could have a long-term impact on the direction and tone of the conversation will be discussed in this chapter. Such strategies are used to avoid trouble and to clear space for the actual work of conversation. Meaning negotiation and tactics to repair trouble, which ensure the continuation of talk and provide the learner with support to take part in the conversation, will be considered in the following chapters.

Conversational structure is formed by the turntaking of conversational initiations and responses to them. Turn-taking is a basic skill required for conversations to function smoothly and it is one of the skills learnt in infancy. According to Ervin-Tripp (1979:395-399), children's conversations have few overlaps or long gaps early on, but this changes from age two to four: from then on, there are more turn-relevant interruptions in conversational dyads, some overlaps due to anticipation rather than to processing delays, remedial repetitions by interrupted children, and more acknowledgement overlaps. In triads, rivalry for the attention of a third person causes overlaps. Skill in anticipating completions or answers

increases with age, but also being in a dyad helps in bringing about this increase, since triads are more difficult to enter. These changes take place as early as at the age of two. Therefore, it is to be expected that by the age of eight turn-taking skills are well developed.

It is one thing to initiate a sequence and quite another to initiate or continue it in such a manner that the interlocutor will respond. Here, of course, the NS and the learner are in different positions. The learner may want to respond to the NS's initiation but cannot because of insufficient language competence. The NS has the necessary language skills to respond, although some effort may be required to interpret the learner's initiations. A refusal to take the speaker role when it is offered breaks the rules of conversation and attracts attention, at least in adult conversation (Bublitz 1988:88). If there are differences in NSs' willingness to respond, this can lead to differences in the structure of the whole discourse with respect to participation rights and domination patterns. The present analysis will look at both NSs' and learners' initiations and consecutive responses. In this way it is possible to evaluate the NS's attempts to draw the learner into the conversation, the learner's ability to respond and initiate openings, and the NS's willingness to respond to the learner's initiations.

Whenever relevant, a description of the dyad is given. It includes information on the amount of learner talk (measured in words) and pauses, and on the general impression of the interaction given by the conversation. The examples will be numbered separately for chapters 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 and cross-references will be given to the same extracts elsewhere in the text.

### 4.1.1 Initiations and responses

In this section, initiations and responses are surveyed for NS and beginner dyads. Initially, Katja and Caroline, two native speakers, will be compared in their approach to learner initiations. Data from other NNS-NS and NS-NS dyads will be used as additional examples when necessary. The length of the interactions can be summarized as the number of words produced by each speaker as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Interaction 7 | NNS/Matsumi | 199 words |
| | NS/Caroline | 391 words |
| Interaction 8 | NNS/Matsumi | 45 words |
| | NS/Katja | 605 words. |

In general, the range of differences in learner participation measured in number of words varies from very active participation, equal and above the level of NS participation, to hardly any participation at all. For instance in an interaction between Joanne (NS) and Chazal (bL) (interaction 18), the learner produces 5 words per 531 NS words, whereas an advanced learner, Maisa, produces 722 words per 710 NS words in her conversation with a NS (interaction 9). These figures are for interactions roughly equal in length.

#### 4.1.1.1 Initiations and responses: Katja (NS) and Matsumi (bL)

Katja, the NS, makes 21 topic initiations in her conversation with Matsumi, as opposed to two by Matsumi, the learner (Table 5 below). The beginner is

in a disadvantaged position because of her low proficiency level, and it is probably for this reason that she cannot initiate as often as the NS. Katja's initiations are of the following type: eight 'questions'[1], one 'request', nine 'statements', and three 'miscellaneous' initiations (eg. incomplete utterances and exclamations). The 'questions' are both yes-no questions and wh-questions.

**TABLE 5 Initiations in Interaction 8 (Katja and Matsumi)**

| | FT 8 | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Katja (NS)** | **Matsumi (bL)** |
| ***Initiation type*** | | |
| Question | 8 | - |
| Request | 1 | - |
| Statement | 9 | - |
| Miscellaneous | 3 | 2 |
| Unanalyzable | - | - |
| | **21** | **2** |

Of the 21 initiations between Katja and Matsumi, Matsumi responds to nearly half (nine) verbally (see Table 6). There may, of course, be non-verbal responses that cannot be detected in the audio data. The responses occur both at the beginning of the recording session, examples (1) and (2), and towards the end. Hence it cannot be that the learner's contributions occur only when she starts feeling comfortable in the situation. The grammatical form of the NS's initiations may be more revealing than the position of the learner responses in the discourse. First of all, Matsumi responds to five out of eight 'questions', as in (1), (2) and (3), which represent both yes-no questions in the case of (1) and (2), and wh-questions in that of (3).

**(1)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house[2]
-kw: **Matsumi, do you like your teacher?**
-mt: uh?
-kw: do you like your teacher [clearly and slowly]
-mt: no
-kw: I don't like mine either

**(2)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
-kw: **do you speak English at all?** [slowly]
-mt: no

**(3)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house [see also 10,4.2.2]
081 kw: **which do you think will be a better wedding gown (2) out of those?=**
082 **=which would be a nicer wedding gown?**
083 mt: I don't know

1 Single quotation marks indicate the category for initiations and responses.

2 No line numbers are indicated, because this stretch of the conversation was not part of the original transcription.

084 kw: just choose one choose one

The other forms that the learner responds to are the one 'request' in (4) in a topic-initiating position, and the three 'miscellaneous' initiations, as in (5) and (6). None of the 'statements' as topic initiations receive a response.

(4) Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
128 kw: **put her bonnet on, she likes it**
129 mt: she's * * (pretty) (3)
130 kw: what shall she wear today?
131 mt: pretty
132 kw: yes, it is pretty, isn't it? (20)

(5) Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
040 kw: **this, yak**
041 mt: yes

(6) Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
045 kw: **hat and ...**
046 mt: handbag
047 kw: right

Lexical difficulty may be another reason for a learner not to respond, but lexical modification does not seem to be a strategy used by Katja: some initiations may have included words that the learner does not know, eg. *fussy* in *Now, this girl, she's not fussy what she wears,* line 075. Also a question like *Want to help me?* in (7) below, line 001, may be difficult for the learner to react to. It is said slowly and clearly enough, although not as slowly as the question in (2) above, but it is both an intonation question and a reduced form where the subject *you* is not expressed, and it is followed immediately by a request, line 002, for Matsumi to do something. The question could, of course, be interpreted as a rhetorical question, not requiring a response. The request does not receive a verbal response either.

(7) Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
001 kw: **want to help me?**
002 you find the clothes for HER [paperdoll] (18)

There are twelve cases of 'non-response' to the NS's initiations (see Table 6 below): the learner does not respond to any of the 'statements' and two of the 'questions'. The learner's responses, when they occur, are appropriate and contribute to the conversation either forming a question-answer pair, as in (2) or (3), or referring to the first part of the pair, in (4) and (5), and even completing an unfinished utterance in (6). There is only one response that could be considered 'inappropriate', the comment in (8) below, line 091, to a question asked. As such the comment is not topically inappropriate but it does not give the information requested, and therefore results in the repetition of the original question by the NS. This example can be compared with (4), where the learner's comment *She's * * (pretty),* line 129, might be similar, since there is no information as to whether the learner actually has carried out the requested action or not.

(8) Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
090 kw: now what shall she wear for the wedding?
091 mt: **she's naked**
092 kw: what shall she wear for the wedding with those, with these?

**TABLE 6 Responses in Interaction 8 (Katja and Matsumi)**

| | FT 8 Katja (NS) | Matsumi (bL) |
|---|---|---|
| *Response type* | | |
| No response | 1 | 12 |
| Inappropriate/irrelevant | - | - |
| Minimal predicted | - | 3 |
| With additional content | 1 | 5 |
| Other appropriate | - | 1 |
| Unanalyzable | - | - |
| | **2** | **21** |

In addition to the twelve non-responses, Matsumi's response types can further be classified into three 'minimal predicted responses', five 'responses with additional content' and one 'other appropriate response'. The 'minimal responses' are found in (2), (3) and (5); *yes* or *no* as a response to a question is considered a 'minimal predicted response' and anything else a 'response with additional content', here in (4), (6) and (8). *I don't know* in (3) is close to an acknowledgement. However, when we have a learner who cannot contribute much, anything that goes beyond a *yes* or a *no* gives the interlocutor some idea of what the learner may be thinking. Matsumi's comments on the dolls (*She's naked* in (8), *She's * * (pretty)* in (4) and *He's black*/interaction 8/line 110) are, unlike a mere affirmation or negation, material that the NS could use to continue the conversation. Katja, however, chooses not to develop the topics offered by Matsumi.

In (1) above, the learner's request for repetition is coded as 'other appropriate response'. McTear (1985:54) defines 'minimal predicted response' as the type where "the subject responds according to the expectations set up by the preceding utterance but does not add anything which would contribute to the continuation of the conversation." According to this definition, the request for repetition cannot be considered a predicted response, and it does not contain additional information either; rather it requests information, and as such provides a continuation point.

It is generally assumed that in securing a response from a linguistically non-competent interlocutor, questions and requests are more efficient than statements. For instance Long (1981:268) found different distributions of question types between NT and FT: questions are used more often than statements in adult FT, and there are more wh-questions. In the present data, the learner, Matsumi, reacts to different initiation types as expected: she responds to Katja's 'questions' and 'requests', but not to her 'statements'. It can also be expected that by this age (around eight) knowledge of different interlocutor reactions is part of NSs' linguistic competence. However, there may be differences in the skills required to

manipulate this knowledge in a FT situation, as can be seen when Katja's approach to the conversation with Matsumi is compared with Caroline's below.

#### 4.1.1.2 Initiations and responses: Caroline (NS) and Matsumi (bL)

What happens in Matsumi's conversation with Caroline is quite different from what happens with Katja above. In this interaction, Matsumi responds verbally to many more topic initiations: out of 24 initiations she responds to 21 (Table 8 below). The responses are not much more varied in structure than with Katja, but they make it possible to continue the conversation, sometimes quite playfully. There is, in particular, one important difference: with Caroline, Matsumi, for some reason, often answers in Japanese. Different kinds of initiations by Caroline are answered in Japanese, as shown in (9-11).

**(9)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
013 cw: **Matsumi, say lala**
014 mt: (Japanese 'I won't')[3]

**(10)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
026 cw: **Matsumi, is it good?**
027 mt: (Japanese 'well done, this American is an expert') [sings]

**(11)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
090 cw: **tiktok tiktok tiktok**
091 mt: (Japanese 'what is it?')
092 cw: (imitates mt)

Responses in Japanese are used both in response to 'requests', as in (9), and 'questions', as in (10). They are also used when the NS's utterance allows for sound imitations or could be interpreted as playful behaviour, as in (11). Interpreting Matsumi's utterances as a direct response was the original interpretation, which was done without the English glosses added later. In fact, it turns out that the learner is giving a running commentary on their play and the recording session. (For the discussion of the learner's use of code-switching see chapter 4.1.4.4 below.)

Tables 7 and 8 show the distribution of initiation and response types that occur in interaction 7 between Caroline and Matsumi. Caroline's initiations (Table 7) range in structure from eight 'questions' and six 'requests' to ten 'miscellaneous'. It is noticeable that there are no 'statements' used as topic initiations. In Katja's conversation with Matsumi 'statements' formed the largest single group of initiations, which, however, received no response from the learner. The three 'non-responses' found in Matsumi's conversation with Caroline are shown below in (12-14).

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3 English glosses are added to Matsumi's Japanese utterances. For the discussion on code-switching see chapter 4.1.5.4.

**TABLE 7 Initiations in Interaction 7 (Caroline and Matsumi)**

| | FT 7 Caroline (NS) | Matsumi (bL) |
|---|---|---|
| *Initiation type* | | |
| Question | 8 | 1 |
| Request | 6 | - |
| Statement | - | - |
| Miscellaneous | 10 | 2 |
| Unanalyzable | - | - |
| | **24** | **3** |

**TABLE 8 Responses in Interaction 7 (Caroline and Matsumi)**

| | FT 7 Caroline (NS) | Matsumi (bL) |
|---|---|---|
| *Response type* | | |
| No response | - | 3 |
| Inappropriate/irrelevant | - | 1 |
| Minimal predicted | 1 | 5 |
| With additional content | - | - |
| Other appropriate | 2 | 6 |
| Unanalyzable | - | 9 |
| | **3** | **24** |

**(12)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
001 cw: **Matsumi, this?** (12)
002 Ms Mat Matsumi, this good?
003 this good?
004 mt: (Japanese 'so so')

**(13)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
076 cw: **Yuki?**
077 where's Yuki?
078 at home?
079 Yuki at home?
080 mt: uh?

**(14)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
055 cw: **Matsumi, noise** [exaggeratedly high intonation]
[a car could be heard in the background]

Matsumi does not immediately respond to two questions in (12) and (13). Neither does she respond to a comment in (14) on something happening outside the immediate play context. In (12) and (13) Caroline has to repeat and reinitiate several times before she has a learner response.

In (12) and (13) above, Caroline's initiations could be regarded as receiving a response, although the two questions are answered only after repeated attempts. Because of the repetition, they are considered cases of reinitiation. Matsumi's immediate responses (Table 8) fall into four categories: one 'inappropriate', five 'minimal predicted', six 'other

appropriate responses' and nine cases 'unanalyzable'. The unanalyzable responses are those given in Japanese, and they could be coded with the help of the English glosses. However, from the point of view of Matsumi's interlocutor they are unanalyzable and are left as such at this point. They occur during the first half of the recording and, as was pointed out above, are responses to a variety of initiations.

In the following discussion, the NS initiations and immediate learner responses are discussed together. In addition, there are cases where no immediate response is given and the NS reacts to this. Such cases are interpreted as requiring some response from the initiator and will be treated as instances of either meaning negotiation or some tactic.

***Initiations by Questions.*** Examples of questions as topic initiations are given below in (15-17).

**(15)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
159 cw: Matsumi, we're gonna make a big house?
160 mt: **yes** minimal predicted response

**(16)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
206 cw: Matsumi, your house gonna be big?
207 mt: **wha'?** other appropriate response

**(17)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
214 cw: you got a brother?
215 mt: **yes, short** nappropriate response
216 cw: no, Matsumi: you got a brother, Matsumi?
217 mt: yes
218 cw: little brother?
219 mt: big brother [etc.]

All the questions used as topic initiations are yes-no questions and can therefore be answered with a minimal predicted response, as in (15). Some are, however, answered in Japanese, and still others receive a request for repetition, here coded as 'other appropriate response', as in (16). One response, in (17), is considered 'inappropriate'. The NS asks whether Matsumi has got a brother, line 214, and receives a reply *Yes, short*, line 215. This answer is probably carried over from the preceding question-answer exchange, where the NS has asked questions about the size of the house to be built, and one of the learner's answers has been *Ye::s, short*. The NS corrects the learner, the only correction in this conversation. The learner accepts the correction, and the conversation continues with a practice on words denoting family relations.

***Initiations by Requests.*** The initiations realized as requests receive similar responses to those given to questions, mostly minimal predicted responses, as in (18), and one request for repetition in (19).

**(18)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
028 cw: Matsumi, sing a song

029 mt: **yeah** minimal predicted response

**(19)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
059 cw: you like Little Red ...?
060 say Little Red Riding Hood
061 mt: **wha'?** other appropriate response

***Initiations by Other Means.*** Caroline, much more than Katja, uses initiations that cannot be coded as any major speech act. Peck (1978:392-393) points out that between children anything may be used as a topic and that this may make it more difficult for a learner to function in child-child interaction than in adult-child interaction. An adult is more likely to help a learner to nominate a topic (see also Cathcart-Strong 1986). On the other hand, it seems that the fact that anything is a potential topic may make it easier to find topics. Peck refers to the differences between children and adults in the use of playful talk and information concerned with referential meaning. This can be extended to the form of initiations: any form can be used to initiate a topic, as shown in (20-22).

**(20)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
024 cw: Matsumi, over here [gently]
025 mt: **ah** [starts singing] minimal predicted response

**(21)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
176 cw: "clap clap clap clap your hands, clap your hands together" [sings]
177 mt: **uh?**

**(22)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
182 cw: hello
183 mt: **goodbye**
184 cw: thank you
185 mt: goodbye
186 cw: hello, thank you, goodbye
187 mt: goodbye
188 cw: hello
189 mt: goodbye
190 cw: hello
191 mt: goodbye, goodbye, goodbye, /goodbye/
192 cw: /hello/, thank you, please
(and so on)

Initiations of different surface forms perform a number of functions, eg. locating in (20) and some sort of play function in (21). In (22) the NS's contribution is picked up by the learner and used to begin language play. Matsumi responds to several initiations of this type in Japanese, and there is only one, (14) above, that she does not respond to at all. By using different ways to draw the learner into conversation, the NS increases the learner's chances of using the input offered.

In both conversations the learner responds to questions and requests, as can be expected. The major differences in the learner responses between the two conversations discussed are the following: with Katja, the largest single group of responses from the learner is 'non-responses' (twelve cases),

whereas with Caroline there are only three 'non-responses'. The reason for this may be partially in the use of 'statements': 'statements' often do not receive a response from beginners and Katja uses 'statements' as topic initiators, whereas Caroline does not. Other differences are found in code-switching and in the learner's response types: with Caroline, Matsumi code-switches into Japanese, which does not occur at all with Katja, while with Katja, a number of Matsumi's responses contain additional information as against none with Caroline. No plausible explanation could be found for this difference in the content of the conversation. It might, however, be that if the learner either has few opportunities to initiate topics or is for some reason unwilling to do so, she uses additional information as a way to make her contribution to the conversation. Finally, whereas Caroline uses the learner's responses to build the interaction further, Katja often does not, even when such an opportunity arises. This difference will be discussed in the following section.

#### 4.1.1.3 Learner initiations and responses

There are two topic initiations attempted by the learner in her conversation with Katja (Table 5 above). The NS responds to one in (23), but not to the other in (24).

**(23)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 032 | mt: | **h a t** | | I/suggest |
| 033 | kw: | a hat | | A/correct? |
| 034 | mt: | h a t | (4) | repeat |
| 035 | kw: | (hat), dress, umbrella for mother, and yes... | | |
| 036 | | now, we've done this girl, she's got those clothes, now THIS, man, yes? (3) yes? | | |
| 037 | mt: | oi | (6) | |
| 038 | kw: | phew, he's got a lot of clothes, hasn't he? | (3) | |
| 039 | | oh oh, sorry *, Matsumi [high pitch] | (12) | |

**(24)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 005 | mt: | **fat, pretty fat** | (11) |
| 006 | kw: | now, uh [mt giggles] | (14) |

In (23) the NS responds to the initiation with a 'response plus additional information', ie. acknowledges the learner's initiation by repeating what she has said but at the same time adds the indefinite article and thereby possibly corrects the learner's utterance, line 033. The learner repeats what she has said, line 034, but does not incorporate the correction into her repetition. After a few seconds the NS uses the learner's contribution to build up her utterance, line 035.

In (24) there is no response to the learner's initiation. After a lengthy silence she frames her action with *Now, uh*, line 006, but does not take up the topic offered by the learner. If a conversational exchange is expected to consist of an initiation, a response, and possibly an acknowledgement (I-R-A), this exchange seems incomplete, and consequently it seems that the NS does not fulfill her duty as a conversational partner.

In the two examples above, Katja does not respond immediately in a way that would develop the topic any further. In (23) the learner's attempt is first corrected grammatically, and it is only later in the same sequence that her suggestion is taken up and used to start a list of all the articles required for dressing the doll. The tendency to carry on the task rather than adapt to the immediate demands of the situation is not so apparent here, since carrying on with the task merges with the learner's utterance: the learner wants to contribute to the activity and the conversation and manages to do so. By contrast, in (24) the NS does not respond to the learner's comment or expression of opinion at all.

Example (24) above is clearly the kind of opening where Caroline would not hesitate to continue, as is shown by the exchanges in (25) and (26) initiated by Matsumi in her conversation with Caroline. Caroline's responses can be classified as a 'minimal predicted answer' in (25), line 121, and 'other appropriate answer', as in (26), line 085.

**(25)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 119 | mt: | **this** | (20) |
| 120 | | piece, no, no. not | |
| 121 | cw: | **no** | |
| 122 | mt: | piece, not piece uh | |
| 123 | cw: | that piece, go on | (20) |

**(26)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 084 | mt: | (**Japanese** 'tonight, there will be the evening paper') |
| 085 | cw: | (imitates) |
| 086 | mt: | (Japanese 'I'm speaking Japanese today') |

In (26) Caroline imitates Matsumi, as she so often does during this conversation. A sequence like this could be analyzed as an initiation by Matsumi, line 084, to which Caroline responds, line 085, by imitating Matsumi, regardless of the fact that she does not know what Matsumi says. Exchanges with Japanese utterances were, however, excluded from the analysis of initiations and responses. They would not be comparable to other exchanges where both speakers either understand or make an effort to understand what is being said. Caroline, not knowing Japanese, cannot react to the propositional content of Matsumi's utterances; rather, she reacts to the flow and structure of the conversation. Her other options would be to ignore Matsumi's Japanese utterances or to try to persuade Matsumi directly to express what she has said also in English. Caroline's only reaction is in some way to use these utterances in the interaction. Therefore, interactional considerations seem to direct her behaviour: her main motive is probably to keep the conversation going and imitating a language she does not know is one device among many others.

The learner in her conversations with Katja and Caroline takes an equal amount of space as far as her own initiations go. The NSs seem to react somewhat differently to learner initiations, but nothing certain can be said about this, since the learner initiations in these two interactions are so few. However, the NS and the learner interact differently in the two conversations, especially when it is the NS who initiates a topic. There are

also differences in the topic development. These will be discussed in chapters 4.2 and 4.3.

### 4.1.2 Initiations and responses with advanced learners

Above, two NSs, Katja and Caroline, were analysed in their interactions with a beginner. The same NSs, together with a third NS, Nia, can also be analysed in conversation with advanced learners. The comparison that can be made here is between Caroline and Nia in their play talk with Mei Kien (interactions 44-45 and 48) and Katja with Maisa (interaction 5). Originally, interaction 45 was intended to be a game instruction task as opposed to free play. However, in the conversation itself, the game is referred to only a few times, and the rest of the conversation is on topics similar to those discussed in the girls' play interaction. Therefore, the two interactions are combined in one free play task.

In general, the learner's level of competence is found to cause variation in the NS language (eg. in the use of surface sentence types and the complexity of sentence structures). In the present data, it was found that beginner FT and advanced FT differed in the number of coordinated and embedded structures, in the number of full verbal groups per utterance and in the length of utterance measured in words (LUW) in that longer and more complex structures were used in advanced FT (Hirvonen 1984:115-116). Among the discourse indicators a similar difference was found in the distribution of the surface sentence-types but not in any other variable (see Table 1 above in chapter 2.2.2.2). Discourse indicators, eg. the use of vocatives or non-immediate reference, are features that can be seen to realize the speaker's interaction strategies somewhat more directly than surface syntax categories. There was, some indication of differences in the use of sequence modes: more control, tutorial and unanalyzable sequences were found in beginner FT (Hirvonen 1984:172).

Although discourse indicators and discourse variables did not show clear differences in the statistical analysis between beginner and advanced FT, it is expected that at the individual level a NS's FT strategies with an advanced learner are similar to the same speaker's NT strategies. Such an observation can be made with regard to Nia (see Table 9): to a large extent, her FT with Mei Kien (aL) resembles her NT conversation with Caroline (NS). 'Questions' and 'requests' are used in the same proportions as topic initiators: five 'questions' and two 'requests' in NT (total of 17 initiations) and seven 'questions' and two 'requests' in FT (total of 25 initiations). There are considerably fewer 'statements' (six out of 17, about one third) and more 'miscellaneous' initiations (4, around one quarter) in her talk with another NS than with the learner. In FT the corresponding distributions for 'statements' are one half and for 'miscellaneous' less than one fifth.

Apart from the proportionate difference in the use of 'statements', the pattern of topic initiations in FT with an advanced learner approaches that generally found in NT. When surface sentence types are considered, declaratives are more frequent in advanced FT than in beginner FT, whereas interrogatives, imperatives and moodless utterances are more

frequent in beginner FT (Hirvonen 1984:118). This pattern is not, however, very clear here: both NSs use a high proportion of questions also in NT (Caroline well over half and Nia nearly one third). In Caroline's fairly infrequent topic initiations (eight) with Nia this means that there is room only for one statement and two miscellaneous initiations.

Katja and Caroline show some differences in the conversation with the advanced learner, but none of the differences are as marked as those found between Katja and Caroline in their conversations with Matsumi, the beginner. As seen above, the initiation types in advanced FT vary somewhat: Caroline uses 'questions' (about half of all initiations), whereas Nia favours 'statements' (about half of her initiations). Caroline, however, shows a marked difference between the initiation types used when talking to a beginner and to an advanced learner: she uses several 'miscellaneous' initiations with Matsumi, and none with Mei Kien, the advanced learner. It can be said that Caroline, just like a kindergarten teacher studied by Kleifgen (1985:68), skilfully manipulates the linguistic resources available to her when adjusting her attempts at initiating the kind of talk aimed at drawing learners at different levels of competence to participate. No corresponding comparison can be made of Nia's FT, since only the advanced FT sample is available for her.

**TABLE 9 Initiations in Interactions 44-45, 46-47 and 48 (Caroline, Nia and Mei Kien)**

| | FT 44-45 | | NT46-47 | | FT 48 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mei Kien (aL) | Caroline (NS) | Caroline (NS) | Nia (NS) | Nia (NS) | Mei Kien (aL) |
| *Initiation type* | | | | | | |
| Question | 7 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 16 |
| Request | 2 | 4 | - | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Statement | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 12 | 7 |
| Miscellaneous | 8 | - | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Unanalyzable | - | - | - | - | - | 2 |
| | **21** | **17** | **8** | **17** | **25** | **33** |

Katja, whose FT with a beginner was discussed above (chapter 4.1.1), was also recorded with an advanced learner, Maisa. The features found in Katja's conversation with a beginner are noticeable also in her conversation with a considerably more advanced learner: minimal answers and acknowledgements of the learner's contribution and following her own idea of their play and conversation characterise Katja's contribution in both conversations. For example, in (27), the learner receives no answer to her repeated question.

**(27)** Katja (kw; NS) with Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house
012 md: what's that? what is it?
kw: -

Katja initiates only one third of the topics in her conversation with Maisa, the advanced learner (Table 10). Among the three girls, this is the

lowest proportion of topic initiations with an advanced learner. The numbers here are fairly small, but it is clear that nearly two thirds of her initiations are 'statements' and there are fewer 'questions' used as initiations than in her conversation with a beginner (nearly one fifth vs. two fifths). Therefore, Katja shows the type of modification expected in terms of the learner's level of competence.

**TABLE 10 Initiations in Interaction 5 (Katja and Maisa)**

| | FT 5 | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Katja (NS)** | **Maisa (aL)** |
| *Initiation type* | | |
| Question | 2 | 10 |
| Request | 2 | 3 |
| Statement | 7 | 11 |
| Miscellaneous | 1 | - |
| Unanalyzable | - | - |
| | **12** | **24** |

It was seen above how limited learner initiations can be in a conversation that involves a beginner. The two advanced learners discussed in this section are, in contrast, very active initiators. In fact, they both make more than half of all the topic initiations in their conversations with a NS. Maisa's use of different initiation types shows advanced proficiency (Table 10). She uses both 'questions', as in (27) above, and 'statements' in equal proportions, and a few 'requests'. 'Questions' are prevalent in Mei Kien's initiations, one third in her conversation with Caroline and one half with Nia (Table 9). 'Requests' and 'statements' are used in similar proportions by the two learners. With Caroline, Mei Kien uses a number of 'miscellaneous' initiations of the type shown in (28), whereas with Nia she resorts to direct questions more often, as in (29). Mei Kien is interested in everything around her and wants to find out about Nia's dolls, how she has learnt English (29), and about the house where the girls are. She also explores the house as much as she can.

**(28)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house
098 mk: **Jaws**
099 cw: Jaws was horrible, wasn't he?
100 mk: yes, he eat * people

**(29)** Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house [26, 4.2.3.2]
071 mk: **who teach your English?**
072 nl: well, my mum and dad did
073 mk: teach your English?

The response types in these conversations with advanced learners (Tables 11 and 12) show a pattern of 'non-response', exhibited by NSs and learners alike. The 'non-response' rates vary from one fifth to one third for NSs and from one third to two thirds for learners. Caroline shows the lowest figure four 'non-responses' to Mei Kien (Table 11), and Katja the

highest, eight 'non-responses' to Maisa (Table 12). 'Minimal predicted response' together with no response accounts for about two thirds of all responses given by the NSs.

**TABLE 11 Responses in Interactions 44-45, 46-47 and 48 (Caroline, Nia and Mei Kien)**

| | FT 44-45 | | NT46-47 | | FT 48 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mei Kien (aL) | Caroline (NS) | Caroline (NS) | Nia (NS) | Nia (NS) | Mei Kien (aL) |
| *Response type* | | | | | | |
| No response | 5 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 10 | 16 |
| Inappropriate/ irrelevant | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Minimal predicted | 3 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 12 | 3 |
| With additional content | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| Other appropriate | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| Unanalyzable | 2 | 3 | 1 | - | - | - |
| | **17** | **21** | **17** | **8** | **33** | **25** |

**TABLE 12 Responses in Interaction 5 (Katja and Maisa)**

| | FT 5 | |
|---|---|---|
| | Katja (NS) | Maisa (aL) |
| *Response type* | | |
| No response | 8 | 5 |
| Inappropriate/irrelevant | - | - |
| Minimal predicted | 8 | 3 |
| With additional content | 7 | 2 |
| Other appropriate | 1 | - |
| Unanalyzable | - | 2 |
| | **24** | **12** |

'Non-responses' may be taken as an indication of how little importance the children attach to answering all questions politely, since their main concern is to keep on playing. On the other hand, in Mei Kien's conversation with Nia, most of the initiations not answered are to do with the play activity, as in (30). Such initiations may function as thinking aloud rather than as interactive contributions to the conversations. There are examples of similar 'non-responses' to initiations to do with play activities in other interactions, eg. between Farah (NS) and Aedy (bL). 'Miscellaneous' initiations, eg. questions about something outside the immediate context, as in (29) above, usually receive a response. The fact that Mei Kien is very active, and is probably perceived as being responsible for herself, may contribute to the NSs' perception of the learner not requiring their full attention. Similarly, Aedy's conversation with Farah (interaction 12) is characterised by his active participation and a great deal of questioning (198 words per the NS's 574 and 20 learner topic initiations out a total of 36).

**(30)** Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house
173 mk: **you wanna come and play with it?** (6) no response from NS

There are, however, differences, which are indicated by the different proportions of 'non-responses' from the NS and the corresponding 'non-response' rate from the learner: the lowest learner 'non-response' rate is one third from Mei Kien with Caroline and the highest (two thirds) from Mei Kien with Nia. This may be an example of accommodating to the interlocutor's style to the extent that in addition to other modifications response rates are found to converge: if one speaker does not respond, the other feels that there is no need to respond either. It has been found (Garvey and BenDebba 1974) that in pairs of the same age group between three and a half and five and a half years of age, the number of expressions produced by each interlocutor during the conversation is positively correlated to the number produced by the partner. Also temporal congruence is shown in the duration of pauses both intrapersonally and interpersonally (Welkowitz et al. 1976:271). This type of reciprocal accommodation could then be expected in other features as well. As pointed out above, Mei Kien's non-response rate varies from one third with Caroline to two thirds with Nia. Caroline consistently responds to the learners' initiations in FT, and if convergence is to be expected her response rate should have an effect on the learner. Possible convergence can be seen between Aedy and Farah: there are eight 'questions' and five 'statements' among Aedy's initiations compared with Farah's nine and four, respectively.

To conclude this section on advanced FT, it can be said that regardless of some differences all three NSs show a pattern of initiation types closer to their NT use than that found in their FT with a beginner. Fewer 'questions' and more 'statements' are used with an advanced learner. Caroline also shows a marked difference in the use of 'miscellaneous' initiations: none are used with an advanced learner, whereas with a beginner ten out of 24 initiations are 'miscellaneous'. The differences between NSs in the use of 'questions' and 'statements', when a similar trend is found both in NT and FT, reflect personal preferences in the use of topic initiations, rather than FT strategies. As noted above, due to the character of play, high levels of 'non-response' rates may not be unusual in child-child interaction, although similar figures in adult conversations would not be expected.

### 4.1.3 Initiations and responses in native talk and foreigner talk

As an example of intra-speaker variation, one NS's, Katja's performance in NT and FT can be compared. The initiations in NT conversations bring out a different Katja as a conversational partner as compared to her FT performance. To begin with, she initiates ten topics, ie. only about one third of all the initiations made, in her conversation with Caroline (NS), compared with nearly all with Matsumi, the beginner (Table 13 below). With Caroline, instead of being the active initiator, Katja responds to her interlocutor's initiations. (With Simon, the other NS, Katja makes nearly two thirds of all the initiations in game talk.) Katja's and Caroline's

initiation types in NT and FT in their conversations with Matsumi and each other are summed up in Table 13.

Both Caroline and Katja show systematic differences in initiation type between FT and NT, although the differences are not the same for the two speakers. Caroline's use of 'questions' (Table 13) does not vary between NT and FT, whereas Katja's use of 'questions' increases in FT: in NT, the number of 'statement' initiations is more than double that of 'questions', whereas in FT there are an almost equal number of 'questions' and 'statements'. There are a few 'miscellaneous' initiations in Katja's FT but none in NT. In Caroline's data the shift in the use of such initiations is pronounced: none in NT vs. ten in FT. The possibility of using a varied means of expression seems to be needed more in FT than in NT. The NS wants to ensure the learner's attention, as in (31), and through that the possibility of reaching common understanding is gained.

**TABLE 13 Initiations in Interactions 7, 8 and 9 (Katja, Caroline and Matsumi)**

| | **FT 7** | | **NT 8** | | **FT 9** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Matsumi (bL)** | **Caroline (NS)** | **Caroline (NS)** | **Katja (NS)** | **Katja (NS)** | **Matsumi (bL)** |
| ***Initiation type*** | | | | | | |
| Question | 1 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 8 | - |
| Request | - | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | - |
| Statement | - | - | 10 | 5 | 9 | - |
| Miscellaneous | 2 | 10 | - | - | 3 | 2 |
| Unanalyzable | - | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| | **3** | **24** | **22** | **10** | **21** | **2** |

**(31)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
094 cw: **Matsumi, there**
095 mt: (Japanese 'although you don't understand, why do you say so')

Caroline uses no statements to initiate in FT, whereas there are ten such initiations in her NT conversation, eg. (32):

**(32)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/9/ F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
070 cw: **a:::h that's nice, a:::h I'll have to...**
071 that's better, petticoat, I'm gonna put a petticoat on her

The example in (32) is typical of the initiation-response exchange between the two girls: when Caroline initiates using a 'statement', her initiation does not attract any response from Katja in five out of ten cases. There are six cases where Katja produces no response to Caroline's initiations (see Table 14 below): five out of them after a 'statement', one after a 'request' (33) and none after a 'question'. In (33), after line 006, a pause after Caroline's request indicates that a response is expected. The response, line 008, is given only when a question, as a tag to a statement, line 007, is asked. Otherwise then, in this NT conversation, Katja answers questions, which she does not always do in FT.

**(33)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/9/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
006 cw: **tell me which was her nightie** (2)
007 she's got her nightie on, mine has, has yours?
008 kw: yeah

In the discussion of the research problems above in chapter 3.1.3, it was expected that some features would stay constant regardless of context and could therefore be established as features of a speaker's linguistic profile; other features could be expected to be context-dependent, and they would define the speaker's modification strategies in a FT situation. The number of initiations and types of initiations were considered as candidates for context-dependent strategy features, but it now seems that the matter is more complicated: for instance, it may be that among the initiation types some types may be personal speaker-dependent variables for some speakers and context-dependent strategy variables for others. For instance, Caroline seems to be always asking many 'questions' but varies her use of 'statements', whereas Katja varies her use of 'questions'. Since the use of 'questions' stays constant across different types of discourse for Caroline, it can be established as a personal feature for her language use. Her use of 'statements' is context-dependent from one discourse type to another and can be posited as a strategy feature. For Katja, on the other hand, the use of 'questions' is a strategy feature. The use of 'miscellanous' initiations is a strategy feature for Caroline and possibly also for Katja.

As far as responses go, the major difference between the two native speakers in their NT can be found in the number of times they give no response, as was indicated above: there are six cases of 'non-response' (out of 22) in Katja's NT speech and none in Caroline's. (The response tables are compiled in Table 14 below.)

Since Katja does not respond to Caroline's 'statement' initiations and Caroline responds to Katja's (there are five 'statement' initiations in Katja's speech in NT, which Caroline responds to), it is interesting to see whether there is any difference between the initiations. What emerges is that Katja's initiations seem to be more challenging than Caroline's. They are less concerned with play than with other interesting matters outside the immediate play context, whereas Caroline comments on the activity in a way that does not always invite or require a response, as in (34).

**(34)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/9/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
149 cw: **oh, there are the two bubbles, I thought I didn't know where they'd gone**
150 [continues as role play]

Those statements of Caroline's that challenge Katja are responded to, as in (35), where Katja immediately responds, line 106, to Caroline's comment on a doll's nighties:

**(35)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/9/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
105 cw: **my babies have got nighties (3) proper baby's nighties**
106 kw: well, that's a proper baby's nightie, that one

Similarly, Caroline is drawn into responding to Katja's 'statements' about the recording session (36) and the food being offered (37):

(36) Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/9/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
065 kw: **the tape was spoiled, that's why she had to arrange all this, 'cause the tape was spoiled**
066 cw: no, 'cause she couldn't hear it

(37) Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/9/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house
082 kw: **you're having pancake**
083 cw: goodie, are you?
084 kw: yeah

**TABLE 14 Responses in Interactions 7, 8 and 9 (Katja, Caroline and Matsumi)**

| | FT 7 Matsumi (bL) | Caroline (NS) | NT 8 Caroline (NS) | Katja (NS) | FT 9 Katja (NS) | Matsumi (bL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Response type* | | | | | | |
| No response | 3 | - | - | 6 | 1 | 12 |
| Inappropriate/ irrelevant | 1 | - | - | - | - | - |
| Minimal predicted | 5 | 1 | 4 | 4 | - | 3 |
| With additional content | - | - | 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 |
| Other appropriate | 6 | 2 | - | 4 | - | 1 |
| Unanalyzable | 9 | - | 2 | - | - | - |
| | **24** | **3** | **10** | **22** | **2** | **21** |

Katja uses other appropriate responses, mainly requests to repeat and specify, as in (38), where Katja requests Caroline to specify her referent, line 112. This type of response might again reflect her reactive role as opposed to Caroline's initiator role in this NT conversation.

(38) Caroline (cw; NS) and Katja (kw; NS)/play with dolls/in Katja's house
111 cw: do you ever change her nappy?
112 kw: **whose nappy?**
113 cw: that baby's nappy

The number of learner initiations made by Matsumi with both Katja and Caroline is so small (two and three respectively) that it is not possible to compare the NSs' NT and FT with regard to their responses to learner initiations. What can be noted, however, is that Caroline's 'other appropriate responses' are imitations of Matsumi's Japanese utterances. It seems justifiable to consider these responses appropriate in this context: what Matsumi says is not transparent to Caroline, and imitating the learner may be Caroline's best attempt to use her contribution to keep the conversation going, ie. she considers the interactive requirements, rather than the information value, of the conversation paramount.

When talking with Caroline, Katja reacts to Caroline's initiations rather than initiating herself. In contrast, with Simon, the other NS, the

same characteristic emerges that was found in Katja's conversations with learners, as is shown in the following examples.[4]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **(39)** | Katja (kw; NS) with Simon (sn; NS)/6/F+M/game/in Katja's house | | |
| 052 | sn: | **what's this?** | |
| | kw: | - | no response |
| **(40)** | Katja (kw; NS) with Simon (sn; NS)/6/F+M/game/in Katja's house | | |
| 059 | sn: | should we do some Lego? | |
| 060 | kw: | **no** | plain rejection |
| **(41)** | Katja (kw; NS) with Simon (sn; NS)/6/F+M/game/in Katja's house | | |
| 113 | kw: | she wants us to play Lego | |
| 114 | | **no, I don't like Lego** | likes and dislikes |
| 115 | sn: | I do | |
| 116 | kw: | well, we're not playing Lego, right? | |
| 117 | sn: | right | |
| **(42)** | Katja (kw; NS) with Simon (sn; NS)/6/F+M/game/in Katja's house | | |
| 033 | sn: | play with the Lego? | |
| 034 | kw: | **so I've got 1, 2, 1** | not talking about the other speaker's topic |

Katja does not necessarily answer all questions, as shown in (39). She often answers briefly and even rejects the other's suggestions either with a simple *No* (40), with a more elaborate expression of her likes and dislikes (41), receiving compliance from her interlocutor or by talking about something else (42). Katja's discourse is characterized by not answering and talking about something different from the topic initiated by her interlocutor.

Caroline's conversation with Nia offers another NT comparison in addition to her conversation with Katja. It is interesting that while with Katja Caroline initiates two thirds of all the sequences, with Nia she initiates only one third, eight out of 25 (see Table 9 above). Familiarity may be a factor here, since Katja and Caroline know each other from school, whereas Nia and Caroline are not school mates. In any case, this shows that Caroline is willing to give space to her interlocutors (cf. her share of about 90 % of sequence initiations with a beginner and half of that with an advanced learner).

As in her NT conversation with Katja, Caroline systematically uses 'questions' to initiate topics with Nia as well. The same fairly high proportion of 'question' initiations is also shown in her conversation with an advanced learner, Mei Kien. Therefore it seems that 'question' initiations definitely characterize Caroline's conversations, no matter who her interlocutor may be. There is one difference between Caroline's two NT conversations: with Katja, Caroline uses a high proportion (over two fifths) of 'statement' initiations, whereas in her conversation with Nia only one out of eight initiations is a 'statement'. Again, the degree of familiarity and its consequences for politeness strategies may be a factor here: if 'questions'

4 Examples (39)-(42) are from a game instruction interaction.

are considered a more polite form of initiating a sequence, Caroline may choose to use them with a less familiar interlocutor.

The interactions discussed so far have shown more or less balanced conversations between NSs. An example of a different kind of NT interaction is provided by a conversation between Anthony and Sanjay (interaction 38). Anthony initiates as many sequences as the other NS, Sanjay, but not using topic-nominating 'questions', which he does not use with the learner either. Therefore he controls the conversation to a larger extent than Sanjay. Sanjay does the work of repairing and nominating topics with 'questions', which gives more control to the other speaker, as is shown in the following example, line 008, where Sanjay's interlocutor rejects his suggestion and proposes that the boys find something else to play:

**(43)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school
005 sh: **shall we play Lego?**
006 at: lots and lots of Lego
007 sh: let's play that
008 at: no, let's find something else

Several of Sanjay's topic nominating 'questions' refer to the other NS's knowledge and approval in a way that shows him to be in a position similar to that of a learner. Anthony uses 'questions', 'requests' and 'statements' as initiations (three, five and six, respectively, out of fourteen initiations) and Sanjay 'questions' and 'statements' (seven and five out of twelve). Sanjay is a bilingual speaker, who nonetheless behaves in some ways as if he did not have the same cultural information as the other boy, as the following examples show:

**(44)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school
011 sh: **what's that?** (4)
012 at: * * * it's playdough
013 sh: **playdough, what's that, playdough?**
014 at: we'll see now (5)

**(45)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school [41, 4.2.4; 87, 4.3.3.4]
166 sh: **why we came down here?**
167 at: eh? request for repetition
168 why we come down here? request for confirmation
169 sh: yeah
170 at: told you, 'cause the girl is studying, people

Sanjay asks about the toys being used (questions about playdough in (44), lines 011, 013, and he also refers to Anthony as an authority about the reasons for their play session in (45), line 166. Sanjay is a bilingual speaker of English and Gujarati and may have a very different cultural background from Anthony's (a monolingual English speaker). Socioeconomic differences together with cultural differences may cause such asymmetry even between NSs. This interaction was recorded in an independent school, where the parents pay school fees. Therefore, we can expect the boys to be from homes not vastly different in their socioeconomic status. However, cultural differences probably exist. To an extent the asymmetry shown by

Sanjay's question is reflected in the numbers of words produced by each speaker in this interaction: Anthony produces 733 words and Sanjay 429.

In this NT interaction (see Table 15), all the initiations are clearly 'questions', 'requests' or 'statements', realized as a full sentence structure. This makes the conversation clear and coherent, whereas in Anthony's FT interaction with Yasushi (aL), the types of initiations used result in a higher proportion of 'non-response'. 'Miscellaneous' initiations are used a great deal by both speakers: one half of Anthony's initiations can be labelled as 'miscellaneous' and one third of Yasushi's. Of the possible responses, one third and one half of the NS's and the learner's respectively are 'non-responses'. This, in its turn, results in a high number of initiations, since a new topic opening is required every time an initiation is not taken up and developed. Consequently, the conversation seems fractured. The response types used also show differences between NT and FT (Table 16): in NT, out of Anthony's twelve possible responses, only two are 'non-responses' and three 'other appropriate' responses, ie. about two fifths of the responses. In FT, seven out of twenty-three responses are 'non-responses' and nine 'other appropriate', ie. over two thirds.

**TABLE 15 Initiations in Interactions 35 and 38 (Anthony, Sanjay and Yasushi)**

| | FT 35 Yasushi (aL) | Anthony (NS) | NT 38 Anthony (NS) | Sanjay (NS) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Initiation type* | | | | |
| Question | 6 | 3 | 3 | 7 |
| Request | 2 | 2 | 5 | - |
| Statement | 3 | 4 | 6 | 5 |
| Miscellaneous | 8 | 15 | - | - |
| Unanalyzable | 4 | 4 | - | - |
| | **23** | **28** | **14** | **12** |

**TABLE 16 Responses in Interactions 35 and 38 (Anthony, Sanjay and Yasushi)**

| | 35 FT Yasushi (aL) | Anthony (NS) | 38 NT Anthony (NS) | Sanjay (NS) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Response type* | | | | |
| No response | 13 | 7 | 2 | 2 |
| Inappropriate/irrelevant | - | - | - | - |
| Minimal predicted | 9 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| With additional content | 2 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Other appropriate | 3 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| Unanalyzable | 1 | 1 | 1 | - |
| | **28** | **23** | **12** | **14** |

The differences between NT and FT initiations and responses can now be summarised. Katja's share of topic initiations varies between one third

(with Caroline) and nearly all of them (with Matsumi). Caroline also shows variation in this respect. For instance, her share of initiations with another NS varies from one third to two thirds. How active an initiator a NS is going to be clearly depends on a number of factors, not only on whether her interlocutor is a learner or a NS. In beginner FT, Katja uses more 'questions' than 'statements' in her topic initiations. In advanced FT, Katja's initiations approach those used in NT, ie. 'statements' are used more often than 'questions'. Caroline, on the other hand, tends to use 'questions' in all types of interactions, and therefore the use of 'questions' is not a strategy for her, it is a feature of her language use in general. For Katja, the use of 'questions' is a strategy. Caroline uses a high proportion of 'miscellaneous' initiations in beginner FT and no 'statements', which are used in NT and in advanced FT. These can be posited as strategies in her FT. Similarly, miscellaneous initiations seem to be a strategy feature for Anthony, not employed in NT but frequently in FT.

When possible responses are considered, 'non-response' is a typical feature for Katja in all the interactions, whereas Caroline hardly ever shows 'non-response'. 'Non-responses' in NT probably result from the type of initiation used: Katja's initiations are more challenging than Caroline's and it may be partly for this reason that Caroline shows a lower proportion of 'non-response'. Katja ensures Caroline's participation by presenting her topics in such a manner that Caroline becomes interested. Also Katja is drawn into responding when Caroline's initiations are more challenging, ie. worth responding to. There are high proportions of 'minimal predicted' responses. Katja uses some responses with additional content in her advanced FT and NT. Caroline's conversation with Matsumi is characterised by her imitations of Matsumi's Japanese utterances, which Caroline uses as responses. Also Anthony shows 'non-response' in his FT conversation, as opposed to his NT, where he responds to most NS initiations. The relationship between the kinds of initiations and responses used found in Anthony's and Yasushi's conversation shows similar convergence to that indicated above in Caroline's conversations with an advanced learner (see chapter 4.1.2).

### 4.1.4 Strategies for avoiding trouble

In the present study, strategies for avoiding trouble are analyzed from the point of view of whether a NS using such strategies allows a learner more space than a NS who uses fewer long-range planning strategies. First, strategies as used with beginners are discussed in chapter 4.1.4.1 and those with advanced learners in 4.1.4.2. Native talk strategies are discussed in 4.1.4.3. Tactics for solving problems are discussed in the following chapters on meaning negotiation (chapter 4.2) and conversational support (chapter 4.3).

### 4.1.4.1 Foreigner talk strategies with beginners

One of the long-term planning strategies suggested by Long (1983:132) is **relinquishing topic control**. The use of questions to nominate topics is considered to be an indicator of a speaker's approach to topic control. If the NS asks questions that are possible or even easy for the learner to answer, the learner can take some control over topic nomination. As was seen above (sections 4.1.1-4.1.3), both Katja and Caroline use questions to nominate topics, especially with a beginner, although questions are not the only means of initiating. It was also seen that there was individual variation in the use of questions as topic initiators. It is assumed here that topic-initiating questions are used for relinquishing topic control, if they are reasonably easy for the learner to answer. It may, however, be that the NS can retain topic control, rather than give up her control, when asking questions on topics that she herself wants discussed. How a given instance is interpreted depends on other indicators of co-operation and willingness to take into account the interlocutor's contribution.

Different kinds of questions can also indicate something about a NS's willingness to let a learner choose the topic. Long (1981:264) points out that in adult NS-NNS conversations alternative questions show willingness to talk about what the NNS feels comfortable with, as eg. in a question *Do you study* ***or*** *do you work?* In the present child-child data alternative questions are not prominent. They do not occur in topic-nominating functions, and when they are used, they have more to do with play activities, choices to be made in the course of play, rather than with choosing topics of conversation. However, in Katja's conversation with Matsumi there is an example of extensive negotiation, where different types of questions are used:

**(46)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with paper dolls/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 081 | kw: | **which do you think will be a better wedding gown** (2) | |
| | | out of those?= | topic-nominating question |
| 082 | | =which would be a nicer wedding gown? | |
| 083 | mt: | I don't know | |
| 084 | kw: | just choose one choose one | |
| 085 | mt: | eh? | |
| 086 | kw: | **that one or that one?** | |
| 087 | | **which one?** | |
| 088 | | **that one?** | |
| 089 | | right then, she needs flowers for * | |
| 090 | | **now what shall she** [another doll] **wear for the wedding?** | |
| | | | topic-nominating question |
| 091 | mt: | she's naked | |
| 092 | kw: | what shall she wear for the wedding with those, with these? (17) | |

An alternative question, line 086, follows wh-questions and commands, lines 081, 082, 084, when there is no response from the learner. The alternative question is then followed by a wh-question, line 087, and a yes-no question, line 088. When the learner finally responds, line 091, to a topic-

nominating wh-question, the NS does not use the learner's contribution in any way and carries on her own line of thought.

Following this exchange, lines 093-100, the NS moves from wh-questions to yes-no questions in order to prompt an answer, but even there a string of questions is not enough to make the learner participate. There are other examples of topic-nominating yes-no questions that do not give the learner a chance to develop the topic: either she does not respond, as in (47), or her response is not acknowledged or it is rejected, as in (48), lines 049 and 052:

**(47)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with paper dolls/in Katja's house
001 kw: **do you want to help me?**
002 you find the clothes for HER [slow] (18)

**(48)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with paper dolls/in Katja's house
048 kw: **now, shall /we play/?**
049 mt: /yes**/
050 kw: now
051 mt: look that *
052 kw: no, move these along (43)

In Caroline's conversation with Matsumi there are no topic-nominating alternative questions and only one wh-question (see (13) above in 4.1.1.2). All the other topic-nominating questions are yes-no questions. Caroline's topic-nominating questions are somewhat more successful than Katja's, either because they are easier to answer or because Matsumi often answers in Japanese, as in (49). Other examples where the learner responds in English were discussed above (see examples (15)-(19) in section 4.1.1.2).

**(49)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house
026 cw: Matsumi, is it good?
027 mt: (**Japanese** 'well done, this American is an expert') [singing]

Long (1983:136) includes **comprehension checks** among his strategies to preempt trouble. They are used especially in FT conversations to check whether the interlocutor has understood what has been said, for instance by asking *OK?* or directly *Do you understand?* Comprehension checks are not frequent in the present data: neither NS in question, Caroline or Katja, keeps checking the learner's comprehension during the conversation. At the beginning of her conversation with Matsumi, outside the transcribed text, Katja however asks whether Matsumi speaks English at all (example (2) above in 4.1.1.1). This seems like a global strategy to set the context and find out some essential information about her interlocutor's language skills, ie. also comprehension. The answer that she receives may seem discouraging and, in fact, Katja does not try very hard after this first exchange. Having told her interlocutor that she does not speak English, Matsumi, too, may feel relieved of any further responsibility in the conversation. This may partially explain both speakers' behaviour and its consequences for interaction.

**Salient topics** and **brief topic treatment** are also considered strategies that speakers can use to prevent trouble. Topics are salient when physically or temporally close, and observable persons, objects or activities are being discussed. It is quite clear that both Katja and Caroline talk only about the 'here and now', in the same way as caretakers do when talking to young children. There is no difference between the girls in this respect, although Caroline perhaps chooses more topics that are outside the immediate requirements of the activity itself. There is no noticeable difference in the length of topic treatment either.

Caroline's attempts at relinquishing topic control to a beginner are generally more successful than Katja's. Caroline uses yes-no questions, whereas Katja may use a long string of questions of different types, without securing a verbal response from the learner. The topics chosen by the two NSs are generally salient and, as noted above, there is no difference in the length of topic treatment between them. Neither NS uses comprehension checks to avoid trouble in beginner FT.

#### 4.1.4.2 Foreigner talk strategies with advanced learners

Katja's conversation with Maisa, an advanced learner, has fewer instances of either strategies for avoiding trouble or tactics to repair trouble than either Nia's or Caroline's conversations with advanced learners. Two topic-nominating yes-no questions can be found in Katja's speech. The one in (50) clearly indicates an interest in the matter being discussed, and the sequence starts with decomposition, lines 053-054, where the question encodes the topic. This sequence can also be seen as an instance of meaning negotiation.

**(50)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 053 | kw: | you got mixed | decomposition |
| 054 | | **did you mixed** [sic] **some of them up?** | |
| 055 | | did you take some from a box? | |
| 056 | md: | box? | |

Example (51) combines the strategy of using questions with the use of a pause before the key word, line 215. The learner's response, line 216, is followed by an alternative question to show the learner the other possibility in the matter being discussed (either she sleeps alone or with her brother). When the learner's answers are contradictory, line 216 and 218, the NS asks a confirmation question, line 219, and receives a satisfactory response with an explanation, line 220.

**(51)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 215 | kw: | **do you have (2) your bedroom to yourself?** | pause |
| 216 | md: | yeah | |
| 217 | kw: | or does your brother share with you? | |
| 218 | md: | I sleep with my brother | |
| 219 | kw: | does your brother sleep with you? | confirm |
| 220 | md: | yeah, because we have only two bedrooms upstairs | |

The use of questions to nominate topics and to relinquish topic control to her interlocutor in this way is Caroline's speciality. The question type used is mainly that of yes-no questions. In the following examples the topics are nominated in a variety of ways: as a suggestion for a new activity (52), as a question about something outside the immediate context (53) and as a reference to a topic discussed earlier (54):

**(52)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house
051 cw: **shall we play some games in a minute?**

**(53)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house
059 cw: **do you watch S** [TV-programme]?

**(54)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house
070 cw: **did you see that bit where they cut one of the sharks open?**

Katja and Caroline turn out to have the same means to build the interactional space, but Caroline seems to be more willing to employ them, both with a beginner and with an advanced learner. The learner's behaviour combined with her willingness can result in an interaction that is beneficial for the learner's acquisition process. Mei Kien shows characteristics that can keep the conversation going: she is extremely active, initiates, responds and generally claims her space. In both of her conversations with NSs, she shows this type of behaviour and orientation.

Another NS, Nia, does not use a wide variety of strategies and tactics to avoid trouble or repair trouble in her interaction with Mei Kien. This conversation works almost in a native manner, and therefore strategies to avoid trouble are not needed extensively. Nia uses the different types of initiations in much the same proportions both in FT and NT, the only difference being the slightly higher proportion of statements in FT than in NT. Topic-initiating questions are also used in a NT manner. There are both yes-no questions and wh- questions: *Do you like your school?*, line 060, *What are you making now?*, line 019, *What are you looking for?*, line 023. Some of these questions function as topic initiators, ie. the learner responds to them and the topic is discussed perhaps at length. It was noted above about Katja's behaviour with the learner that she often did not answer direct questions. Here the reverse happens frequently: the learner does not necessarily respond to the NS's direct questions, eg. questions *What's that?*, line 027, and *What are you doing?*, line 057, are not answered. Therefore, the learner does not use all the opportunities offered her. On the other hand, it seems that she takes as much space as she requires by initiating herself (see above in 4.1.2). This may indicate that, instead of paying attention to what her interlocutors are doing, she carries on with her own agenda.

#### 4.1.4.3 Strategies in native talk

The number of sequence initiations by Katja in her conversations with different interlocutors ranges from nearly one third of all initiations to 90

%. Similarly, the number of sequences initiated by Caroline ranges from one third to around four fifths. It can be noted that in her NT conversation with Katja Caroline initiates two-thirds of all topics, whereas in FT conversations she does not control topic initiations to such an extent. Conversely, in her FT conversations Katja controls topic initiations much more than she does in NT. There is a definite difference in the strategies used for relinquishing topic control between Katja and Caroline in their NT: Caroline initiates new topics by asking several yes-no questions (example 55) and wh-questions (example 56), whereas Katja initiates only two new topics by a question (example 57). Katja may feel that her NS interlocutor can look after herself and she need not trouble herself with questions to make space for her, not even to the extent she does in FT. On the other hand, asking questions may also be used as a way to control the conversation. Somehow Katja may feel relieved of the responsibility to keep the conversation going and therefore allows her NS interlocutor much more room than she does with a learner.

**(55)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
049 cw: **look what she's got, has she hurt herself or something?**
050 kw: oh, Mari's taken her outside

**(56)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
085 cw: **where's that dress you got OUT for her?**
086 **where's that dress you got out for her?**
087 kw: pretty one?
088 cw: yeah, that one

**(57)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
147 kw: **do you like this doll's hair?**
148 cw: yes, nice

Katja's and Caroline's conversations with other NSs (Katja with Simon and Caroline with Nia) confirm the use of questions as topic control devices: Katja uses questions only a few times. This could mean that Katja is not so willing to pass on to her interlocutor the decision about the topic to be discussed, or of the kind of activity to be chosen, whereas for example Simon asks several questions of the type in (58) and (59) in the course of his conversation with Katja.

**(58)** Katja (kw; NS) with Simon (sn; NS)/6/F+M/game/in Katja's house
033 sn: **play with the Lego?**

**(59)** Katja (kw; NS) and Simon (sn; NS)/6/F+M/game/in Katja's house
006 sn: **what would you like to play then?**
007 kw: mine [referring to the game, not answering the question]
008 sn: what?

Partly Simon is politely asking his interlocutor's opinion, partly trying to convince Katja that they should play Lego. Simon's politeness can be contrasted with Katja's categorical refusal to play Lego, expressed in the same conversation, in (41), lines 114 and 116.

The other strategies (salient topics, brief topic treatment and comprehension checks) are only used occasionally and do not seem to be

relevant in the NT context. It may, of course, be that a person has an idiosyncratic way of treating topics very briefly, but such a characteristic is not found in these conversations and therefore it is not discussed here. In her conversation with a beginner, Katja uses some framing to make new topics salient to the learner (see in 4.3.2.3 below). In NT there are also some examples of framing, but they are not enough to claim that framing is used as a strategy.

The type of comprehension check that could be expected in NT is shown in (61), where Nia asks Caroline whether she knows what *mews* means, and this leads to a negotiation on the meaning of the word:

**(60)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Nia (nl; NS)/46/F+F/game/in the researcher's house [22, 4.2.2]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 155 | nl: | they call, **do you know mews?** |
| 156 | | hey call them mews |
| 157 | cw: | yeah |
| 158 | nl: | right, when they are used, they are hundred years old |
| 159 | cw: | mews |
| 160 | nl: | yeah, you know, kind of house |

In their conversation, both Caroline and Nia initiate sequences with topic-nominating questions, either yes-no or wh-questions. There are a few questions that can be considered to relinquish topic control even in NT. Most, however, are requests for information about the game or the surroundings. In NT, this probably does not mean that the person to whom the question is addressed would necessarily be allowed more space in the conversation. More space is given, of course, in the sense that once a question is asked, an answer is normally expected, thus giving the person answering one turn she would not necessarily have if the other speaker had produced a statement, as in (61), where Nia answers Caroline's question, line 053.

**(61)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Nia (nl; NS)/46/F+F/game/in the researcher's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 050 | cw: | do you like * *, she's a singer, isn't she? |
| 051 | nl: | pardon? |
| 052 | cw: | do you like * *, she's a singer? |
| 053 | nl: | **yeah** |

Because of the open question, the conversation could freely be developed by Nia, but she does not use the occasion for this. A similar open question asked by Nia, *What do they* [biscuits] *taste like?*, line 085, is not developed any further either. Questions like *Shall we play Treasure island?* asked by Nia, line 081, or *Look at that, shall we build a house?* by Caroline (interaction 47/line 015) give space to the other speaker to express her opinion on what should be done next. Caroline's behaviour does not differ noticeably from her FT conversations, although in this NT conversation she initiates more sequences (almost three quarters of all sequences) than would be expected, considering how willing she is to give the learner space.

Although Caroline gives her interlocutors space, also she at times shows behaviours that demonstrate how she can fail to take her interlocutor into account, eg. in (62).

**(62)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Nia (nl; NS)/47/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

001 nl: oh, look
002 cw: **Mei Kien, the Chinese girl, whatever her name is, she speaks English * *
003 nl: fire chief
004 I'll do the fire chief

Caroline starts a different topic, line 002, from the one that Nia has called her attention to, ie. building Lego. On the other hand, this may result from the play situation: the girls are playing and although Caroline starts to talk about something not directly relevant to their play, she may still be paying attention to her interlocutor and acting as requested.

In short, the three NSs' strategies for avoiding conversational trouble and clearing the conversational space are not noticeably different from each other. However, Caroline is more successful than Katja at using topic-nominating questions to relinquish topic control. Even in beginner FT no comprehension checks are used to avoid problems. This might indicate that tactics for repairing problems are used more extensively. The NSs' behaviour in advanced FT approaches their NT behaviour and shows their personal preferences, for instance in the use of question types.

#### 4.1.4.4 Learner strategies

The focus of this chapter is the space that the learner can get in FT discourse. This has been discussed from the point of view of NS behaviour, bearing in mind that both speakers in a dyad influence the interaction and emerging discourse. Therefore, the learners' contributions have been discussed together with the NSs'. The purpose of this section is to discuss strategies that are either used exclusively by learners or that are prominent in some learners' discourse.

***Code-switching.*** Although code-switching (CS) is not a phenomenon central to the questions presented here, a few words are necessary to describe its occurrence in one learner's discourse when engaged in conversation with one NS. As will be remembered from the discussion above, the speakers in question are Caroline (NS) and Matsumi (bL). Their conversation includes a number of features not found elsewhere in the data, either in this learner's conversation with another NS or in other interactions. One such feature is code-switching. Although it is rather difficult to pinpoint Matsumi's use of CS either as a strategy or a tactic, it will be discussed at this point, since reference is made to it throughout the study.

Code-switching has traditionally been defined as alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of language or even speech styles. In a number of studies (see eg. Blom and Gumperz 1972; Saunders 1980, 1988), code-switching has been identified as having several functions. It can be used to achieve a precise expression or the matter in question has been learnt only in that code. Code-switching can also be used for citations, or to emphasize the speaker's authority or expertise, or the speaker may want to emphasize her message by repeating it in two codes.

Recently Myers-Scotton (1993a, 1993b) has proposed a markedness theory, according to which all speakers recognize all code choices as more or less unmarked or marked. An unmarked code choice is expected as the medium in an exchange and a marked choice is an unusual choice for a particular exchange. Meyers-Scotton (1993b:75) argues that code-switching is used to convey intentional (ie. non-code based) sociopragmatic meanings and that speakers make their choices aware of the consequences, not because norms direct them to do so. Various motivations have been identified for code-switching: CS as an unmarked choice (in multilingual situations), CS as a marked choice (eg. to show authority, expertise, etc.), and CS as an exploratory choice (eg. to find out what language should be spoken). In addition, CS can serve as a strategy of neutrality or as a deferential strategy (Myers-Scotton 1993b:113 ff.). In this model, the choices are seen as meaningful activities showing skill, not linguistic inadequacies

There have been several examples in the discussion so far that include instances of Matsumi's code-switching from English into Japanese. All these have initially been analysed without the Japanese gloss, as if from Caroline's, the English NS's, point of view. Caroline does not understand Japanese and therefore her reaction to what Matsumi is saying does not include a reaction to the content, while she may have an interactive and affective reaction to the fact that her interlocutor is using her L1 and that she cannot therefore understand her. The Japanese glosses added later give some additional information about the content, although they do not change the conclusions reached.

First of all, it has been stressed how adept Caroline is at handling the situation and how she uses varied means to draw the learner into the conversation. Even though the learner answers in Japanese, her own L1, Caroline treats everything as best she can and interprets these contributions as real contributions towards the conversation that they are building together. The learner's Japanese utterances imply that she is at times bored, baffled, and even annoyed. She expresses these feelings in her own language, fully understanding everything that the NS is saying, as can be seen in (63).

**(63)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house [13, 4.2.2]

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 144 | cw: | this? uh? | | | |
| 145 | | gonna play this * ? | | | |
| | | | 146 | mt: | uh? |
| | | | 147 | cw: | this? |
| | | | 148 | mt: | (Japanese 'I'm so bored, I can't take it any more') |
| | | | 149 | cw: | this? uh? |
| | | | 150 | | that? |
| | | | 151 | | this? |
| 152 | mt: | what are these? | [exaggerated intonation] | | |
| | | what are these? | | | |
| | | what are these? | | | |
| 153 | cw: | Lego | | | |

The learner requests clarification, line 146, and the NS responds by repeating part of her original question. Immediately after this, the NS reacts to the

learner's Japanese utterance, line 148, as if it were another request for clarification, lines 149-151, which is interpreted as a tactic for repairing trouble.

Several times Matsumi also expresses in Japanese her refusal to do what the NS asks her to do. The NS cannot, of course, feel this to be impolite, since she does not understand the refusal. Rather, Caroline interprets these refusals as turns taken in the conversation to continue the exchange without changing the topic, as in (64), lines 133-8.

**(64)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 131 | cw: | Matsumi, read this | | | |
| 132 | mt: | NO (Japanese 'don't tease me, I can't read, you know it') | | | |
| | | | 133 | cw: | Matsumi, read this |
| | | | 134 | mt: | (Japanese 'no') |
| | | | 135 | cw: | can you read that? |
| | | | 136 | mt: | (Japanese 'no, I can't') |
| | | | 137 | cw: | Matsumi: k, p, t, m, |
| | | | 138 | | come on, read this, read this |
| 139 | mt: | no, no, hard | | | |
| | | | 140 | cw: | hard? |
| | | | 141 | mt: | hard, yeah |
| | | | 142 | cw: | hard, is it? |
| | | | 143 | | hard? |

Here Caroline's insistence brings the result that she wants: after three answers in Japanese, lines 132, 134 and 136, Matsumi switches into English, line 139, and the next repair routine is in English, lines 140-3.

The learner also expresses her attitude towards the NS's behaviour in Japanese. In (65) Matsumi feels that what Caroline says is just flattery, line 169. Caroline turns the situation into play by imitating Matsumi, lines 170, 172 and 174, and finally the conversation returns to the task at hand, ie. building the Lego house, which Matsumi also comments on in Japanese, line 176.

**(65)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 167 | cw: | Matsumi (2) |
| 168 | | nice |
| 169 | mt: | (Japanese 'don't flatter me') |
| 170 | cw: | (imitates mt) |
| 171 | mt: | (Japanese 'how about if you flattered better') |
| 172 | cw: | (imitates mt) |
| 173 | mt: | (Japanese 'it's the other way around, this is * *? I'm called *') |
| 174 | cw: | Matsumi, wow wow wow |
| 175 | mt: | (Japanese 'what are you singing?' |
| 176 | | (Japanese 'shall we do red now? first * * and then eight sizes?') |

There are a couple of instances where both the NS and the present writer have interpreted something said in Japanese as if it had been in English. The NS behaves according to the tendency of participants wanting to create connection and coherence (cf. Bublitz 1988:90), and in these instances it is very easy to hear "English", even when it is quite clear that it is not. In (66), line 016 was originally interpreted as if the learner had said in

English 'you can play with this', although she says in Japanese 'how dare you say that in front of people?' The original mishearing was either caused or reinforced by the NS's reaction *Yes, lets do that*, line 017. Even the learner is led to wonder whether the NS might understand what she is saying, line 022.

**(66)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 013 | cw: | Matsumi, say lala |
| 014 | mt: | (Japanese 'no I won't) |
| 015 | cw: | lalalaalala |
| 016 | mt: | **(Japanese 'how do you dare say that in front of people?')** |
| | | (originally interpreted as English **'you can play with this'**) |
| 017 | cw: | yes, let's do that |
| 018 | mt: | (Japanese 'how dare you say that in front of people') |
| | | (originally as above) |
| 019 | cw: | it's nice, Matsumi |
| 020 | mt: | (Japanese 'aren't the English shy?) |
| 021 | cw: | mmmm |
| 022 | mt: | (Japanese 'does she understand what I'm saying?) |
| 023 | cw: | (imitates mt) |

There are other problems of interpretation in code-switching similar to that above. For instance, in (67) the NS's response, line 030, to the learner's Japanese utterance, line 029, sounds appropriate when the learner's utterance is heard as English 'yeah', whereas the actual meaning is a negation, not an assent.

**(67)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house [68, 4.3.3.1]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 028 | cw: | Matsumi, sing a song | |
| 029 | mt: | **(Japanese 'no')** | |
| | | (originally interpreted as English **'yeah'**) | |
| 030 | cw: | come on then | |
| 031 | mt: | (Japanese 'no no no') | [said in a sing-song style] |
| 032 | cw: | Matsumi /you sing?/ | |
| 033 | mt: | /(Japanese 'this is not a song')/ | |
| 034 | cw: | you sing? | |
| 035 | mt: | (Japanese 'I don't want to, because I don't want to) | [sung] |
| 036 | cw: | sing again, sing /again/ | |
| 037 | mt: | /(Japanese 'no no')/ | [sung] |

In this example Matsumi's refusal to sing, said in Japanese and sing-song style, is reacted to as if she were singing. This gives the NS the impression that her request is being complied with, ie. there is interaction, the learner has received the space required for communication, and consequently meanings are being successfully negotiated.

The functions of Matsumi's code-switching are not easy to determine. There is no contextual or communicative reason for her to use Japanese. In fact, it seems that code-switching can be only a hindrance to communication in this situation. Matsumi's choices are clearly marked, ie. they are not expected. They are all the more marked, as this is the only interaction where there is any code-switching in these data. A clue to Matsumi's marked choices is given in a long stretch of Japanese monologue, at the beginning of

which Matsumi comments *'I hear that somebody in this house does research on Japanese, why would they do such a thing?'* It might be that Matsumi thought that she was supposed to be speaking Japanese. This however does not explain the fact that it is only with Caroline that this happens: there are no Japanese utterances in her conversation with Katja, the other NS, which was recorded on the same day, with the same instructions given to both dyads. Therefore, there is still the difference to be explained between Matsumi's behaviour with Caroline and that with Katja, and this difference is part of the overall difference in the discourse behaviour that the two NSs exhibit. It seems that Caroline creates the kind of atmosphere that makes it possible for Matsumi to use her L1 since her competence in English is obviously not very high. This gives her the space to exercise her rights as a speaker and contribute what she can. Therefore, at least one function of her code-switching may be to compensate for her low level of competence in L2. She may feel free to use code-switching with one speaker but not with another.

The fact that Caroline and Matsumi, in parts of their conversation, end up in a dialogue that is not mutually comprehensible, ie. not comprehensible to the monolingual speaker of English, does not change the analysis presented above. The two speakers are still involved in negotiating meanings instead of speaking parallel to each other. The learner's Japanese utterances are always relevant to what is going on at the moment, and the NS reacts to them as if they formed coherent discourse, just as an adult does when "conversing" with a small baby. This can be compared with Bublitz's (1988:90) claim that there is a general tendency in everyday conversations to create connections between successive utterances and topics and that the creation and maintenance of topic continuity are, in fact, urgent concerns of those taking part in a conversation.

At this point it can be argued that Matsumi's code-switching is a learner's strategy for avoiding trouble rather than a tactic for repairing trouble. It does not lead to repair of communication, simply because it does not prepare any ground for mutual understanding. It can be seen as the learner's global strategy in approaching this particular interaction and serves as a reminder that there is also intra-speaker variation in learners, not only in NSs.

***Topic-nominating questions.*** The learners seem to show different behaviour in the use of questions as topic-initiating devices. It may, of course, be asked what function these questions serve in the learners' language as opposed to the NSs'. When a NS asks a topic nominating question in NS-NNS interaction, it is interpreted as a means of relinquishing topic control to involve the learner. To an extent this has been shown to be the case, since Caroline uses questions somewhat more than Katja, and with her the learner is a more active participant in the conversation. However, questions, such as clarification requests, can have the function of allowing the speaker to gain control, not only clarify something. Learners ask topic-nominating questions, and for them this may be a way to gain control and space in the conversation, instead of relin-

quishing it. A beginner with hardly any means of expressing herself, like Matsumi, may not be able to use this device, but more advanced learners like Mei Kien and Maisa in these data seized on the possibility of using it.

Mei Kien uses a high proportion of questions to initiate topics in both her conversations with a NS. She is also successful at defining topics: her questions are answered, talked about, and negotiated at length. In her conversation with Caroline there are both yes-no questions and wh-questions on a variety of topics: the house, its ownership and inhabitants, TV programmes, the names of the other girls participating in the taping sessions, as in (68) and (69). She is a great talker who perhaps to an extent thinks aloud.

**(68)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house [34, 4.2.4]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 010 | mk: | this th this house is who? (2) |
| 011 | | what that girl name that lady name? |
| 012 | cw: | Tuula |
| 013 | | lady near the room? |
| 014 | | the lady who just come in? |
| 015 | | Tuula |

**(69)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house [34, 4.2.4]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 030 | mk: | how much bedroom has she got? |
| 031 | cw: | how much bathroom? |
| 032 | mk: | yeah |

Out of all the sequences in Nia's and Mei Kien's conversation the learner initiates well over half. In half of these, topic-nominating questions are used, and these are mostly wh-questions. Such figures alone indicate that the learner and NS are fairly equal in this interaction. The topics initiated by the learner are directly relevant either to their play or the immediate context as above.

Most of the learner's questions are answered, but not all, ie. they are not successful as topic-nominating moves. Two of those that are not answered are questions about their play, which may or may not have been answered non-verbally. Two questions in (70), lines 200 and 202, are not answered, possibly because they were not meant to be answered.

**(70)** Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 200 | mk: | what's the time now? (2) |
| 201 | | this clock went small small (3) yes * oh |
| 202 | | want to go to the toilet? |
| 203 | | I want to |
| 204 | nl: | go on then |

The learner is probably looking at the clock (there was a small alarm clock in the room) and can see for herself what time it is, line 200. Moreover, she does not pause long enough for the NS to answer before going on herself after her second question, line 202.

Maisa in her conversation with Katja also uses a high proportion of topic-nominating questions, mostly yes-no questions. Her questions are

answered, but they are not negotiated to the same extent as Mei Kien's questions are. Maisa talks about the Lego pieces and the dolls that the girls are playing with, so the topic sphere is not as large as Mei Kien's. Matsumi, the beginner, only manages to ask one question. Clearly the learner's level of competence has something to do with how the questions in general and the different question types are used. For the learners, asking questions does not seem to be a way of relinquishing topic control to the NS, rather it is a way of gaining some control of the conversation, the topics to be discussed and how they are discussed. The more wh-questions the learner manages to ask, the more space she can gain and guarantee that her topics will be negotiated.

### 4.1.5 Summary

The analysis presented above shows that there are individual differences between NSs in their ability or willingness to draw the learner into the conversation. In some interactions, or parts of them, the learners receive space for their contributions, and in others not. The NS's attempts to involve the learner, the learner's ability to respond and to initiate openings, and the NS's willingness to respond to the learner's initiations vary from one interlocutor to another and from one interaction to another. For example, not answering the learner's questions does not give the learner a chance to nominate topics, whereas asking many questions will draw any interlocutor into conversation.

In all the interactions, the NSs show modification in their use of initiation types in beginner FT. More questions and fewer statements, as expected, are used with beginners, whereas there is a pattern of initiation types closer to NT used in advanced FT. Fewer questions and more statements are used with an advanced learner. The differences between NSs in the use of questions and statements, when a similar trend is found both in NT and FT, reflect personal preferences in the use of topic initiations (speaker-dependent features), rather than FT strategies (context-dependent features). Caroline uses questions in all types of interactions. Therefore, for her, the use of questions is a feature of her linguistic profile in general, not a strategy for coping in FT discourse. For Katja, the use of questions is a strategy. In beginner FT, she uses more questions than statements in her topic initiations, whereas in advanced FT Katja's initiations approach those used in NT, ie. statements are used more often than questions. As an example of intra-speaker variation, Caroline shows a marked difference in the use of miscellaneous initiations: none are used with an advanced learner, whereas with a beginner a high proportion of her initiations are miscellaneous. Moreover, it can be noted that Caroline uses no statements as topic initiators in beginner FT, whereas they are used in NT and in advanced FT.

It is generally assumed that in securing a response from a linguistically non-competent interlocutor, questions and requests are more efficient than statements. One of the learners, Matsumi, reacts to different initiation types as expected: she responds to questions and requests. However, statements of intention can create interest and can be efficient as learner strategies

(Cathcart-Strong 1986). The major differences in the learner responses between Matsumi's two conversations are the following: with Katja, the largest single group of responses, twelve cases, from the learner is that of non-responses, whereas with Caroline there are only three non-responses. Statements often do not receive a response from beginners, and Katja uses statements as topic initiators, whereas Caroline does not. Therefore, there is a higher non-response rate in Matsumi's conversation with Katja than with Caroline. Another major difference is the learner's use of code-switching: with Caroline, Matsumi code-switches into Japanese, which does not occur at all with Katja.

Non-response is a typical feature for Katja in all the interactions, whereas Caroline hardly ever shows non-response. Non-responses in NT probably result from the type of initiation used: Katja's initiations are more challenging than Caroline's and it may be partly for this reason that Caroline shows a lower proportion of non-response. Katja is also drawn into responding when Caroline's initiations are more challenging. There are high proportions of minimal predicted responses. Katja uses some responses with additional content in her advanced FT and NT. Caroline's conversation with Matsumi is characterised by her imitations of Matsumi's Japanese utterances, which Caroline uses as responses. In general, Caroline uses the learner's responses to build the interaction further. Katja often fails to do this.

In addition to initiations and responses, the use of strategies were discussed in this chapter. Such strategies are used to avoid trouble and to clear space for the actual work of conversation. Although the differences found are not very marked and not even necessarily consistent across different speakers, there are indications of individual differences in the ways in which NSs take learners into account and provide them with the space required for interaction with a linguistically not fully competent interlocutor. Such differences are easily lost in a study using quantitative methods, but can be found and focused on in a detailed analysis of individual interactions and exchanges. The differences in initiations and responses, combined with possible differences in meaning negotiation and other conversational support make it apparent that FT discourse is not as monolithic as quantitative research results perhaps suggest. There is a continuum of development from childhood onwards, and each individual brings their own experiences to bear on the particular discourse they are involved in.

Looking for explanations for the types of differences outlined above we have to turn to the subjects' individual experiences and capabilities, and some contextual factors. Three specific areas can be identified: the learners' status in interaction, interest created by a speaker's contribution and questions relating to general cognitive development.

In her discussion of various effects on children's conversation Ervin-Tripp (1979:395-9) mentions that younger speakers' delayed responses and unrelated talk tend to be ignored because of their status. Ervin-Tripp claims that the older conversational partners of younger children do not respond, because they consider their partners' contributions to be redundant or irrelevant. This type of reaction could partially explain why learners' contributions are not always responded to. Although the speakers are age

peers, there are other factors, discussed in more detail below, that may make NSs react to learners as non-peers. Some NSs might feel that not all the talk produced by a learner, especially a beginner, is relevant, and this could explain some differences in the NSs' behaviour. There are few direct indications of this type of attitude, but indirect indications will be discussed in chapter 4.3. There is no other information on the subjects' attitudes and reactions to the learners and, therefore, this explanation cannot be verified.

It was pointed out above how Katja reacts to her NS interlocutor's initiations when they challenge her. Interest in the conversation may be one factor that can explain the differences between the speakers. Cathcart-Strong (1986:522-3) reports on kindergarten age L2 learners' low success rate in securing a response from NSs to their calls for attention and requests for action and on the high response rate to learner's intention statements. Although intention statements do not form a first part of an adjacency pair, and consequently do not as such require a response, they are responded to, because they often interest the child interlocutor. Similarly, somewhat older speakers may react to their interlocutors' contributions, questions or statements, as interesting or not interesting, and react accordingly. An utterance needs to serve this "enticement" function (Cathcart-Strong 1986:523) before a response can be expected, and it is the speaker's responsibility to make her topic interesting enough for the interlocutor. For L2 learners this means that they have to shoulder a great deal of the responsibility for involving the interlocutor and generating input for language learning.

Politeness is another factor that may be involved and is connected with the issue of interest. Child speakers do not need to be polite, or their concept of politeness may be different from that of adults. They may have learnt that questions in general require responses, but they do not as such draw a child interlocutor into conversation. If they are interested, even statements will work, as was seen above. We might, however, ask whether a NS is not conscious of her responsibility in NS-NNS interaction if she expects the learner to entice her into interaction.

It was assumed that being age peers ensures maximum equality also cognitively, and it seems that the NSs have more or less the same skills that they exhibit in different situations. For instance, Katja uses questions variably and varies the way in which she allows her interlocutor space in initiations. However, her perception of when to use these strategies seems to differ from that of Caroline's. The reasons underlying such perceptual differences are beyond the scope of this study, but it may be, as Cooper and Cooper (1984:81-85) suggest, that willingness to modify discourse behaviour (eg. an unsuccessful request) suggests a metacognitive component and that not only developmental but also within-age-group variation accounts for such differences. They outline limitations in capabilities and other sources of influence as direct developmental constraints and indirect constraints. A child may not have acquired a behaviour or a skill or there are limitations in processing capacity in using the skill (eg. maintaining attention uses up processing capacity and there is not enough for giving an explanation). On the other hand, the child may not have the metacognitive understanding that a behaviour would be useful (for example responding to a learner's

every statement) or various social constraints prevent the NS from understanding the learner and vice versa. Members of different cultures have different concepts of what is and is not appropriate in a given situation (see eg. House 1996a). In addition, the speakers' idiosyncratic characteristics, ie. personality, or other factors affecting an individual's mood can influence the situation. For instance, in clearing comprehension problems, a NS will need skills in meaning negotiation and enough metacommunicative competence to evaluate the situation and to realize that it is important to negotiate in this situation. Moreover, she has to be willing to participate in negotiation rather than withdraw or attack. At the same time, the NNS's corresponding characteristics come into play. The speakers in this study operate at different levels of language skill and have different cultural backgrounds. Consequently, the NNS reacts to the learner both as a learner and possibly as a foreigner. When it is considered that a given situation is the product of all the factors outlined above, it becomes clear that finding a single explanation or even the relevant explanations is not possible without much more detailed research into different situations.

## 4.2 Meaning negotiation

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of meaning negotiation processes in the interactional space created in conversation. Two types of meaning negotiation, task and repair negotiation, and the roles taken by interlocutors will be discussed to determine possible differences between NSs in their use of meaning negotiation as a support tactic.

Meaning negotiation only becomes possible when both interlocutors have gained access into the conversation and are able to claim a reasonable share of the interactional space. Meaning negotiation in conversations is a process whereby the interlocutors involved come to the conclusion that they can accept a meaning that they share. In the present study, meaning negotiation is regarded as a process, the use of which is dictated by a need to clarify a communication problem. Meaning negotiation is required when it would be either impossible or very difficult to continue the topic under discussion (repair negotiation) or it would be difficult to continue the activity (task negotiation) without a clarification. Meaning negotiation forms sequences within which the speakers use various tactics (to be discussed under support in chapter 4.3). In task negotiation such sequences are often main sequences and in repair negotiation they form side sequences. The starting point is the NS's responsibility in the conversation (see Thomas 1984), but it is quite obvious that no analysis can be made without also taking into account the learner's contribution, ie. the interaction between the speakers. This is especially necessary in child language studies, since child learners need to take on some of the responsibility for generating input, as discussed above in chapter 4.1.

In second language acquisition studies, meaning negotiation and communication strategies have often been seen as two different areas of research. It is quite clear, however, that they represent two different approaches to the study of the same phenomenon, ie. second language acquisition and interlanguage. In their article on this dichotomy, Yule and Tarone (1991:169-170)[5] propose that input studies and study of meaning negotiation would benefit from taking into account work done on communication research for two reasons. Both the learner's and the NS's contributions would be looked at together and it would be easier to identify key moves in the interaction. Also, input and learner performance studied together would give researchers a firmer ground for making claims about acquisition.

Færch and Kasper (1983b:36) define communication strategies as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal." Tarone's (1980:420) definition takes into account meaning: "mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where the requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared." Since negotiated input requires co-operation of both speakers using various communication strategies, it seems that the two areas should be considered together as different sides of the same phenomenon, namely managing conversations.

### 4.2.1 Types of meaning negotiation

As was discussed above, the present study is concerned only with interactions within which negotiating activity takes place, ie. free play interactions, as opposed to interactions which are negotiations proper. Firth (1991) distinguishes encounters which contain **negotiating activity** from encounters that are **negotiations**, eg. business negotiations. Encounters that are negotiations can be found also in children's language. An example of a negotiation encounter could be a game interaction where one interlocutor explains a game to another and the children have to reach an agreement on the rules of the game.

An example of a negotiation encounter is given in (1). It is a sequence from a game instruction interaction between two NSs. The interaction as a whole is built on negotiation more than any other interaction in these data, including the game interactions. Damian's and Christine's interaction is characterized by extensive negotiation of the rules of the game. Damian (NS) is in charge of instructing Christine (NS) in how to play Treasure Island. Although he gives detailed instructions, the interaction is not one-sidedly his production. Both speakers request clarification in a way that results in negotiation of meaning and contributes to the building of shared understanding. Tactics are used in addition to meaning negotiation, but they are subordinate to it.

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5 See also Tarone (1980) on the overlap of communication strategies, foreigner talk and repair in interlanguage.

(1) Damian (da, NS) and Christine (cc, NS)/17/M+F/game instruction/at school[6]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 011 | da: | **and if you land** *land* on there, it's the pirates' bush trap (3) **I think** | |
| 012 | cc: | **and here?** | |
| 013 | da: | and if you land on there, you're in a trap | (5) |
| 014 | cc: | OK *now*, **how about here then?** | |
| 015 | da: | you've got, no ... | (18) |
| 016 | | well, you've got to miss a turn | |
| 017 | | and if you *you* land on one of them, that's trouble | (3) |
| 018 | | *so* | (6) |
| 019 | cc: | **what if I land on one of those?** | (12) |
| 020 | da: | you can choose any line you want | |
| 021 | | and, if you land on one of them, you can choose, any line you want, because you gotta follow your line, your colour | |
| 022 | | so that's, brown, eh? | |
| 024 | | so you can choose any other one | |
| 025 | cc: | **so I gotta follow that** | |
| 026 | da: | yeah, if you, yeah, unless you land on one of them, you can choose another one | |
| 027 | cc: | **land on there, I can go there, land on there, I can go there** | |
| 028 | da: | I'm going that way (3) | |
| 029 | | so you'll end up... | |
| 030 | cc: | there, that way (4) | |
| 031 | cc: | **how do you end it?** | |
| 032 | da: | oh, to end it, the first one... | |
| 033 | cc: | *to get to the treasure, oh yes* | |
| 034 | da: | yes, so (2) so I've got to throw the dice | |

The negotiation process in (1) is achieved with the use of clarification requests and repetitions (shown in bold type). It is not common in the present data for the players to request additional information about the game after they have been instructed to play. Christine, however, does so. She checks what happens at certain crucial points in the game, lines 012, 014 and 019, recapitulates, interprets the information that she has received, lines 025 and 027, and wants to know how the game is resolved, line 031. The questions and recapitulations form the backbone of the negotiation sequence, although Damian provides information independently of the clarification requests. For instance, he answers Christine's question, line 020, and then continues to other options. Christine completes Damian's explanations, lines 030 and 033; on line 033, as she does so, she answers her own question. Other tactics used in this extract are repetition, lines 011 and 017, frames, lines 014 and 018, request for confirmation, line 022, and pause before a key word, lines 021 and 022.

Varonis and Gass (1985b:73) say that meaning negotiation takes place in side sequences that "involve the negotiation of meaning which is crucial to the success of the discourse." They propose that what they call "non-understanding routines" are used to clarify problems: the routines serve to negotiate non-understandings and to continue the conversation, as in (2). Non-understanding routines are defined as "those exchanges in which there is some overt indication that understanding between participants has not been complete." Within exchanges there may be embeddings of one or

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6 A new numbering sequence starts for chapter 4.2.

more clarifications. In the present study, this type of negotiation is referred to as **repair negotiation.**

**(2)** Farah (fa, NS) and Aedy (aa, bL)/12/F+M/play with Lego/at school

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 191 | fa: | can you understand Pakistani language? | | | |
| | | | 192 | aa: | **eh?** |
| | | | 193 | fa: | can you understand Pakistani language?[7] |
| | | | (60) | | |
| 194 | fa: | ah, give me that | (34) | | |
| 195 | | do you know what * * means? | | | |
| | | | 196 | aa: | **eh?** |
| | | | 197 | fa: | do you know what * * means? |
| 198 | aa: | I don't know | (11) | | |

In both instances of negotiation in (2), the learner triggers the sequence by requesting repetition, lines 192 and 196. The NS responds by providing the repetition requested. The first exchange is not resolved, since the learner does not answer the NS's question. In the second exchange the NS's question is answered.

In a conversation, questions may be asked about what is to be done next, and names and uses of objects may be enquired about. This type of negotiation is called **task negotiation** in the present study. Sequences of task negotiation may also involve clarifications, but clarifications are not necessary for such negotiation to take place. Example (3) contains negotiation at both levels, task and repair.

**(3)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 053 | kw: | you got mixed | | | |
| 054 | | did you mixed [sic] some of them up? | | | |
| 055 | | did you take some from a box? | | | |
| | | | 056 | md: | **box?** |
| | | | 057 | kw: | and put it in there |
| | | | 058 | md: | **what?** |
| | | | 059 | kw: | did you take some from a box, and put it in here? |
| | | | 060 | | from a box, a Lego box, this? |
| 061 | md: | no | | | |

What is being negotiated is the NS's framework about the order kept among the Lego pieces. This is an instance of task negotiation in that the NS wants to know where the learner got the Lego pieces she has used, lines 054, 055 and 061, but the sequence includes repair negotiation as well, lines 056-060. Maisa apparently asks what box Katja means, line 056, but Katja continues her previous question, line 057, without answering Maisa's question. Maisa requests repetition, line 058, and after Katja's repetition, during which she clearly specifies what box she is talking about, lines 059-060, Maisa gives her answer on line 061, and the girls continue negotiating on their play. The extract also contains elements of a dispute in peer play and could be analyzed in terms of conflict talk (see Corsaro and Rizzo 1990).

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7 The NS is a speaker of Urdu and Punjabi in addition to English.

An example of another kind of meaning negotiation is provided by the following exchange (4) between Caroline and Mei Kien, who discuss the meaning of the word *landlady*.

**(4)** Caroline (cw, NS) with Mei Kien (mk, aL)/44/F+F/G/in the researcher's home [34, 4.2.4]

004 mk: what's that woman that lady?
005 cw: I think it's her [the researcher's] landlady
006 mk: what landlady?
007 cw: la landlady, looks after the house
008 mk: where?
009 cw: you know, does all the tidying
010...

The learner initiates the repair sequence by asking what *landlady* means, line 006, and after receiving an answer, line 007, she wants the NS to specify the meaning in more detail, line 008. The play resumes after Caroline's answer, line 009, the girls apparently having achieved an understanding. The few instances of this kind found in these data are included in repair negotiations, since they have the function of enabling the interlocutors to continue their conversation.

### 4.2.2 Task negotiation

An almost equal number of negotiation sequences can be found in Katja's and Caroline's conversations with a beginner. The general impression is that Katja's conversation with Matsumi is not as successful as that of Caroline's. As was seen above, Matsumi's interactions with Katja and Caroline differ in the way initiations and responses are used. There are few learner initiations in these conversations, and therefore most negotiation sequences are opened by the NS.

In Katja's conversation with Matsumi the beginner is drawn into negotiations about the task at hand rather than about topics outside the immediate play context. In some sequences the NS keeps the flow of conversation going trying to negotiate, but does not achieve a two-way negotiation. An example of a failed negotiation is shown in (5). As interrupted as the sequence is by long pauses, there is a real effort in drawing out responses from the learner.

**(5)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house

053 kw: *there,* now we'll play [sighs] (10)
054 *there, now*: one day sh they were all asking: "Oh, what shall I wear today?"
055 mt: hihihi
056 kw: *now,* you choose the the something for her to wear (4)
057 *here,* look here (3) **have a look at these** (14)
058 umbrella, that's her umbrella (9)
059 mt: hihihi (3)
060 kw: does she want her umbrella?
061 kw: **want this?** (10)
062 **her umbrella** (10)
063 kw: *there,* there's another dress *

The NS's efforts involve a great deal of framing (marked in italics on lines 053, 054, 056 and 057) and repetition (in bold on lines 057 and 061-2). Lines 061-2 also include repair negotiation. It is quite an uphill struggle, because the learner only responds in giggles. Therefore it is no wonder that the NS perhaps feels that there is nothing much she can do. For example, Katja gives the learner a chance to choose something for the doll, line 056, which seems an excellent way to involve the learner, since choices like this can be made without any verbal communication. The only response she receives is giggling, line 059, and Katja continues to probe the learner's choice further by asking Matsumi to repeat her answer or clarify it, lines 060-061. Long pauses separate most utterances, which adds to the laborious effect. The example is representative of this conversation as a whole. Nonetheless the question remains as to why it is that under the same circumstances Caroline manages to interact verbally with the same learner.

In several short sequences Katja attempts to involve Matsumi in a discussion about which doll to dress next (6 and 7), and what a doll should wear (8 and 9).

**(6)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+/play with dolls/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 010 | kw: | **now this girl HERE** | (5) |
| 011 | | **yes?** | (10) |

**(7)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 015 | kw: | uh boy, **this boy?** | (10) |
| 016 | | **: yes | |
| 017 | | **: yes | |
| 018 | kw: | no | |

**(8)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 070 | kw: | **d'you want this on her?** | (4) |
| 071 | | we'll put this pretty dress on | |

**(9)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 104 | mt: | ** |
| 105 | kw: | **shall she wear this (3) or this?** |
| 106 | | **this?** |
| 107 | mt: | hihihi |

**(10)** Katja (kw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play with dolls/in Katja's house [3, 4.1.1.1; 47, 4.3.2.4]

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 081 | kw: | which do you think will be a better wedding gown (2) out of those? = | | |
| 082 | | =which would be a nicer wedding gown? | | |
| 083 | mt: | I don't know | | |
| 084 | kw: | just choose one choose one | | |
| | | | 085 | mt: **eh?** |
| | | | 086 | kw: that one or that one? |
| | | | 087 | which one? |
| | | | 088 | that one? |
| 089 | kw: | right then, she needs flowers for * | | |

All these sequences contain a single question with no answer from the learner. It is common for the NS to employ tag questions, as in (6), line 011. There are fewer instances of the type shown in (10), where the NS tries to

find out what the learner wants by responding to the learner's request for repetition, line 085. The NS's attempts in the repair negotiation sequence are successful, and a resolution is reached, as is shown by the end of the sequence, where the NS asks a confirmation question *That one?*, line 088, and continues, line 089, possibly satisfied with a response, which is not audible. In this example the learner's request triggers repair negotiation within task negotiation, whereas in (5) the learner's non-response triggers the repair.

Katja's negotiation sequences with Matsumi are either very short or not fully developed. They are directly relevant to the activity at hand: the talk is about their play, not about anything else. Katja seems to be interested in how to accomplish the task that she has been given and thus shows orientation towards the content (see House 1996a).

In contrast, Caroline's negotiations with Matsumi are longer and involve a variety of conversational aims (tutorial, representational, control), in order to draw the learner into the conversation (a type of interpersonal orientation). It is interesting to see that several of the explicit negotiations can be found in tutorial sequences (see also the discussion on tutorials in chapter 4.3.3.2), and it is not always easy to distinguish negotiation from display information, as in (11).

**(11)** Caroline (cw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house [75, 4.3.3.2]

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 206 | cw: | Matsumi, your house gonna be big? | | | | initiate |
| | | | 207 | mt: | wha*? | request for rep. |
| | | | 208 | cw: | your house gonna be BIG? | repeat |
| 209 | mt: | yes | | | | respond |
| 210 | cw: | is your house gonna be BIG? | | | | |
| 211 | mt: | ye::::s | | | | |
| 212 | cw: | YOUR house gonna be big? | | | | |
| 213 | mt: | yes, short | | | | |

In (11) Caroline asks the same question, line 210, that Matsumi has just answered, line 209. She asks the question twice, varying the stress from the word *big*, line 210, to the word *your*, line 212. Since the information exchanged is used for display only (the information is known to the participants), the exchange can be called **display negotiation**. Such display negotiation is used to involve the learner and to teach routines, not to establish new information.

There are other examples of sequences where the interlocutors may not necessarily intend to negotiate about the task; rather, they go through some motions of negotiation without really paying attention to what the other person says, ie. carrying on conversations of their own parallel to each other. For instance, Barry, in his interaction with Aedy (bL), uses no topic-nominating questions that relinquish topic control to the learner. In (12), Barry makes a suggestion, line 001, which turns out to be a plan that he is going to carry out despite the learner's opinion, lines 005-6. This type of negotiation should be distinguished from task and display negotiation and could be called **mock negotiation**. In task negotiation the speakers are involved in trying to reach a common understanding, and in display one

speaker takes on the role of a tutor, whereas in mock negotiation a common goal cannot be identified.

**(12)** Barry (bb; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/11/M+M/play with Lego/at school

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 001 | bb: | **will you make a park, please?** |
| 002 | | * * |
| 003 | | * * * and I'll make a park |
| 004 | a a: | I'm not make a park |
| 005 | bb: | I am |
| 006 | | make a park |

Also in Caroline's and Matsumi's conversation task negotiation and repair negotiation often occur simultaneously, as in (13).

**(13)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house [63, 4.1.4.4]

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 144 | cw: | **this** | | | |
| 145 | | **gonna play this, yeah?** | | | |
| | | | 146 | mt: | **uh?** |
| | | | 147 | cw: | **this?** |
| 148 | mt: | (Japanese) | | | |
| 149 | cw: | this? | | | |
| 150 | | that? | | | |
| 151 | | this? | | | |

Caroline starts by asking for Matsumi's opinion on what the girls should play, lines 144-5. She does this by decomposing her question to make it as clear as possible (strategy to avoid trouble). Matsumi's response is a request for repetition, line 146, which is provided, line 147. Instead of an answer to the original, Matsumi continues in Japanese, line 148. From the NS's point of view, this could be understood as a clarification request. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as an answer; not knowing what the learner has said, the NS ends the sequence by repeating her question several times, lines 149-151, in an attempt to present the learner with choices that she could possibly indicate non-verbally. Because there is no overt indication of a request for repetition the last section is considered to be task negotiation.

Caroline's task negotiations with Matsumi are all long and rather involved, as opposed to Katja's one-utterance attempts at negotiation. It is also noticeable that Caroline's and Matsumi's talk is not interrupted by pauses. The fact that Matsumi uses Japanese part of the time (and the NS accepts this) probably contributes to the flow. The one defining characteristic of Matsumi's conversation with Caroline is that there are no rejections or overriding (see chapter 4.1.1). Matsumi's extensive use of Japanese helps her to create the easy flow of conversation, although it obviously does not improve the chances for a smooth transmission of messages. In the conversation with Katja, there are several instances of rejection, but Matsumi does not react to them. Should Matsumi consider them a challenge, and react to them, they would have a supportive function.

There are examples of lengthy task negotiation sequences on different topics in Farah's and Aedy's conversation (interaction 12). Example (14) shows an example of task negotiation. In addition to task negotiation, (15) also includes repair negotiation, lines 037-8, as does (16), lines 111-5.

**(14)** Farah (fa; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/12/F+M/play with Lego/at school

001 fa: **what are you making?**
002 aa: I don't know (4)
003 fa: I'm gonna try to make a school (30)
004 I'll make a school
005 shall we make one big school?
006 eh, shall we? (9) insist on answer
007 aa: *
008 fa: eh? (24)

The NS does not give up easily and insists on answers from the learner, in (14), line 006, and in (15), lines 039-041. In (14) the negotiation is initiated by giving the learner a chance to tell what he is making. The NS does not receive an answer to her initial question *What are you making?*, line 001, but she develops the topic by telling what she is making herself, lines 003-4, and then asking a question again, presenting her plan as a suggestion, line 005. Her insistence results in a reply, which is unanalyzable and not interpretable to the NS either, and is followed by the NS's request for repetition, line 008. There is no clear resolution to the sequence.

**(15)** Farah (fa; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/12/F+M/play with Lego/at school

028 fa: **what country do you come from?**
029 aa: from Brunei
030 fa: it's down China somewhere
031 aa: yeah (3)
032 fa: I come from Pakistan
033 **are you a Muslim?**
034 aa: I don't know
035 fa: I am (2)
036 Muslims don't eat pork
037 aa: **eh?**
038 fa: Muslims don't eat pork (what I say to you)
039 fa: do you eat pork, anything, do you? insist on answer
040 do you?
041 just tell me, 'cause if you don't, you're a Muslim

**(16)** Farah (fa; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/12/F+M/play with Lego/at school

107 fa: **where's the other doll?**
108 aa: * * (2)
109 fa: is there another doll?
110 where?
111 aa: **eh?** request for repetition
112 fa: where's the other doll?
113 aa: **window?** request for confirmation
114 fa: doll
115 doll, like this
116 fa: no, like this
117 no, the other one like that * *
118 fa: doesn't matter, I will use just this giving up
119 aa: it nice doll

In (15) and (16) the learner initiates the repair negotiation by asking for repetition, lines 037 and 111. In both examples the learner's request for repetition is answered appropriately. In (16) the NS's answer is followed by a request for confirmation, when the learner hears *doll* as *window*. The matter seems to be resolved, at least to the extent that the NS is able to show the learner what she means, lines 115-7, but finally she gives up, line 118.

In (15) as in (2) above, there is negotiation on matters not directly related to the task at hand. Farah takes the discussion into topics difficult for a beginner to handle, but she navigates the discussion skilfully and manages to produce a flow of talk, although the learner is not able to say much. The learner's answer, line 029, to the original question, line 028, is acknowledged, line 030. The learner's confirmation of the acknowledgement, line 031 is followed by some information that the NS gives about herself, line 032, immediately followed by another background question about the learner's religion, line 033. The NS's explanation of her religion, line 036, is followed by the learner's request for repetition and a repetition of the explanation, lines 037-8. The negotiation then continues as the NS's insistence on an answer, lines 039-041, but the matter is not resolved.

In Katja's interaction with Maisa, an advanced learner, the learner is actively involved in marking new topics in (17) and (18) and asking questions (19). These examples are treated as task negotiation, since there is no overt indication of requests for repair from the native speaker.

**(17)** Katja (kw; NS) with Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 189 | md: | **she haven't got a baby yet** | new topic introduced |

**(18)** Katja (kw; NS) with Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 208 | md: | **that's her bed** |
| 209 | | can we do a bed for her, a nice bedroom, all right? |
| 210 | | come on, shall we? |
| 211 | | a nice, nice, nice bedroom for her |

**(19)** Katja (kw; NS) with Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 095 | md: | what's that? |
| 096 | | **what is it?** |
| 097 | | it's not good a tree |
| 098 | | **it's not good tree** |
| 099 | kw: | I made that |

In (18) Maisa carries on a monologue, suggesting play, line 209, pleading, line 210, and justifying her plea, line 211. The justification sounds like a sigh: Maisa seems to be resigned, but still hoping that she could do this wonderful thing. As seen above (chapter 4.1), the NS does not always respond to learner initiations, and in (18) there is no response. Occasionally the learner provides her own answers and repetitions when the NS does not seem to be giving any as in (19), lines 097-8. In (19), Maisa manages to get Katja's attention when she criticizes a tree used in their play. Even so she has to repeat both her original question, line 095, and her comment, line 097, before Katja responds rather abruptly that she has made it herself. Just as in her NT interaction (see above in chapter 4.1.3), Katja is drawn into responding when challenged. This places a great burden on her inter-

locutors, especially on learners, who do not have the same linguistic resources as native speakers (see the discussion in chapter 4.1.5). Maisa as an advanced learner does very well, but as was seen above, Matsumi is not as successful. If input generation requires that the NS is enticed into conversation, advanced learners have better resources and can be more actively involved in creating meaning negotiation. Beginners' attempts seem to be limited to repair negotiation.

In their NT conversation Nia and Caroline use roughly the same devices as with the advanced learner, which is to be expected: with the advanced learner the conversation resembles native talk conversations. Both girls initiate sequences that are marked by politeness, which then leads to negotiation, as in (20). They also use some repetition to insist on an answer and there are examples of decomposition being used (21).

**(20)** Nia (nl; NS) with Caroline (cw; NS)/46/F+F/game+play/in the researcher's home

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 097 | cw: | you can choose a picture | |
| 098 | | who do you want to be? | |
| 099 | nl: | whom do you want? | (5) |
| 100 | cw: | and, you can choose | [hesitating] |
| 101 | nl: | uh, Captain Cook | |
| 102 | cw: | I thought you would | |
| 103 | | I'll be Phil then | |
| 104 | nl: | * * | |

It is noticeable how finely tuned to politeness the girls are: Caroline first of all allows Nia a chance to choose her character and only then chooses her own, lines 097-8 and 103. In the meantime, Nia politely, line 099, asks who Caroline would want to be.

**(21)** Nia (nl; NS) with Caroline (cw; NS)/47/F+F/play/in the researcher's home

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 003 | nl: | fire chief | (3) |
| 004 | | I'll do the fire chief | |
| 005 | cw: | do you wanna do that? | |
| 006 | nl: | yeah, just do that | |
| 007 | | or do you want an easy one? | |
| 008 | | * * a pretty easy one | |

In (21) Nia uses a decomposition structure, lines 003-4, to announce her plans. Caroline enquires about what Nia wants to do (line 005); Nia answers the question, line 006, but then returns Caroline's politeness and asks about Caroline's preferences, line 007.

There is a lexical negotiation sequence (22) that shows how NSs, too, need to clarify meanings and that they are fine-tuned to their interlocutor's level of competence.

**(22)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Nia (nl; NS)/46/F+F/game/in the researcher's house [60, 4.1.4.3]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 155 | nl: | they call, **do you know mews?** |
| 156 | | they call them mews |
| 157 | cw: | yeah |
| 158 | nl: | right, when they are used, they are hundred years old |
| 159 | cw: | mews |
| 160 | nl: | yeah, you know, kind of house |

In this sequence Nia wants to find out whether Caroline knows the meaning of the word *mews*. Why it is necessary to explain *mews* is not clear; neither is it clear whether Caroline finally understands the meaning of the word. The girls, however, are engaged in creating a meaning together.

### 4.2.3 Repair negotiation

In L1 acquisition literature, Wells et al. (1979) for instance have paid attention to what the language learner's influence or control over the acquisition context may be. Differences in the amount of speech produced and negotiation sequences used can tell us something about the learner's participation rights and her chances to influence or even control the interaction. Moreover, side sequences can have an important function in the language learning process. According to Homewood (1979:8-9), in conversations between young children and caretakers, topically static side sequences can have a function of preparing for the acquisition of contingent query sequences. The child's use of contingent queries, e.g. in repetition of the caretaker's utterance, can direct the caretaker's attention and the conversation (see e.g. Bates et al. 1982, Garvey 1979). Side sequences and questions asked within them can be used to gain control just as the topic-nominating questions discussed above (chapter 4.1.4.4).

Even though learners can use side sequences and questions to their advantage, NSs' influence can be seen in the wide variation found in learners' participation in conversations. For instance, in the conversations with Katja and Caroline, Matsumi produces 45 words and 199 words to the native speakers' 605 and 391 words, respectively. Repair negotiation and side sequences resulting from it, which are concerned with the channel of communication rather than its content, reflect this difference. More work is needed to keep the communication channel open in a conversation where the interlocutors are not equally proficient. The proportion of all metacommunicative side sequences in the present data (including game instruction interactions) shows this: in FT 14.4 % of the utterances are metacommunicative and in NT 8.4 % (Hirvonen 1984). In addition to negotiation sequences, metacommunicative functions include, for instance, starting a new topic, functioning as silence fillers, repeating or reformulating and calling for attention (Wells 1975).

One feature in the use of side sequences in the speech of the two native speakers under discussion here, Katja and Caroline, is that the side sequences are used for fairly limited functions: confirmation, repetitions, and framing. This section of the study concentrates on repair sequences, which are one type of side sequence; decomposition and frames will be discussed under the heading of tactics (in chapter 4.3).

#### 4.2.3.1 Repair negotiation with beginners

Repair sequences are understood to be attempts at rectifying breakdowns in communication. Examples of repair negotiation incorporated in task negotiation sequences were discussed above in examples (2), (10), (11), (13),

(15) and (16). It is interesting to note that (10) represents the only repair sequence initiated by the learner in Katja's conversation with Matsumi. This indicates how minimal the learner's participation in this interaction is. Most learners use the possibility of requesting repetitions and other repairs much more frequently.

Caroline's use of side sequences shows a more varied pattern than Katja's. This, however, does not explain the fact that with Caroline Matsumi produces nearly one third of the speech whereas with Katja her speech represents less than one tenth of all speech produced. It is, however, one sign among the many showing the same tendency: Caroline gives the learner space and supports the learner's initiatives, whereas Katja mainly frames sequences (see in 4.3.2 below). Without any real negotiation within sequences, frames are not enough to allow the learner the same kind of space as she is allowed with Caroline.

When considering the differences between Katja and Caroline, it would be easy to draw the conclusion that Caroline is, simply, a nice, friendly person, as reflected in her discourse, and Katja is not. In fact, no such difference could be found between the two girls: they were both friendly, outgoing and well-mannered, and willing to play with the learners. Therefore, any explanation of the differences in their discourse based on character differences has to be ruled out, especially since such differences, if there were any, could only be stated impressionistically without testing the subjects for certain personality traits. There is, however, research that indicates that personality differences can be used to explain differences between NSs in their FT encounters. Derwing (1991b:15-7) reports that in a narrative task those NSs who were in a high interpersonal affect/social participation group used significantly more high frequency vocabulary when explaining the plot of a film to NNSs, and they also used slower speech rates. There were no significant differences in overall communicative success or usage of conversational adjustments.

Most of the repair negotiation sequences conform to the prototype of the repair sequences shown below. In such a sequence speaker A's utterance, for instance a question, is not answered immediately. The response is deferred until a metacommunicative problem disturbing communication is cleared up in a side sequence (B: request for clarification, A: clarification given). Only after that can B give her response to A's original utterance.

speaker A: utterance which requires a pair
*B: request for clarification*
*A: clarification*
speaker B: utterance in response to A's original utterance.

An example of a prototypical repair sequence is given in (23):

**(23)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 206 | cw: | Matsumi, your house gonna be big? | | | | **A** |
| | | | 207 | mt: | **wha'?** | **B** |
| | | | 208 | cw: | **your house gonna be BIG?** | **A** |
| 209 | mt: | yes | | | | **B** |

Caroline asks a question, which Matsumi does not understand immediately. She requests clarification, line 207, and responds, line 209, after receiving it, line 208.

Not all the repair sequences show such a clear pattern. The answer can finally be given non-verbally after a longer side sequence of, for instance, repetition - confirmation - specifying. For other reasons, as in (13) above, it may be difficult to determine whether the metacommunicative side sequence has helped the learner to understand what she wanted to be repeated.

A speaker may request clarification by wanting to confirm her own comprehension. Caroline uses this confirmation function in her repair sequences, eg. in (24) and (25).

**(24)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 102 | cw: | oh dear, good, I thought it was wrong | | | |
| 103 | mt: | **no** | | | |
| | | | 104 | cw: | **what?** |
| | | | 105 | mt: | **no** |
| | | | 106 | cw: | **it's not?** |
| | | | 107 | mt: | **no, no, no, no, no** |
| 108 | cw: | what is it then? | | | |

**(25)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 138 | cw: | come on, read this, read this | | | |
| 139 | mt: | no, no, hard | | | |
| | | | 140 | cw: | **hard?** confirmation |
| | | | 141 | mt: | **hard, yeah** |
| | | | 142 | cw: | hard, is it? tutorial? |
| | | | 143 | | hard? (5) |

To what extent in these types of repair sequences the speaker is concerned with the channel of communication only, and to what extent with the content, is difficult to decide. For instance, in (24) Caroline's *It's not?*, line 106, seems to express incredulity and uncertainty in addition to functioning as confirmation. In (25) *Hard?*, line 140, asks for confirmation, whereas *Hard, is it? Hard?*, lines 142-3, looks more like Caroline's tutorials than an actual side sequence, since Matsumi's *Hard, yeah,* line 141, clearly gives the confirmation requested.

In beginner FT, it seems to be the NS who mostly initiates repair negotiation. There are, however, clear differences between Caroline and Katja in their use of repair negotiation with beginners: Caroline employs this support tactic much more than Katja. This is one more indication of the differences between the two NSs in their approaches to the same FT situation.

#### 4.2.3.2 Repair negotiation with advanced learners

With advanced learners NSs can expect much more co-operation from their interlocutors in repair negotiations, and usually also receive it. There are sequences where both the NS and the learner make an effort to understand

what the other is saying. Both speakers make use of side sequences within such a negotiation sequence in (26).

**(26)** Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 060 | nl: | do you like your school? | | | |
| | | | 061 | mk: | **eh?** |
| | | | 062 | nl: | do you like school? |
| 063 | mk: | yes (3) you like it? | | | |
| 064 | nl: | it's all right (2) | | | |
| 065 | mk: | what school are you in? | | | |
| 066 | nl: | a Welsh one | | | |
| 067 | mk: | why in Welsh one? | | | |
| | | | 068 | nl: | **pardon?** |
| | | | 069 | mk: | n::othing (5) |
| 070 | nl: | these windows (3) | | | |
| 071 | mk: | who teach your English? | | | |
| 072 | nl: | well, my mum and dad did | | | |
| | | | 073 | mk: | **teach your English?** |
| | | | 074 | nl: | yeah well I learn English, you know, in school as well |
| | | | 075 | mk: | **learn English in school?** Welsh... |
| | | | 076 | nl: | Welsh in sc, well, you see I know English, Welsh and English |
| | | | 077 | | we don't really learn it, you know, we do things about it (2) |
| | | | 078 | | you know, when we have a story, we have a Welsh one, sometimes, sometimes an English one (8) |

The learner requests repetition, line 061, and so does the NS, line 068. The learner asks for confirmation, lines 073 and 075, and receives a lengthy answer, with which she seems to be satisfied, since after line 078 the learner's attention turns to the play activity and a new topic. It can also be pointed out that, in addition to being an active negotiator herself, the learner can participate in building the conversation in her responses and initiations along with the NS. In the present sequence she can both respond to the NS's question, line 063, after the intervening side sequence, and after a pause reciprocates by asking the NS whether she likes her school. After the NS's answer, line 064, she continues by asking a further question, line 065. In this instance, it is the learner's questions that determine the direction that the sequence takes.

Mei Kien is also involved in side sequences with Caroline, as in (27), by requesting repetitions, line 076:

**(27)** Caroline (cw; NS) with Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 075 | cw: | did you see that bit where they cut one of the sharks open? | | | |
| | | | 076 | mk: | **eh?** |
| | | | 077 | cw: | did you see when they cut the shark open? [slow] |
| 078 | mk: | yes | | | |

With the advanced learners Katja's use of meta-communicative side sequences approaches that found in NT. She requests repetition (28), line 116, and wants the learner to specify her information (29), line 166:

**(28)** Katja (kw; NS) with Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house
115 md: look my house, Katja
116 kw: **what?** request for repetition
117 md: look my house

**(29)** Katja (kw; NS) with Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house
164 kw: these are her wedding shoes
165 md: uh uh, where is it?
166 kw: **what?** request to specify
167 md: where's her husband?

Further examples of negotiation sequences with advanced learners will be analysed in connection with the discussion on participants' roles in interaction (chapter 4.2.4 below).

#### 4.2.3.3 Repair negotiation in native talk

The uses of metacommunicative side sequences between NT samples varies to a degree: Caroline, who uses repairs to further the conversation in her FT, hardly needs to use this device in her conversation with Nia, while her conversation with Katja includes several examples of side sequences. Katja's conversation with Simon (game instruction interaction) includes several side sequences. Therefore it seems that Katja is willing to use side sequences in her conversation with other native speakers, although this tactic is not employed in her interaction with Caroline.

Katja uses requests for repetition, as in (30), line 073, and, especially in her conversation with Caroline, requests to specify, as in (31), line 112.

**(30)** Katja (kw; NS) with Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
072 cw: when you put your baby to sleep, do you put that nightie on her?
073 kw: **what?** request for repetition
074 kw: yes

**(31)** Katja (kw; NS) with Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
111 cw: do you ever change her [the doll] nappy?
112 kw: **whose nappy?** request to specify
113 cw: that baby's nappy?
114 kw: yep, use the same one again, 'cause I have I've only got one

In (30) Katja requests repetition and almost immediately, as often happens in conversation, comprehends what was said before her interlocutor has time to react to the request. This is shown by the fact that she answers the question herself, line 074, and the question expressed is left without its expected pair. The repair sequence, therefore, looks incomplete but in fact is not. Katja implicitly lets her interlocutor know that she had heard and understood what was said. Neither is it impolite for Caroline not to answer this type of request, since the answer is not expected any more and, if given, it would repeat something that the interlocutor clearly had both heard and understood.

Although Katja's conversation with NSs may at times have the same air of off-handedness and brusque manner as with learners, it is clear that there is a qualitative difference between these two situations: it is more

likely that with a learner she will merely frame sequences and carry on with the conversation without showing any willingness to deal with the fine detail of the trouble spots, while with another NS she is happy to clarify and specify, which shows that she has the required skills.

Caroline's and Nia's NT conversation is characterized by polite task negotiation. Repair negotiation does not seem to be needed between these two girls, whereas there are some other NT conversations where repairs are more frequent. In Sanjay's and Anthony's conversation (interaction 38), especially Sanjay uses task negotiation to request explanations (see also chapter 4.1.3 on NT initiations and responses). At the same time, there is more repair negotiation initiated by both speakers than between Nia and Caroline, as in (32).

**(32)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 208 | at: | did you know we're being recorded? | | | | |
| | | | 209 | sh: | **wha'?** | request for repetition |
| | | | 210 | at: | we're being recorded by that (4) | |
| 211 | sh: | **eh?** | | | | |
| 212 | | **what's that, * alarm?** | | | | |
| 213 | at: | no, it's not an alarm, just a red light flashing | | | | |

In (32) Sanjay needs to request for repetition, line 209, and he also asks for an explanation of a red light flashing on the tape recorder. Sanjay's *Eh?*, line 211, does not seem to be related to the repair sequence preceding it. Instead, it may be a frame for his subsequent question about the light.

In their conversation both Anthony and Sanjay initiate repair sequences, whereas between Farah and Barry (interaction 13) such repairs are used mainly by Barry as in (33).

**(33)** Farah (NS) and Barry (NS)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 033 | bb: | what are you doing? | | | | |
| 034 | fa: | we're doing animals | | | | |
| | | | 035 | bb: | **eh?** | request for repetition |
| | | | 036 | fa: | animals | |
| | | | 037 | bb: | **animals?** | confirming own comprehension |
| | | | 038 | fa: | yeah | |

Barry requests repetition, line 035, and immediately after receiving an elliptical repetition of what Farah thinks was the problem in communication (the word *animals*, line 036), he wants to confirm his own comprehension, line 037.

The NT conversations show both inter-speaker and intra-speaker variation in the use of repair negotiations, depending on the context. In light of this, the variation found in the FT conversations is not unexpected. The speakers vary the use of negotiation according to both interlocutor and discourse context (NT/FT).

### 4.2.4 The learner, the enabler and their roles

Leaving aside the kind of meaning negotiation where two native speakers negotiate in a symmetric situation, both being "knowers", we can consider the interlocutors in an asymmetric negotiation situation to be a non-knower and a knower, ie., learner and NS. As conversational partners, the native speaker and the learner share the goal of advancing the meaning negotiation and reaching an acceptable conclusion. In addition, the speakers have their own roles. According to Wong Fillmore (1989a), the native speaker provides access to the learner, motivation for learning, and assistance. She has to know the language well enough to be able to give access. Where native speakers vary is in their willingness to provide assistance, and this results in great differences in their behaviour. The native speaker can modify her language to the learner so as to act as an enabler or react when there are comprehension problems (Bremer et al. 1996:21). The result may be quite different if the native speaker chooses either to modify or react to problems, or neither. The learner, in relation to the NS, has the responsibility of letting the native speaker know about the problems experienced and try to use the native speaker's contribution (words or expressions) in building up her own (Bremer et al. 1996:21; see also Bremer and Simonot 1988). The learner's contribution to variation results from what the learner does with the material that she has to work with (Wong Fillmore 1989a). The learner as well as the NS may have other roles outside their learner and NS roles: children as schoolmate and playmate, adults as customer, employer, employee, and so on. In the present data, the interactants can be considered primarily in their learner and NS roles: the NSs in the NS-NNS interactions were aware of the fact that they were there to play with a learner and the learners were aware of being learners.

If neither the native speaker nor the learner fulfills their role expectations, we can say that they have failed their responsibilities in furthering the conversation and reaching a negotiated outcome. There may be several reasons for this, but simply the fact that the speakers in a NS-NNS situation come from different cultures can influence the conversation: they may have different views of what is an acceptable outcome and an acceptable contribution from partners in an asymmetric situation. In some cultures children may be expected to be quiet as a sign of respect, whereas in others speaking is valued (Andersen 1990:33). It is not, however, clear to what extent such considerations affect children.

The following examples of negotiation sequences will be analysed from the point of view of the speaker roles outlined above. The aim is to see how NSs and learners realise these roles and how willing they are to negotiate. FT with advanced learners will be discussed first, because it offers more involved sequences for analysis.

The stretch of conversation in (34) between Caroline and Mei Kien takes place at the beginning of their interaction. Their discussion shows how inquisitive and alert the learner is, which becomes evident also linguis-tically in the course of the conversation. Facts are established, and

common meanings reached, despite difficulties. Both the NS and the learner persist in clearing trouble spots, the learner by insisting on getting answers, and the NS by trying to understand. Since neither is willing to drop a topic once it is begun, agreement and comprehension are reached on every topic. It is evident that the girls take each other seriously as conversational partners. The sequence starts with an extended negotiation about the context of the recording session and can be divided into three topical sequences: the landlady, the ownership of the house together with the researcher's name, and the number of bedrooms in the house.

**(34)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/game/in the researcher's house [69 and 70, 4.1.4.4; 4, 4.2.1]

001 cw: do you like it here in this house? (3)
002 she's got a nice house, hasn't she? (2)
003 do you think she lives here?
004 mk: what's that woman that lady?

005 cw: I think it's her landlady (1)
006 mk: what landlady?
007 cw: la landlady, looks after the house
008 mk: where?
009 cw: you know, does all the tidying

010 mk: this th this house is who? (2)
011 what that girl name that lady name?
012 cw: Tuula
013 cw: lady near the room?
014 the lady who just come in?
015 Tuula
016 mk: Tuula
017 cw: nice, wow, nice name, isn't it?
018 mk: that house is *, is it? (2)
019 cw: pardon?
020 mk: what that her name again?
021 cw: eh?
022 mk: what that her ...
023 cw: eh, what's the lady's name again?
024 mk: yeah
025 cw: Tuula
026 mk: Tuula
027 cw: yeah (3)
028 mk: this house is Tuula house, is it?
029 cw: yes (4)

030 mk: how much bedroom has she got?
031 cw: how much bathroom?
032 mk: yeah
033 cw: bathroom?
034 mk: bedroom
035 cw: bedroom?
036 mk: yeah
037 cw: this is her bedroom, I don't know how many others she's got
038 mk: I think she two
039 cw: two? (4)
040 cw: I think she's got two as well

041 mk: she got two *
042 cw: yes, she has one two, they're small, aren't they? (11)

The stages of the negotiation can be outlined as follows:
**(1) lines 001-009**: The NS tries to initiate the sequence, although the learner nominates the actual topic on the identity of the woman seen in the hallway. There is a repair negotiation on the sense of the word *landlady*. The NS's three initial questions, lines 001-3, refer to the learner's opinions, but she does not answer any of them. They, however, lead to the learner's question, line 004, about the identity of the woman she has seen elsewhere in the house. The NS understands the reference immediately and answers that the woman is the landlady, line 005. The learner does not understand what *landlady* means, and this leads to negotiation as to the sense of this word, lines 006-9. The negotiation is resolved: no more questions are answered, and it can be assumed that the learner is satisfied with the explanation she receives.
**(2) lines 010-029**: The learner initiates a new topic, which is the ownership of the house. The researcher's name is negotiated in the side sequence. The learner asks whose house they are in, line 010, but because she does not remember the researcher's name, she asks the NS to give her the name, line 011. The NS answers, line 012, but immediately she feels that she has to establish first who the learner means, and this leads to repair negotiation, lines 013-016. She checks her own comprehension, lines 013-4, repeats the name, and the learner repeats it confirming that she has understood, line 016. After the NS's comment on the name, line 017, the original question is returned to, line 018. Since this is not clear to the NS, as it is not clear in the recording either, she asks for repetition, line 019, and another round of repair negotiation on the name follows, lines 020-7, until the original question is repeated, line 028, and answered, line 029.
**(3) lines 030-042**: The learner initiates a new topic on the number of bedrooms in the house. Again, there are repair sequences to clarify the eventual answer. The learner asks a question on how many bedrooms there are, line 030, the NS mishears this but does not trust what she hears and asks for confirmation, line 031, starting a repair sequence. She receives the confirmation, line 032 but being still incredulous requests confirmation again, line 033. After the learner repeats herself clearly, line 034, and this information is confirmed, lines 035-6, the original question is returned to. The NS gives her answer, line 037, which is not definite, and the learner gives her suggestion, line 038. In a sense the learner answers her own question, and this answer is confirmed by the NS, lines 039-040, repeated by the learner, line 041, and again confirmed by the NS, line 042.

In this interaction, both speakers are responsible for their success in communication. Caroline does everything to try to understand what the learner says and is willing to assist Mei Kien in finding answers to her questions through the complicated repair sequences. Caroline, then, orients herself towards the learner and fulfils the role expectations of a NS in this interaction. Mei Kien, for her part, fulfills a learner's role expectations in that she lets Caroline know about her problems in comprehension and uses the assistance given to her to reformulate the trouble source. Both girls are

willing to try and neither gives up at any point. Other examples discussed above (see eg. (23) in 4.2.3.1 above) confirm Caroline's willingness to negotiate and to accept the learner's efforts as valuable contributions towards the creation of common meaning.

Bremer and Simonot (1988:251) identify three aspects of success in negotiation: negotiation has been successful when there is agreement on the interpretation of the point being discussed and when negotiation is as little disruptive as possible. Speed of resolution is important here: short side-sequences (negotiation sequences) disrupt less than long ones. Cooperation speeds up the proceedings and minimizes the threat to face, which secures success on an interpersonal level. In children's conversations, success may also have a dimension of play success. Furthermore, speed may not play the same role in children's conversations as it does in the types of official encounters that adults have to deal with. The example above shows lengthy negotiation sequences that are easily integrated into the conversation with minimal disruption.

Katja's conversation with Maisa provides different kinds of examples of negotiation achieved and not achieved between the interlocutors. In (35) there is a sequence initiated by the NS, the topic being the kinds of Lego pieces needed for the Lego construction. The sequence does not develop into what is here called negotiation; rather, it retains the character of parallel conversation, in which the learner's questions are not answered or are answered belatedly (and impatiently):

**(35)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md;aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house [98, 4.3.4]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 009 | kw: | another layer we need, we'll have to do a multi-coloured layer on the top | |
| 010 | md: | where the door then? | |
| 011 | kw: | we're not having a door!! [shouts] | |
| 012 | md: | what's that? | |
| 013 | | what is it? | no answer |
| 014 | kw: | **have to have a multi-coloured house now, put all the colours on there** | |
| 015 | md: | oh, can we put there blues? | no answer |
| 016 | kw: | **we need two squares now** | |
| 017 | md: | what what colour? | no answer |
| 018 | kw: | **one square now** | |
| 019 | md: | what colour? | |
| 020 | kw: | any colour [impatient] | |
| 021 | md: | blue I find | |
| 022 | kw: | right, now /watch now/ | |
| 023 | md: | /we haven't/ she put many of them * here, I don't know (1) no she haven't got | |
| 024 | | look, now I find that | |
| (break) | | | |
| 030 | kw: | can you find ummmmm one like that the two on there now? | |
| 031 | md: | yes | |
| 032 | kw: | oh, I think so, no I haven't found the right one | |
| 033 | md: | three or two? | |
| 034 | kw: | two, please | |
| 035 | | I found the one | |
| 036 | md: | that yellow one's better | |
| 037 | kw: | no, all right then | |
| 038 | md: | yellow | |
| 039 | kw: | let's have red there | |

040 md: what colour?
041 that's red on yellow too
042 kw: **no, we don't need those**
043 md: what colour? blue?
044 kw: **no** it's OK now, we're all set

This example illustrates Katja's approach to meaning negotiation in many ways: on lines 014, 016 and 018 she carries on her own conversation, parallel to what the learner is trying to say. The learner is also carrying on her own conversation without regard to what the NS is doing, but later in this example, and elsewhere in the interaction, there are many indicators that the learner usually tries to accommodate to what the NS does, rather than the other way around. Moreover, the learner picks up the NS's topic on line 015, where she starts talking about colours instead of the door she talked about before. The NS, however, does not respond to the question of the colour and changes her topic to talk about Lego shapes, line 016. The learner obviously finds it difficult to switch to a new topic so quickly and repeats her question about the colour required, line 017. The NS's answer *any colour*, line 020, is impatient and she carries on with her own activity, line 022, even though the learner acknowledges the answer by telling her what colour she found, line 021. From line 030 on, the conversation takes on the character of a negotiation, but it still retains the quality of rejection, especially towards the end, lines 042 and 044, where the NS does not accept the learner's suggestions and makes her own decisions about their play.

The roles of the learner and the NS are not so well realised in this interaction as they are in (34) above. The NS does not assist the learner and does not accept her topics as to be either negotiated or discussed. Katja's willingness to take her interlocutor into account is not at all on the same level as Caroline's. The learner has to accommodate to the NS's topics and in this way the NS retains control of the interaction. There are no communication problems to rectify in this sequence, and therefore the learner does not need to let the NS know about any problems. The topic of this interaction is the activity at hand, and this may limit the need for negotiation. Katja's interactions are almost monotopical in the sense that she hardly talks about anything else but the task with the learners she interacts with, and it is probably her choice to an extent. This may also indicate something about her willingness to get involved in the interaction. Other NSs, who are willing to explore different topics, may also be more willing to take the learner into account. It has become evident elsewhere that Katja can be drawn into conversation where the topics are more challenging (see eg. (35) in 4.1.3 above) and that Katja is willing to negotiate about something she finds important (see (3) in section 4.2.1 above).

In another negotiation sequence, example (36), Mei Kien, who was also involved in intricate negotiations in (34) above, takes the role of the negotiator and modifies her speech in ways in which a NS would be expected to do. She uses the tactic of decomposition and elaborates and confirms what the NS has said.

(36) Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

144 mk: when you go to sleep, and you take your doll in the bed?
145 nl: pardon?
146 mk: uh, when you go to sleep?
147 nl: yeah
148 mk: you take your doll in the bed, eh?
149 nl: sometime
150 mk: sometime, not every day, not every night time
151 nl: no

Mei Kien starts the sequence by asking Nia whether she takes her doll to bed with her at night, line 144. It may not be clear to Nia that this was intended as a question and she requests clarification, line 145. Slightly hesitating, Mei Kien takes her question apart, repeating the first part, line 146, and after receiving acknowledgement of comprehension from Nia, line 147, she repeats her question adding *eh?* as a marker of a question. Nia answers the question, line 149. Mei Kien wants to confirm her own comprehension but she also elaborates by glossing the meaning of *sometime* as she understands it. The NS then acknowledges her confirmation and, at the same time, her gloss, line 151. Although it is the learner who carries the main burden of negotiating in this instance, there is no indication that the NS would be unwilling to help her. She seems to accept the role reversal and performs her share of the role assigned to her by the learner.

Further examples of role shifts in Mei Kien's interactions are shown below (37)-(39). She talks a great deal and her NS interlocutors often request clarification, which results in learner repetitions. This can be seen in (37), a typical sequence of repairs, where the learner incorporates both her own and her interlocutor's phrases in her repeats. The NS's request for clarification is realised as *Pardon?* in this sequence (eg. line 185) as elsewhere in the interaction (eg. in (38) and (39) below).

(37) Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

184 mk: how much money you buy? [doll]
185 nl: pardon?
186 mk: **how much money you buy that doll?**
187 nl: twelve pounds
188 mk: **twelve** request for confirmation?
189 nl: yeah
190 mk: that's lot of money
191 nl: yeah, I had it for Christmas (2) Christmas
192 mk: you had **in the Christmas?** request for confirmation
193 nl: yeah
194 nl: what did you have for Christmas?
195 mk: a doll, no, a Cindy, no its', it's a small one
196 nl: small Cindy, oh I got one of them
197 mk: h... you had to buy the dress for him (3) yes?
198 nl: yeah, dress, **you had to buy the dress**

Mei Kien wants to know how much Nia's doll has cost, line 184. Nia requests clarification, line 185, and Mei Kien repeats her question specifying her reference, line 186. After receiving an answer, line 187, she either

acknowledges it or requests confirmation, line 188. Mei Kien uses no discernible rising intonation, but Nia confirms with *Yeah*, line 189. This and Mei Kien's subsequent comment on the price seem to indicate that the repeat is a request for confirmation rather than a mere acknowledgment. Nia acknowledges the expensiveness of the doll and explains that it was a Christmas present, line 191. Mei Kien again requests confirmation, line 192 by trying to repeat Nia's utterance, but changes some of it (*in the Christmas* pro *for Christmas)*. After Nia's confirmation the discussion continues on the topic of Christmas presents. There is slight hesitation when Nia does not answer Mei Kien's question, line 197, before Mei Kien prompts Nia to respond by marking it as a question with *yes?*. Nia then incorporates a repetition of Mei Kien's question in her answer, line 198. There is an almost native-like manner in this sequence in that the same topic is retained as a longer initiation - response - initiation sequence, lines 194-8.

A few times in this interaction the NS requests repetition, when the learner's utterance is quite clear. However, the girls are engaged in play and the NS may be involved in something to the extent that she does not pay attention to what her interlocutor is doing and, therefore needs to request clarification. The learner does not want to repeat her question and drops the topic, as in the following.

**(38)** Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

100 mk: hey, what's that thing?
101 nl: **pardon?**
102 mk: **you don't know**

**(39)** Nia (nl; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/48/F+F/play/in the researcher's house

015 mk: look at that man's face
016 nl: **pardon?**
017 mk: **nothing**

In (38) Mei Kien does not repeat her question. Her answer, line 102, to the NS's request for clarification seems to indicate that she may think that the NS does not have any more knowledge than she has in the matter and simply tries to avoid the issue, line 101. In (39), line 017, she also indicates that she wants to drop the topic.

Above, the NS acts as a sounding board for the learner's attempts. In (40) the NS does the negotiating on her own terms, which results in parallel interaction.

**(40)** Christine (cc; NS) and Mona (ma; aL) /15/F+F/play with Lego/at school

010 cc: where's the door gonna be?
011 ma: door? request for confirmation
012 cc: oh I know where how to fix the door
013 there's the door
014 ma: oh here, the door (7)
015 wait a minute
016 cc: oh, Mona, come on, that's the door
017 ma: wait a minute repetition
018 cc: I'll put the trees on, all right?
019 I'll do the garden, you'll do the house, all right?

The NS introduces the topic, line 010, and this topic is then negotiated (task negotiation). The learner's request for confirmation, line 011, is not acknowledged, neither is there any reaction to her requests *Wait a minute*, lines 015 and 017. Moreover, the NS does not accept the learner's suggestion about a door, line 014, corrects her, line 016, and continues by telling the learner what her plans are: she will do the garden and the learner the house, lines 018-019. The suggestions are framed by a tag *all right?* but receive no reply from the learner.

Although it is assumed that interlocutors usually find themselves in a fairly balanced situation in NT interactions, it was seen above that this is not always the case. One NS, Anthony, controls his NT interaction with Sanjay to a large extent, since Sanjay nominates topics with questions that give more control to the other speaker. Sanjay refers to Anthony's knowledge and approval in a way that shows him to be in the position of a learner (see eg. (44) in chapter 4.1.3). Both in task and repair negotiation Sanjay also behaves more like a compliant learner, not like a knower, which is the role assigned to Anthony, as seen in (41) and (42).

**(41)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school [45, 4.1.3; 87, 4.3.3.4]]

166 sh: why we came down here?

167 at: **eh?** request for repetition

168 **why we come down here?** request for confirmation

169 sh: yeah

170 at: I told you, 'cause the girl is studying, people

**(42)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school

005 sh: shall we play Lego?
006 at: lots and lots of Lego
007 sh: let's play that
008 at: no, let's find something else

Repair negotiation similar to that in FT interactions occurs in (41), where Sanjay expects Anthony to have an explanation regarding the recording session. Sanjay's question, line 166, is not clear to Anthony, who requests repetition, line 167, and confirmation, line 168. He answers Sanjay's question, line 170, after receiving confirmation, line 169. In (42) Sanjay makes a suggestion about play, line 005, and repeats it, line 007. Anthony, however, has decided that he wants to do something else and is not willing to negotiate over Sanjay's suggestion, line 008.

The examples above show the types of enabler-learner role relationships that can develop between the interlocutors in a FT situation and also in NT. The NS's attitude and orientation towards the learner and the task at hand are reflected in the NS roles. In the present data it can be seen that NSs approach their interactions in different ways both from the point of view of the task and that of their personal involvement (Tannen 1984, House 1996a). The interlocutors' roles are negotiable in that in FT either the NS or the learner (Mei Kien) can become the negotiator/enabler, and in NT one speaker may be assigned or will herself take a role similar to that of the learner (Sanjay). The role of an equal participant can be

negotiated to both interlocutors, as Caroline does in (43), where meaning negotiation starts when the learner gives a string of contradictory answers.

**(43)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 098 | cw: | oh dear! that's right, Matsumi? | | | |
| 099 | mt: | (Japanese) | | | |
| 100 | | no, yeah yeah | | | |
| 101 | cw: | oh dear, good, I thought it was wrong | | | |
| 102 | mt: | no | | | |
| | | | 103 | cw: | what? |
| | | | 104 | mt: | no |
| | | | 105 | cw: | it's not? |
| | | | 106 | mt: | nononono |
| 107 | cw: | what is it /then/? | | | |
| 108 | mt: | /nono/ nono | | | |
| 109 | cw: | nononononono [continues as sound play] | | | |

Caroline solicits Matsumi's opinion on some point of the activity, line 098, and expresses satisfaction when Matsumi seems to think that what she did was right, line 101. Matsumi, however, changes her response from affirmative to negative, line 102. Caroline wants to make sure that she has understood correctly, and requests repetition, line 103, and confirmation, line 105. Finally satisfied that this is what Matsumi means, she wants an explanation, referring to the learner's opinion as an equal, line 107. Matsumi only repeats her negative answer, line 108, which repeated by Caroline turns into a sound play sequence. The starting point is forgotten and the question left unresolved, which does not seem to bother either speaker at this point. What seems to be achieved here is both speakers' equal participation in the interaction. When the learner's contributions are as minimal as they are here, it seems that the NS has the power to make the decision whether to start negotiating or not. Here, instead of changing the topic after line 102, Caroline decides to negotiate, perhaps because for her it is more important to keep the interaction going than to achieve a given task.

In addition to negotiating their roles, the speakers can assume certain postures in the interaction. The present subjects seem to orient themselves either to the task given to them (self-orientation including task orientation) or interpersonally to their interlocutors (other-orientation). Of the NSs in question, Caroline and Katja again seem to show the more extreme behaviours in this respect: Caroline is more interpersonally oriented than Katja, which results in more elaborated meaning negotiation with the learner, although there is no *a priori* reason why negotiating about the task should not involve meaning negotiation. In several interactions there are indications of NS's task orientation which does not manifest itself as extreme self-orientation. Rather, task orientation can be found in comments whereby the NS wants to direct the learner's attention back to the task and in this way involves the learner as well. For instance, Nia wants Mei Kien to concentrate on Lego instead of exploring the house and several times calls Mei Kien back (eg., *Come and play Lego,* line 216). Katja's orientation to the task, however, seems to exclude the need to take negotiation seriously.

This, together with rejections and somewhat abrupt behaviour, results in an atmosphere that does not seem to be as congenial as that created by Caroline. As seen above (chapter 4.1.4.4), Caroline is willing to accept almost any contribution from the learner, also in another language, as a contribution towards developing the interaction. An example of such acceptance can be found in (44).

**(44)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/45/F+F/play/in the researcher's house
046 mk: what's that girl name who came in?
047 cw: I don't know: Nia, something like that
048 mk: Mira?
049 cw: Mira, yeah, something like that

Caroline and Mei Kien are discussing another subject's name. Caroline answers the learner's question about Nia's name, line 047. When Mei Kien probably mishears the name and repeats it as *Mira*, line 048, Caroline accepts her suggestion, line 049. She hedges her own answer with *I don't know*, and may even be uncertain herself about the name. This, however, would not necessarily deter her from trying to show the learner that she has the answer and even correcting the learner's version of the name. Caroline's orientation towards the learner is similar to the tactic of accepting sudden topic switches from learners (Long 1983). Saving her interlocutor's face may be Caroline's motive in accepting the learner's version of the name (see eg. Piirainen-Marsh 1995).

Another aspect of the roles that speakers can take is involvement (Tannen 1984, 1989). Indications of the native speaker's attitude towards her involvement can be found in the NS's own speech. In Katja's conversation with Matsumi (bL), it becomes apparent that Katja is not involved. In (45) it can be seen how Katja, early in the conversation, shows her detachment.

**(45)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house
010 kw: now, this girl here (5) yes? (10)
011 ah, no no no (rejects something) (10)
012 no no no uh uh now **what am I going to do?** (5) uh yes, no

The extract is characterised by long pauses and a rejection of either the learner's non-verbal suggestion or offer or the NS's own plans, line 011. Finally, the NS almost speaks to herself, excluding the learner by using the first person singular pronoun *I* instead of *we*, line 012, possibly reflecting what House (1993:168) calls "the individual-I point" instead of "the collective-we direction/purpose of the encounter." There is a perfunctory reference to the learner's presence in *yes?*, line 010, but the learner is not encouraged in any way. Later in the interaction there are similar examples of the use of personal pronouns (eg. ***I'll put all others * back,/*** interaction 8/line 064). In addition to showing detachment, it does not seem polite, even in children's conversations, to exclude the interlocutor in this manner. In the same conversation, Katja, by saying *choose something,* ***I'll sit here*** (line 068), places herself outside the situation, as an observer, while Matsumi performs the task requested of her.

### 4.2.5 Summary

In this chapter, meaning negotiation processes have been discussed as they are used to reach a common understanding in communication, either when repairing communication breakdowns or when negotiating about the task at hand. Both types of meaning negotiation have been analyzed in FT and NT interactions.

The NS subjects exhibit different approaches to FT discourse depending on the learner's proficiency level and on the content of the negotiation. The NS can mainly orient herself towards the task at hand, as Katja does, which often results in short negotiations, or efforts to negotiate about activities. The NS can also avoid negotiations by not accepting the learner's topics. On the other hand, in task negotiations the NS can also show interpersonal orientation, like Caroline, which results in longer and more involved negotiation sequences. Task negotiations with advanced learners are much like negotiations in NT.

In repair negotiation sequences different patterns of initiation and responses can be found, depending on the learner's proficiency level. In beginner FT, repairs are mostly initiated by NS, although some NSs use repair negotiation tactics frequently whereas others use hardly any at all. Even a NS like Katja, who hardly uses repair sequences in beginner FT, uses these repair side sequences in advanced FT in ways similar to her uses of them in NT. In NT, negotiation often deals with more specific repair issues, eg. on specifying, although less complex repetition is also found. Some NT negotiations are characterized by overt politeness, not found in FT negotiations.

In FT interactions, the roles that the interactants have are neither immutable nor predetermined by the fact that they are, by definition, NS and learner/NNS. Depending for instance on the speakers' individual characteristics, cultural expectations, self-assurance or insecurity, and expert roles assigned to the interactants, their roles can change, and in general are negotiable. The topic under discussion and the expert role which confers authority will have especial relevance to the interlocutors' participation patterns (see eg. Woken and Swales 1989, Zuengler 1989 and 1993). In the present data, no expert roles were assigned to the children in the free play situation, and it is clear that also in child-child interactions of the type exemplified here the knower role is negotiable: the NS can assign it even to a complete beginner by expecting her to make decisions, as Caroline does, or the roles can be reversed in cases where the learner is a good negotiator, as in Mei Kien's interactions. Moreover, a NS can assign the knower role to another NS, as Sanjay does. It seems, however, that the NSs exhibit individual differences in their expectations towards the learner's taking the negotiator role: those who are more open in other ways can accept role reversals.

For the interaction to work at any level the interactants have to take responsibility for their share. If there are problems that might prevent the smooth progress of communication, the learner has to give enough information about the problem to the NS for the NS to know what is expected of her, for instance what modifications to use. It is important that

the NS can act on correct and adequate information and is not led to make (wrong) assumptions. It may be that situations where the NS seems to dominate and make decisions on her own, without referring to the learner, may in fact be situations where she is forced to act in this manner, since she has not been given correct and adequate information about the problem. The NS then has the responsibility to support the learner, and the learner the further responsibility to use the help provided. This may require the negotiation of comity, ie. "convergence of participants' worlds in affective terms" (Aston 1993:226). Aston argues that for learner discourse to succeed certain comity strategies are required, eg. the learner should admit incompetence, appreciate benevolence, and distance herself from the stereotypes of her culture.

The present data show clear differences in one of the factors that has an influence in how the interactants fulfil their role expectations. This factor is the speakers' willingness to engage in encounters that require meaning negotiation. If the NS does not want to negotiate or take the learner's viewpoint into account, negotiation will not take place, as often happens in Katja's interactions. The NS's willingness to help manifests itself in making an effort in the conversation and in every way sustaining contact and keeping the interaction going. Moreover, according to Wong Fillmore (1989a:291), the native speaker has to be sensitive, ie. feel the learner's needs in order to provide assistance, and cooperative, ie. make the most of learner efforts. Variation in native speakers, both children and adults, in these characteristics affects the discourse that the learner is exposed to and the quality and quantity of support given.

The interlocutors' different linguistic competence, role as an expert and interactional roles are all aspects of asymmetry, which in its turn can reflect the power relations between the interactants. Power can be negotiated by questioning the authority of those using power, and there is also negative power: the learner, for instance, may use her power by refusing to participate, as Matsumi does to an extent. It seems, however, that the interactional roles assumed by the speakers are the most important factor defining the character of the interaction unfolding in the present data. As was discussed above, in the free play encounters the speakers do not hold any expert roles, and their roles are negotiable. To an extent also the task is negotiable, since the general instruction given to the children was to play using the materials at hand. The role of an equal participant can be negotiated in favour of both interlocutors. Moreover, the learner can be assigned the knower role and roles can be reversed as happens in Nia's and Mei Kien's conversation, where the learner becomes the primary negotiator.

In the present study, meaning negotiation is seen as a conversational resource which is realized in order to manage problems arising in the interactional space and to create the conditions for support to be given to a less than fully competent interlocutor. How meaning negotiation is realized depends on at least the factors discussed above.

## 4.3 Conversational support

This chapter will be concerned with devices that can be used to support an interlocutor in interaction in general and in meaning negotiation specifically. They are factors which relate to the overall atmosphere of the interaction in terms of approval and rejections, and they are tactics used to repair trouble that has arisen. Tactics are seen as either context- or speaker-dependent variables in interaction: the range of tactics will vary both quantitatively and qualitatively in different discourses, depending on the discourse itself or the speakers engaged in it. In the present study, linguistic expression of support will be considered, although other expressions of support are used at other levels.

Context-dependent tactics include slow pace, acceptance of topic switches, frames, decomposition and repetition. They are found mainly, if not exclusively, in negotiation sequences. Speaker-dependent tactics realize the interactants' individual approaches to the discourse. Such tactics in the present data are prompts, tutorials, ungrammatical language and language play. They may be used in meaning negotiation, for example in repair sequences, but are not necessary elements in meaning negotiation.

The use of these devices will be discussed in FT as opposed to NT and in beginner FT as opposed to advanced FT. It will be seen whether differences can be identified between the different contexts and, most importantly, whether differences can be found between individual NSs in their use of either type of tactic. Special attention will be paid to features that have not been found, at least not consistently, or have not been discussed in other studies but have been identified in the present data. These include, in addition to the discussion of individual differences in general, the use of prompts, tutorial sequences and ungrammatical language.

### 4.3.1 Approval and overriding

Support or non-support given to an interlocutor can be realized as an attitude of either approval or overriding (rejection). The way in which a speaker either approves of, or overrides, her interlocutor can be an indication of the roles assigned to speakers and of their general approach to the interaction. Specifically, in the present framework these features can tell us something of a native speaker's willingness to accept her interlocutor and support the learner's efforts to participate in the interaction. Approval and its reverse, overriding or rejection, are here seen as markers of giving support or non-support and interlocutors' involvement or non-involvement in their interaction (cf. Tannen 1984:30).[8] Overriding as a prevalent phenomenon can indicate low involvement, whereas lack of overriding and expressions of approval and support indicate high involvement,

8 Overriding along with minimal feedback can also be seen as a symptom of non-understanding (Bremer et al. 1993:168).

especially when considered together with other strategies and tactics for providing space and support.

Two types of overriding are identified in the data: **overriding relating to the interaction or the conversation** and **overriding relating to the task at hand**.

***Overriding in interaction.*** Initiations and responses were discussed above (chapter 4.1), but for the sake of completeness overriding in conversation is discussed briefly also in this connection.

Politeness (understood here as everyday politeness in behaviour towards other people) requires that we answer questions addressed to us or acknowledge an utterance directed to us. If this is the case, the fact that in (1) the learner's comment is not acknowledged in any way is an instance of overriding the interlocutor by ignoring her contribution and failing to take up her topic nomination.

**(1)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 005 | mt: | fat, pretty fat | (11) | no response |
| 006 | kw: | **now uh** | | |

In this particular interaction instances like this are not frequent because of the learner's few contributions. However, combined with overriding relating to task, they help to create an impression of a non-supportive interaction. The only example of correction, and at the same time the only example of any type of overriding, that could be found in the same learner's other FT interaction, is the following:

**(2)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; NS)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 214 | cw: | you got a brother? | |
| 215 | mt: | yes, short | [follows from an earlier exchange] |
| 216 | cw: | **no, Matsumi: you got a brother, Matsumi?** | |
| 217 | mt: | yes | |

What is corrected, line 216, is not the form of the utterance but the appropriateness of the answer. Matsumi's *Yes, short,* line 215, is carried over from the exchange immediately preceding this one (language play) and is not an appropriate answer to the NS's question. The learner accepts the correction and changes her answer, line 217.

Not answering by the learner seems more acceptable and does not violate the rules of polite conversation to the same degree as a refusal by the NS. However, as discussed above (chapter 4.2), refusal to participate may also be a way for learners to exercise power in a situation where they otherwise might feel unable to control anything.

The advanced FT interactions discussed show clear differences in the occurrence of overriding. There are no instances of this type of overriding in Caroline's conversation with an advanced learner, Mei Kien, while overriding is frequent in Katja's speech when she is talking with another advanced learner, Maisa. The latter is able and willing to initiate topics and also to pursue responses. Yet, in several instances her direct questions are

not answered. For instance in (3), the NS does not answer either of the learner's questions, lines 072 and 073:

(3) Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md;aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 072 | md: | **have you make these?** (4) | no response |
| 073 | | **where's the *?** | o response |
| 074 | | I can see only this one | |
| 075 | kw: | h a a | |
| 076 | md: | *** | |

Similar examples of rejection can be found in the following examples:

(4) Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md;aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 109 | md: | it's * with | |
| 110 | kw: | **no it's not!!!** | [aggressive, loud] |
| 111 | md: | all right | |

(5) Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md;aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house [99, 4.3.4]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 095 | md: | what's that? |
| 096 | | what is it? |
| 097 | | it's not good a tree |
| 098 | | it's not good tree |
| 099 | kw: | **I made that so why did you say it's not good?** |

(6) Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md;aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house [100, 4.3.4]

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 208 | md: | that's her bed | |
| 209 | | can we do a bed for her, a nice bedroom, all right? | |
| 210 | | come on, shall we? | |
| 211 | | a nice, nice, nice bedroom for her | no responses |

In (4) the learner's suggestion is rejected flatly and aggressively, line 110, a response which the learner accepts calmly, line 111. In (5) the learner has to repeat both her question, lines 095-6, and comment, lines 097-8, before she receives an answer. Moreover, the answer challenges her opinion. In (6) the learner's suggestion is not acknowledged, although she repeats it in different ways, lines 209-211.

There are indications of intra-speaker variation in NSs' overriding/approval behaviour. A NS may not be quite as accommodating with some interlocutors, eg. with other NSs, as she is with others, eg. learners. An example of this can be seen in (7), where the NS asserts her own view of the topic to a much greater extent than she does with either of the learners (see for instance example (44) in chapter 4.2.4, where the NS's acceptance of the learner's suggestion is discussed).

(7) Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 064 | kw: | don't |
| 065 | | the tape was spoiled, that's why she had to arrange all this, 'cause the tape was spoiled |
| 066 | cw: | **no, 'cause she couldn't hear it** |
| 067 | kw: | and, 'cause it was spoiled |
| 068 | cw: | **no** |

In NT, Caroline is quite willing to argue for her version of the reasons why the recording session was arranged. In fact, Katja is more concessive with her *and*, line 067, granting that the other's reasoning may be justified, but that hers is also valid, whereas Caroline flatly refuses this with *no*, line 068.

Such differences in the NS's behaviour seem to indicate shifts in the approach to the interlocutor: the learner's language and behaviour need to be accepted for the sake of the interaction, whereas with another native speaker differences of opinion and even linguistic differences can be sorted out more freely, without at the same time endangering the interaction and the flow of communication. It may be that because the speakers have more shared information, they also negotiate more to preserve the mutual understanding.

***Overriding relating to task.*** Task overriding refers to the speaker's insistence of being in charge, especially by holding on to her own plan of what should be happening, as in the following examples.

**(8)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 012 | kw: | **ah, no no no** | rejecting |
| 013 | | **no no no uh uh now what am I going to do?** | excluding the other |

**(9)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

051 mt: look that * *
052 kw: **no, move these along**

In (8) and (9) the native speaker rejects the learner's suggestions and offers verbally, and in (9) also overrides the learner's topic nomination. In (8) the verbal reaction seems rather forceful, but it may be that the native speaker uses repetition as a silence filler as much as emphasis.

One reason for rejection may be a speaker's task orientation: instead of concentrating on the learner and the interpersonal level of communication, a speaker may focus on the task at hand, as in (10):

**(10)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md;aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house

047 md: can we put that? it's better
048 kw: **no**
049 md: why?
050 kw: I put some real * on there, see

The learner's suggestion is refused, line 048, and the refusal is justified on task-related grounds, line 050.

There are fourteen cases of rejection in Katja's conversation with Maisa, mostly task overriding. This figure includes every disagreement but does not include the cases of negation where a yes-no question is answered, as for instance in the following:

**(11)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house

104 md: have you seen anything about Chinese New Year?
105 kw: **no**
106 md: I saw, on the television

There seems to be a great deal of rejection for a conversation of this type, ie. peers playing in a non-competitive situation (cf. Bublitz's (1988) claim that comparable adult conversation always strives for agreement). Rejections may significantly contribute to the impression of non-negotiation. In addition, there are several rejections expressed with *no* alone, without any explanation or justification, which gives a strong impression of impoliteness combined with the fact that Maisa's repeated why-questions are not always answered.

The NS's rejections may or may not include justification and disagreement. There are differences of opinion where a justification is used to strengthen the argument, as in (12).

**(12)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
064 kw: look, nothing's in there
065 md: she wouldn't have she was have only those two sacks
066 kw: **she didn't, she had, trees as well**
067 md: that's two trees, she said I got two trees
068 kw: **no, that is not her tree, that's my sister's tree**
069 md: yes

The girls cannot agree on whose Lego trees are used. Neither speaker is willing to renounce her opinion, although the learner's final answer, line 069, is difficult to interpret: she may want to reinforce her opinion expressed on line 067 or she may express agreement with the NS's explanation, line 068.

Rejection can also be expressed using the negation *no* without any justification, as in (4) above and (13).

**(13)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house [101,4.3.4]
189 md: she haven't got a baby yet
190 all right, let's find a boy
191 that's her his husband her husband
192 kw: **no**

In (4) the NS's opinion is expressed aggressively and in a loud voice, line 110. In (13) the NS refuses to accept the learner's suggestion for a doll's bridegroom, line 192.

Rejections may also be combined with justifications or expressions of assent. Compared with the examples above, (14)-(16) imply that a justification is required to soften and to tone down the abruptness of a rejection.

**(14)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
089 md: come on, show it [to the researcher]
090 kw: no, not yet
091 **we haven't finished it yet**
092 md: why?

**(15)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
198 md: can you open your (2) cupboard?
199 kw: no, **'cause there aren't any clothes for that doll, 'cause it's my sister's,** you know

**(16)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
206 md: that's her husband, it is
207 kw: **no, she can't have a husband like that, the monkey (2) for a husband, can she?**

A justification can be given by expressing an opinion, as in (14), or by giving reasons why a request is not to be complied with, as in (15) and (16). In (16) the NS's reluctance to accept the suggested suitor in (13) above becomes clear.

There is one instance of rejection turning into an assent in (17), line 037, which considerably softens the tone of the conversation:

**(17)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
036 md: that yellow one's better
037 kw: **no, all right then**

NSs' choices in expressing approval and rejections result in different learner behaviours. While a learner in an interaction where her suggestions are not approved of or listened to may be forced to take the role of a compliant interlocutor, such a strategy is not needed with a NS who shows approval and accepts the learner's topic nominations. For instance, a learner may feel that she needs to ask for permission (*Can we...?*, /Maisa/ interaction 5/line 047) or for the NS's approval or opinion (*What what colour?* /Maisa/interaction 5/line 043). A learner in this type of interaction may also be more ready to accept what the NS suggests, simply because she cannot spend her processing capacity in arguing (*All right*/Maisa/(4), line 111 above). But there are moments when a learner tries to assert herself and does not accept the NS's assertion, as in (18), line 132, although she accepts it soon afterwards, line 134.

**(18)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play with Lego/in Katja's house
129 md: look, I done it right
130 kw: no, it's still not right
131 it's got a bit broken
132 md: **no, it's not broken**
133 kw: yes, it is
134 md: **oh**

There is nothing comparable in the other advanced FT interaction under discussion (Mei Kien and Caroline/interaction 44-45). There are no rejections or commands to respond to, and consequently the tone of the conversation is such that there is no need for the learner to be asking for permission or approval. Therefore, the tone of the two advanced FT conversations differs radically.

In addition to FT interaction, a NS's contrary attitudes, rejections, and wish to control the situation may become apparent also in NT conversations, as the following examples show.

**(19)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
061 cw: "gurgle"
062 she's singing, Katja, Katja, she's singing
063 **look at ...** [baby sings] (2)

064 kw: **don't**

**(20)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
040 cw: find some clothes for her
041 kw: **don't (2) don't mess it up, will you?**
042 cw: **all right**
043 kw: oh you you WILL mess it up!, or you won't?
044 cw: I won't

In (19) Katja does not like what Caroline is doing and tells her to stop, line 064. In (20) Katja wants Caroline to commit herself to not "messing up" something. After Katja's warnings and requests, lines 041 and 043, Caroline promises not to, line 044.

What becomes apparent in this conversation is that the girls also use language for bragging and competing, not only for achieving common goals. Some elements of ordering and commanding each other, then, can be expected. In (21) Katja brags about having bigger and better straws than the ones Caroline has seen, line 168:

**(21)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
166 cw: in town on Saturday when I went to town,
167 we went in this shop and there were huge straws, they were really fat, about that fat
168 kw: **well, we've got fatter straws than that**
169 cw: **really?**

In her NT interactions, Caroline takes part in the bragging and is not as accommodating as she is with learners (see eg. (7) above). With Katja, she also initiates more topics (about three quarters of all topics) than with any learner. She also shows features of talking parallel with her interlocutor, eg. in (22).

**(22)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Nia (nl; NS)/47/play/in the researcher's house
001 nl: oh, look
002 cw: **Mei Kien, the Chinese girl, whatever her name is, she speaks English * ***
003 nl: fire chief
004 I'll do the fire chief

Caroline starts a topic, line 002, different from the one that Nia has called her attention to, ie. building Lego, line 001. Nia does not want to accommodate either and continues with her topic, line 003. Regardless of these features, Caroline still shows her more accepting role as a conversational partner, eg. in (23), where she is willing to admire Katja's doll, line 148.

**(23)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/in Katja's house
147 kw: do you like this doll's hair?
148 cw: **yes, nice**

There are two other NSs (Joanne and Anthony/interactions 18 and 35, respectively) who use expressions of approval and overriding in their

interactions with learners. Both exhibit a tendency similar to Caroline's in expressing overt approval of what the learner does. As can be seen in (24) and (25) this is often done in a teacher-like manner, which suggests that NSs can take on a teaching role even when they do not use explicit tutorial sequences (see below in chapter 4.3.3.2).

**(24)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
049 ym: this?
050 at: **yes, that's right, Yasushi**

**(25)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/play/F+F/at school
049 jn: **good girl, nice**
050 is it dog?
051 hey, I know (16)
052 **good girl**, you make a dog
053 **good** oops [laughs] (9)

The teacher-like (or possibly parent-like) phrases used in (24), line 050, and in (26), lines 049, 052-3, may be useful with a linguistically less competent interlocutor. They are used to encourage the learner and show approval. Expressions like those above are not found in the NT interactions in the present data.

Although there are several overt expressions of approval in Joanne's talk with Chazal (bL), there are also indications of this NS, like Katja, wanting to decide what should be done next and overtly rejecting what the learner does or suggests. There are many more rejections here than in Caroline's conversation with the learners. All the rejections can be grouped under task overriding. The NS does not correct the learner linguistically, nor does she override her interlocutor in conversation (eg. she answers the learner's questions). In the task rejections she may just be realistically evaluating the Lego material available and what can be done with it, eg. in (26), where Joanne asks Chazal what she wants to make, line 037, but rejects her suggestion, line 038:

**(26)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/play/F+F/at school
037 jn: what do you want to make?(4)
038 **look, we can't make that**
039 *
040 shall we make people? (4)
041 **can't make that, can we?** (9)
042 we got two people
043 shall we build oops this one? (7)
044 **we can't make all that, can we?** (8)
045 **no**

The other rejections, lines 041 and 044-5, are not clear rejections of the learner's suggestions. The NS might also be thinking aloud and turning down her own ideas. There was a Lego catalogue with suggestions for models to build, and in this case the girls were making use of it. In this and other instances, the suggestions are rejected, and there are other cases, as in (27), where a completed task is evaluated and not approved of.

**(27)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/play/F+F/at school
096 jn: you change that door, **it's not very good**

In addition to overriding, the NS also commands the learner and directs the activity, as in (28) and (29).

**(28)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/play/F+F/at school
002 jn: well, **put the little boy by there**, right? (3)

**(29)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/play/F+F/at school
069 jn: leave the house there, right? (4)
070 and what shall we build now?
071 **no, oh good girl, no I tell you what, look** (4)

In (29), line 071, more or less in one breath Joanne expresses approval and rejection and commands the learner. First she says *good girl,* and then decides that she wants to show the learner how what they are working on should be done (*no I tell you what, look*). Although some rejection can be expected in the normal course of play activities, these rejections can be contrasted with total approval of learner activities shown by Caroline.

Regardless of the rejections and overriding discussed above, the conversations are basically friendly and the children's behaviour polite and considerate. One exception was found to this pattern in the data. In a boy-boy dyad, the NS, Vance, does not show much interest in the task and is impolite and even abusive. He hardly employs either strategies for avoiding trouble or tactics for repairing trouble. A couple of times he tries to speak slowly or articulate clearly either as a response to the learner's request for repetition, in (30), line 043, or because for some other reason he thinks that the learner has not understood.

**(30)** Vance (vn; NS) and David (dc; bL)/1/M+M/play/at school
039 vn: (I don't want to to do)
040 dc: **what**?
041 vn: (I don't want to do)
042 dc: **what**?
043 vn: **I do not want to do** [slow]

There are some direct commands and rejections of the learner's suggestions, but these do not as such set the tone of the interaction. Rather, this is done by the NS's aggressive and teasing behaviour. All through the session Vance either teases David, calls him names or uses abusive language, as in (31) and (32).

**(31)** Vance (vn; NS) and David (dc; bL)/1/M+M/play/at school
001 vn: David, **stupid idiot**, you know * * [laughs]

**(32)** Vance (vn; NS) and David (dc; bL)/1/M+M/play/at school
103 vn: see, **you stupid idiot, I'll hit you**

Vance is the only child in the present data who behaves in this manner. His behaviour may be a sign of uncertainty in a new situation, or he may think

that David does not understand him. How this affects David's participation is not clear because of his fairly low competence level, but it can be supposed that it does not help in making him feel an equal conversational partner. It may well be that if solidarity and involvement are apparent, rejections, too, become acceptable. However, in an interaction like this between Vance and David the learner may feel discouraged, because there are no such signs of support.

Linguistic corrections could also be considered as cases of overriding: in a sense the NS overrides the learner's intention by attending to the form instead of content. However, also negative feedback is needed in the second language acquisition process (see eg. Swain 1985, 1991). Oliver (1995:477) has shown that negative feedback also exists in child NS-NNS conversation and is used in learners' interlanguage production. In the present data direct negative feedback can be exemplified by (33).

**(33)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 032 | mt: | h a t | |
| 033 | kw: | **a hat** | correction |
| 034 | mt: | h a t | [high pitch] |
| 035 | kw: | ... | |

Instead of indicating directly whether she accepts the learner's suggestion of a paper doll's dress, the NS corrects the form of the learner's utterance, line 033. This may, of course, include an acceptance of the learner's suggestion, but it also comprises the correction, of which the learner takes no notice at his point. It can be noted that the point of view chosen decides the interpretation in the sense discussed by Tannen (1984:18; 1993:168, 173): no characteristic has an inherent fixed value and can be considered either as having a positive or negative value. In this instance, negative feedback can be positive, if the learner accepts it and uses it in her interlanguage. It can also be negative, ie. overriding, if she feels it as criticism or an attack.

In the types of overriding identified above, variation was established between discourse types (FT vs. NT) and between NSs. Katja produces rejections and hardly any support in NT and both in beginner FT and advanced FT. Caroline, in contrast, expresses support and produces hardly any rejections either in beginner FT or advanced FT. In her FT interactions she is supportive and approving. When with Katja the advanced learner has to insist on answers and look for the NS's approval, with Caroline there are no rejections or commands to respond to, and consequently the tone of the conversation is such that there is no need for the learner to request permission or approval. Hence, the tone of the two advanced FT conversations differs radically, as borne out by the analysis, which has demonstrated inter-speaker variation in respect of the present data. For Katja overriding seems to be a manifestation of her basic approach to interaction, rather than the result of a particular type of interaction. Caroline, on the contrary does not accommodate as easily in NT as she does in FT. This is indicative of intra-speaker variation depending on the context: Caroline behaves slightly differently in FT and NT, being more accommodating in FT.

The differences in the NSs' behaviour seem to indicate shifts in the approach to the interlocutor: the learner's language and behaviour need to be accepted for the sake of the interaction, whereas with another native speaker differences of opinion and even linguistic differences can be sorted out more freely, without at the same time endangering the interaction and the flow of communication. On the other hand, some devices can be used in FT that are not found in NT: the teacher-like phrases of approval may be useful with a less competent partner and are used to show approval and encourage the learner.

### 4.3.2 Context-dependent tactics

When there are problems in conversation despite long-term planning and the use of strategies, speakers use tactics to solve the immediate, short-term problems. Topic treatment in such a way that the interaction is interrupted as little as possible is the main concern here. As in the use of strategies, each speaker's individual features and those devices that are used locally as tactics emerge in the course of analysis. Long (1983) discusses tactics such as accepting unintentional topic switches, tolerating ambiguous utterances and various clarification and confirmation procedures as ways of ensuring smooth progress even when the learner's contributions are not expected or clear. In addition, there are devices that are used to make topics salient, such as slow pace, stressing key words, pausing before or after key words and decomposition. In the present data the frames that are used to mark the beginning or end of a sequence (eg. *now, there)* are included in this category. Among these features, frames and decomposition are used most frequently in the present data and will be discussed in section 4.3.2.3 below. Although the other devices are not used as frequently, the data show individual differences between the NSs. Therefore they will be discussed briefly in sections 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2 below.

Long (1983) proposes the category strategies and tactics for devices that each individual speaker chooses to use either as strategies to avoid trouble or as tactics to repair trouble. In this discussion, all these devices are included in the discussion of tactics. Individual differences can be expected between NSs in the ways in which they use these devices either to avoid trouble or to repair trouble. To clarify the discussion of such differences they will be discussed in the same chapter.

#### 4.3.2.1 Slow pace and stressing key words

**Slow pace** and **stressing key words** are devices that first come to mind when FT is considered in its everyday sense in adult language, where it is seen as a helpful device when talking to a learner. There are, however, indications that a slow rate of delivery may not always have a positive effect on learners' comprehension (see Derwing 1990). Since the children in the present data employ these devices occasionally, it can be assumed that they have acquired knowledge of the usefulness of slowing down and stressing key elements in their speech to learners. The following examples show that the devices are used both as strategies for avoiding trouble in (34) and as

tactics for repairing trouble in (35) early in a FT conversation with a beginner, and in frames when nominating topics, as in (36).

**(34)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house [2, 4.1.1.1]
- kw: **do you speak English at all?** [slow]
- mt: no

**(35)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house [1, 4.1.1.1]
- kw: Matsumi, do you like your teacher?
  - mt: uh?
  - kw: **do you like your teacher?** [clear and slow]
- mt: no
- kw: I don't like mine either [sympathy and solidarity expressed]

**(36)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house
007 kw: now (3) now **HIM** (17)
008 there, he's got nice lots of clothes now *, hasn't he? (5)
009 hello * (5) hello
010 now, this girl **HERE** (5)

Examples (34) and (35) are almost the first utterances in this particular interaction. Most interactions do not exhibit the type of context preparation shown here. In (34) slow pace and clear articulation are used to ensure the learner's comprehension. As pointed out in the discussion of initiations and responses, the fact that the learner simply answers *No* may relieve both parties from further responsibility to try very hard to be understood. In (35) slow and clear articulation is used as a strategy when the question *Do you like your teacher?* is repeated. Here an attempt to establish rapport with the learner can be seen. The learner is being drawn into participating much more transparently than by any other native speaker in these data. After the learner's negative answer, sympathy and solidarity with the learner are expressed when she is told that the NS does not like her teacher either.

Nearly all the examples of key word stress in the NS's speech in interaction 8 occur in frames like the ones in (36), lines 007 and 010, where *now* is used as a frame marker. After line 007 there is a long pause, during which the learner does not respond and the NS does not verbalise her activities either. Framing combined with a stressed key word would seem like a powerful device for engaging the learner's attention and for securing participation, but there is no noticeable increase in learner participation after these frames. For some reason they are wasted. What looks like strategies for avoiding trouble do not, then, work as they should.

Also in Interaction 7 slow pace and stressing key words are used. In most instances, their function is not clearly either tactical or strategic; rather, they are usually found in a specific context either in prompts or in tutorial sequences and will be discussed in connection with prompts and tutorials as tactics (see below in 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2).

#### 4.3.2.2 Ambiguous turns and topic switches

NSs' different approaches to conversation are apparent when their reactions to the learner's **ambiguous turns** and **topic switches** are compared. Despite the differences, ambiguity that follows from the free play activity itself and the fact that the children often concentrate on what they are doing rather than on conversation seems to be easily tolerated in all the interactions.

In Interaction 7, the NS shows a special kind of tolerance toward ambiguity in her conversation with Matsumi. When Matsumi uses English, her contributions are usually appropriate and unambiguous. Often, however, she switches into Japanese, and although the NS does not understand her, she still acknowledges the learner and carries on as if an appropriate contribution had been made. This kind of behaviour seems to indicate, in Long's terms, a high tolerance of ambiguous utterances, although Long, of course, is referring to ambiguous utterances in the learner's L2. However, the use of L1 makes the learner's contributions opaque to the NS, and in this sense they can be considered comparable to ambiguous interlanguage speech. The other NS's tolerance (interaction 8) is not tested, since when talking to her, Matsumi does not once use Japanese. Neither are there any other utterances that could be called ambiguous in this context.

One of the ways for a NS to repair trouble in a NS-NNS conversation is to accept unintentional topic switches that result for instance from the learner not understanding, or misunderstanding, the NS's utterance. In the present data, there are no instances of unintentional topic switches of this type. However, topic switches may also be intentional in a context like this: the learner may not have sufficient linguistic or other knowledge to talk about the topic suggested, or she may want to talk about something that is relevant, and more interesting, in the context at that moment. In child language such topic switches may not be as unexpected as they would be in adult language. Caroline's acceptance of this type of topic switch is exemplified in (37) below.

**(37)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/in Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 051 | cw: | shall we play some games in a minute? (5) |
| 052 | mk: | **want to wash my hand** |
| 053 | cw: | bathroom's over, over there |
| 054 | mk: | wanna wash your hand? |
| 055 | cw: | I'll just do this |

The NS makes a suggestion about playing a game by asking a question, line 051, but the learner does not respond to the question. After a few seconds, she asks a question of her own, line 052. The NS accepts the new topic and responds to it helpfully by indicating where the learner could wash her hands, line 053. The learner has set her own agenda and follows it, wanting to include the NS, line 052-4. In another sequence discussed above (in (34) in 4.2.4), there is a similar instance, where Mei Kien does not respond to the NS's topic but pursues her own. The NS begins the sequence by asking three

questions and gets no response from the learner, who chooses a topic of her own.

In contrast, not all NSs show similar willingness to accept their interlocutors' topics. There are many instances where the learner tries to pursue her own, as shown above in chapter 4.1.

#### 4.3.2.3 Frames and decomposition

Elements that are used to introduce new topics and to indicate the end of a sequence, eg. *well, OK, now,* are here called frames. Several examples of frames can be found in (36) above and (38) and (39) below.

**(38)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house
004 kw: uh, find some dresses, uh [slow] (15)
005 mt: pretty fat (11)
006 **kw: now, uh** (14) [giggling]

**(39)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house
053 kw: **there, now we'll play** [sigh] (10)
054 **there, now:** one day sh they
055 mt: hihihi (3)
056 kw: **now**, you choose the the something for her to wear (4)
057 **here, look here** (3) have a look at these (14)
.
.
063 kw: there, there's another dress *
064 *** going to play: I'll put all the others * back**

Two types of markers are used for the frames in these examples: those that include *there/here* or *now*, and those that indicate the beginning or the end of an activity lexically, eg. in (39) *now we'll play*, line 053. Sometimes the sequence is overtly framed both at the beginning and the end, as in (39), lines 053 and 064, but more typically one marking is realized. This particular NS, Katja, uses framing in all types of discourse: in her beginner FT, NT and advanced FT, as in (40) below.

**(40)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house
003 kw: **there, now**
004 md: * * *
005 kw: **now**, the reds go back there

There are other NSs, eg. Joanne (interaction 18), who use frames. Frames are not, however, used by Caroline. There is only one instance in Caroline's conversation with Matsumi, where *now* is used as a frame shown in (41).

**(41)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house
056 cw: **now, then** (35)

Decomposition, or left-dislocation, is also used to make a new topic salient. Decomposition resembles framing in that the left-dislocated

element acts as the frame marker. The following two examples from Joanne's conversation with Chazal are prototypical decompositions:

**(42)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/F+F/play/at school
072 jn: **dog**, make a dog there

**(43)** Joanne (jn; NS) with Chazal (ca; bL)/18/F+F/play/at school
024 jn: **a house**, shall we make a house?

Here the semantically central element is removed from the planned utterance and presented to the interlocutor as preparation for the whole. In (42) it can be noticed that the indefinite article is not used in the noun phrase *dog*, although it is used in what follows. Similarly the article is omitted in the following:

**(44)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house
058 kw: **umbrella**, that's her umbrella

Although decomposition can be seen as a framing device, it can be used together with another frame, as in (45).

**(45)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/in Katja's house
065 kw: ***now*, big sister**, she's fussy what she wears
066 "now, what shall my pretty body wear today?" (4)
067 you choose something for her to wear, all right? (5)
068 choose something, I'll sit here

A frame *now*, line 065, is given first and after that the decomposed element *big sister*, which is subsequently replaced by the personal pronoun *she*.

Decomposition structures can be more complicated and involved than those shown above. An example of a longer decomposition sequence in shown in (46):

**(46)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house
077 cw: **Yuki?** where's Yuki?
078 **at home?** Yuki at home?
079 mt: uh?
080 cw: is Yuki at home?
081 mt: (Japanese 'I don't know, this is not our house'))
082 cw: * [noise]

In (46) the noun phrase *Yuki* (Matsumi's brother) is left-dislocated from the question, line 077. Another decomposition follows immediately in, line 078, where a switch is made from a wh-question to a yes-no question, which should facilitate the learner's response. The learner's clarification request follows, line 079, and the NS repeats her question as a yes-no question, line 080. The verb *be* is added in the repetition, which further clarifies the question.

Framing is very frequent in Katja's FT. In most cases it is used as a strategy rather than as a tactic for avoiding trouble, although in some sequences it also used as a tactic, as in (39), when the learner does not

respond. It is, of course, possible that frames help the learner by making topics salient and by clarifying the conversational structure. They explain what is to follow or they round up the preceding sequence and overtly mark sequence boundaries and consequently facilitate the learner's participation in the play. This, however, does not seem to be the case in Katja's conversation with Matsumi. Somehow Katja follows her own script and overrides the learner by imposing the structure of the activity, in this case by using frames. She is not able to draw the learner into the conversation and consequently ends up dominating a situation that could develop into an interaction between two equals. Framing alone, although potentially a facilitating device, cannot help the learner sufficiently. Derwing (1991b:17-8) points out that the amount of modification strategies is not revealing enough about their appropriateness. Adjustments can improve communication only if the speaker can identify when they are needed, can make the required adjustment and ensure the NNS's comprehension.

Caroline's use of tactics shows a more varied pattern than Katja's: she uses fewer frames but her use of decompositions in beginner FT is noticeable. This, of course, does not explain why with Caroline Matsumi produces almost four times as many words as with Katja. It is, however, one sign among many showing Caroline's tendency to give the learner space. The mere framing of sequences, with no negotiation within the sequences, as is mostly the case with Katja, may not be enough to allow the learner this space. Caroline, on the other hand, is an example of a conversationalist who is willing to negate her own needs to involve the learner and to sustain the conversation.

#### 4.3.2.4 Repetition

In the L2 literature, repetition is often treated from the point of view of the interlanguage user: repetition is a temporal variable that helps in explaining IL users' planning problems, although the evidence so gained is, according to Raupach (1983:197) inconclusive because it is indirect. Repeats are often function words and they serve the same function as pauses before content words and drawls, ie. they gain the speaker time at a lexical selection point, or they are part of false starts (Færch and Kasper 1983a:215-6). Here, however, as in the FT literature, repetitions are seen as elements of the native speakers' FT or modification strategy. Long (1983) distinguishes between repeats of a speaker's own utterances as against those of others. These two types of repetitions probably have different functions. The other's utterances are repeated mainly to check the speaker's own comprehension or to acknowledge what the other person has said. The speaker's own utterances seem to be repeated for several different reasons, starting from gaining time to functioning in response to perceived comprehension problems.

Kalin (1995) in her study of adult NS-NNS interactions has categorized repetitions according to what triggers the use of repetition, ie. repeats as a reaction to 1) non-response, 2) ambiguous and vague utterances and 3) explicit utterances of non-understanding. In the following, repetitions in

beginner FT, NT and advanced FT will be discussed using this categorization.

***Repetitions in beginner FT.*** Repetition after non-response is here defined as a point where one speaker fails to take a turn at a point where it is either clearly offered or where a NS would be expected to say something. The examples below are taken from Matsumi's interactions. They offer numerous examples of NS repeats after a pause, during which the learner could start a turn of her own but does not, especially when in conversation with Katja.

**(47)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house [3, 4.1.1.1; 10, 4.2.2]]

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 081 | kw: | which do you think will be a better wedding gown (2) out of those? | | | | |
| 082 | | **which would be a nicer wedding gown?** | | | | |
| 083 | mt: | I don't know | | | | |
| 084 | kw: | just choose one, **choose one** | | | | |
| | | | 085 | mt: | **eh?** | |
| | | | 086 | kw: | that one or that one? | reformulate |
| | | | 087 | | which one? | specify |
| | | | 088 | | that one? | confirm |
| 089 | kw: | right then, she needs flowers for * | | | | frame |

**(48)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 093 | kw: | now the boy (7) **now the boy, this boy,** I'll do his clothes |
| 094 | | what shall he wear? |
| 095 | | shall he put his hat on today? |
| 096 | | **put his hat on today** as well |
| 097 | | shall he wear this? |
| 098 | | **she shall h wear this, shall he?** (22) |

**(49)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 058 | kw: | umbrella, that's her **umbrella** (9) |
| 059 | mt: | hihihi (3) |
| 060 | kw: | does she want her umbrella? |
| 061 | | **want this?** (10) **her umbrella** (10) |

In (47), line 081, a two-second pause precedes *out of those,* which further specifies the question asked. No reply is given at this point, although it is a transition-relevant point. The NS repeats her question, line 082. The learner answers that she does not know what to choose and the NS prompts her, line 084. Again, there is a short pause, which the learner does not use, and the NS repeats her prompt, line 084. The learner then requests repetition, and this request, line 085, receives a string of questions as a reply: a reformulation, a request to specify and a request for confirmation, followed by a frame, *right then,* lines 086-9.

Other examples of pauses preceding repetition are found above in (48), where the frame *now the boy,* line 093, is repeated and reformulated after a pause. Possibly expecting the learner not to respond, the NS does not always allow for any response and repeats immediately, lines 097 and 099. Both repeats are reformulations, and one, line 097, is in fact a reply to the question, line 096, which is follow-up yes-no question to a wh-question asked, line 095. In (49) *Want this?,* line 061, is a reformulation of *Does she*

*want her umbrella?* In these involved repetition-reformulation sequences Katja shows her ability to modify her use of question types and reformulating her efforts at drawing the learner into conversation, but she still does not succeed.

Repetition as part of decomposition is found above in (49), line 058. Below in (50) the preceding pronoun is repeated in a confirmation question, line 106.

**(50)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 103 | kw: | what's-her-name, serving tea (32) |
| 104 | mt: | * * |
| 105 | kw: | shall she wear this (3) or this? |
| 106 | | **this**? |
| 107 | mt: | hihihi (5) |

In the following a complete non-response from the learner is followed by the NS's repetitions, although it is not quite clear whether this is a case of repetition at all:

**(51)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 001 | cw: | Matsumi, this? (12) |
| 002 | | Ms Mat Matsumi, this good?, **this good**? |

First of all, there is no verbal response to the NS's utterance on line 001. Later, the repetition follows a micro-pause, line 002. The repeated vocative and pronoun *this* may or may not be repetition. After a fairly long 12-second pause, the referent of *this*, line 002, may or may not be the same as the referent of the preceding *this*, line 001. There is no indication in the data to decide on this. This is the only instance of a possible use of repetition after the learner's non-response in this interaction. The repetitions in Interaction 7 are generally used in response to a learner response: twenty out of twenty-five repetitions can be interpreted as arising out of a response rather than a non-response.

Another group of NS repeats are instances where the learner explicitly requests clarification, thus signalling non-understanding. Above, in (46), line 080 and below in (52), line 061, Matsumi requests repetition either with *uh?* or *wha'?* Caroline responds to every request with an appropriate repetition: in (46) the original is grammatically expanded to include the copula, line 080 and in (52) the repeat is verbatim, line 062.

**(52)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house [74, 4.3.3.2]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 059 | cw: | you like Little Red...? |
| 060 | | say "Little Red Riding Hood" |
| | | 061 mt: **wha'**? |
| | | 062 cw: **say "Little Red Riding Hood"** |
| 063 | mt: | (Japanese 'I can't say it, it's too difficult') |

In (52) and other tutorial sequences, repetition is an integral part of performing the didactic purpose. Similarly repeats have an important function in the other speaker-dependent tactics (see below in 4.3.3). Repetition will be discussed in the same context.

One group of Caroline's repetitions are the instances that follow Matsumi's vague and ambiguous utterances, ie. her utterances in Japanese, as in (53), line 049 (see also (68) in 4.3.3.1).

**(53)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house
047 cw: Matsumi, sing, **sing, sing**
048 mt: (Japanese '* *')
049 cw: **sing, sing, /sing, sing/**
050 mt: /(Japanese ('sing sing sing sing')/

Caroline does not understand what Matsumi says in Japanese, and she chooses to repeat what she has just said herself, possibly to make sure that Matsumi should understand her and to keep the conversation going. Other possible responses at that point would be to request for repetition or translation. The request for repetition could be made hoping that the learner would repeat what she has said in English. Since the learner code-switches quite unexpectedly in conversation with somebody who does not speak Japanese, Caroline does not choose this strategy, which probably would not be productive and would only result in more Japanese.

Not asking for translation could be another facet of Caroline's politeness and other-oriented behaviour, accepting the other's choices and only indirectly showing her non-comprehension. In (54) a response in Japanese is followed by Caroline's repetition, line 049. It is not easy to see where the NS wants to take each sequence, since there is an element of prompting, tutoring and language play present in these instances. It is sequences like these that easily develop into one or the other type of sequence mentioned. It may be that the playfulness and vagueness of purpose is made possible and supported by Matsumi's code switching. The NS may feel free to explore different possibilities, since the learner has also decided to break the rules by using a language not shared by both interlocutors.

Not all repeats in the interactions fit into the three categories defined above. In the following examples phrases are repeated that are not in response to an observable comprehension problem on the part of the learner.

**(54)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house
024 kw: he's funny **funny funny**

**(55)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house
029 kw: no **no no**, we don't want that, do we?

**(56)** Katja (kw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/8/F+F/play/at Katja's house
133 kw: there, it's night time, they've all been to where they want to go
134 **it's night time** now, now we have to change them

In (54) and (55) repetition gives an impression of emphasis, playful in its character in (54). In (55) Katja's tone is slightly pedantic and teacher-like. In (56) she repeats *It's night time*, although there does not seem to be any communicative function for the repetition. It might be that the NS feels the need to fill possible silence by talking herself, which also results in her

holding the floor and, consequently, prevents the learner from gaining a turn.

Repetition incorporating a correction is found in (33) above, where the NS's *a hat*, line 033, corrects the learner's *hat* preceding it.

As a summary, Katja's repetitions seem to be used mainly to express emphasis and to keep the conversation going in the face of the fact that the learner is not contributing much. Therefore she needs to keep talking herself to fill silences. Repetitions are also used as a response to a perceived comprehension problem, either when the learner does not respond as expected (after a pause or without a pause) or as response to the learner's request for clarification. However, fewer of Katja's repetitions arise as responses to learner utterances than in Caroline's data: four out of fifteen repetitions respond to something the learner says, the rest are in response to a non-response, either after a shorter or longer pause or quick repetitions without a pause. Katja's repeats only once incorporate the learner's utterance, in (33). This repetition functions, at least partially, as a correction of the grammatical form. This can be contrasted with Caroline's confirmation checks and acknowledgements when repeating the learner's words or phrases.

In interaction 8 with Katja the learner's power may show as her power not to say anything at all. There is a possibility that instead of the NS being the interlocutor whose behaviour can determine how the interaction develops it is the learner whose behaviour is the determining factor. Matsumi participates with Caroline, even though part of the time she uses Japanese. However, from the NS's point of view her utterances function as contributions. At times, negative feelings are expressed in the learner's Japanese utterances. While with Caroline Matsumi contains her negative feelings in Japanese, with Katja the same effect may be gained by refusing to participate at all.

***Repetitions in NT.*** Compared with FT conversations, the functions that repetitions are used for in NT are fewer. Also, there are fewer instances of repetitions in any given function. The two NSs in question, Katja and Caroline, however, differ somewhat in their use of repetitions in NT. The other NT interactions in addition to theirs do not offer anything that would change the analysis. Therefore, examples will be given mainly from their conversation.

It is not possible to identify the type of division into repetitions used above for FT repetitions. There is some repetition after non-response, but otherwise repetitions seem to be used mainly in acknowledgements and for emphasis, not in response to ambiguous utterances or to explicit utterances of non-understanding.

Repeats in arguments, where emphasis is required, are shown in (7) and (20) above and in (57) below. In (7) the girls cannot agree on why a second recording of their session is required. First Katja states twice why she thinks it is necessary, line 065, and to challenge Caroline's argument, line 066, repeats her version of the events, line 067. As pointed out above, Katja is conciliatory enough to agree that Caroline also may be right. She shows this by adding *and*, line 067, before repeating her reason. In (20) Katja

emphasises her point by repeating her negative imperative auxiliary, line 041, and the whole clause, line 043.

Repetition is used for emphasis in the play activity in (19), line 062. In the following examples, several functions not identified as communication problems can be seen in the use of repetitions.

**(57)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
026 kw: and she made these for my dollie for Christmas, she made those for Christmas, and she made... (2)
027 cw: for your doll?
028 kw: yeah, and she made, here
029 cw: **for your doll?**
030 kw: that's her nightie, and that's her...
031 cw: a:::h, a coat
032 kw: no, that's her night gown
033 cw: **night gown** and **nightie**, that's nice

**(58)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
126 cw: you, where's some other bubbles?
127 kw: and, in (2) there
128 cw: **in there**
129 kw: (in) the box

**(59)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
085 cw: where's that dress you got OUT for her?
086 **where's that DRESS you got out for her**?
087 kw: pretty one?
088 cw: yeah, that one (2)

Repetition is used as acknowledgements in (57), line 033, and in (58), line 128. In (57) Caroline repeats her confirmation check, line 029, expressing admiration and astonishment. In (59) Caroline repeats her question verbatim, line 086, the only change being a stress shift from the word *OUT* to the word *DRESS*. Similar stress shifts can be found in Caroline's talk with a beginner, Matsumi, in tutorial sequences (see below in 4.3.3.2). There they seem to have a didactic function (drilling sentence patterns), but here it is not clear why Caroline should start rehearsing a sentence pattern with another NS. It could be that she wants to retain her turn at speaking and does this by repeating what she has said, thus creating a type of language play. Below in (60), Caroline either expresses hesitation or wants to gain time and hold the floor by repeating *I didn't*, line 149.

**(60)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
149 cw: oh, there are the two bubbles, I thought I didn't I **didn't** know where they'd gone

Below, an example of the use of repetition as an exaggerated form of acknowledgment and expression of agreement is shown.

**(61)** Farah (fa; NS) and Barry (bb; NS)/13/F+M/play/at school
148 bb: see who gets the best mark back
149 fa: yeah, **see who Miss says, has the best** (3)

150 see if Miss says yours is the best or Miss, if Miss says mine is the best
151 bb: we don't know yet
152 fa: no, **we don't, do we?**
154 bb: we'll soon find out
154 fa: **we'll have to find out, won't we?**
155 bb: don't copy everything I say

Farah's repetitions, lines 149, 152 and 154, offer paraphrases of Barry's immediately preceding utterances. They seem to show agreement with what has been said. Barry, however, does not appreciate such conversational support and, annoyed, asks Farah to stop copying him, line 155.

In the NT conversation, Katja only repeats her own utterances, whereas Caroline also incorporates her interlocutor's utterances in her repeats in acknowledgements, as does Farah.

***Repetitions in advanced FT.*** Above, only beginner FT was discussed as FT interaction. In repetitions, as in many other features, it seems that advanced FT approaches NT in its characteristics. Meaning negotiation, however, requires the use of repetition, both in task and repair negotiations, as discussed above in chapter 4.2. A few examples will suffice at this point to demonstrate the essential characteristics of repetition in advanced FT.

As in both beginner FT and NT, repetitions in advanced FT are used for emphasis, as in (62).

**(62)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house
107 kw: no**no**no
108 now, let's build a little climbing frame

There are no repetitions used as a reaction to non-response in advanced FT. Repeats are mostly found as a response to an explicit expression of non-understanding by either the learner or the NS, or it seems to be used for emphasis. In (63) clarification is given as a response to the learner's expression of non-understanding, ie. a request for repetition:

**(63)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house[9]
- md: I like, I like everything, what you like I like, what you want I like, everything
- kw: so will you have all I have today?
- md: **wha'?**
- kw: **will you have what I have today?**
- md: yeah
- kw: OK, 'cause we've got really hard biscuits, and a cake, not a cream cake
- md: I know

Caroline's and Mei Kien's conversation shows similar examples of repair sequences, eg. in (64).

**(64)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/at the researcher's house
[talking about a movie]
075 cw: did you see that bit where they cut one of the sharks open?
076 mk: eh?

---

9 Examples from outside the originally transcribed data.

077 cw: **did you see when they cut the shark open?**
[simplified, slower pace]

Here the repeat is slightly modified: the phrase *that bit*, line 075, is deleted from the repetition, the phrase *one of the sharks*, line 075, is simplified to become *the shark*, line 077, and slower pace is used in giving the repetition.

Other instances of NS repetitions in Mei Kien's conversations show that repetition is used in reactions to requests for clarification; see examples (26) and (34) in chapter 4.2. It is typical of Mei Kien that even as a learner, she will on occasion be the one providing the repetition. In her interactions the knower and enabler roles are clearly negotiable, which results in the learner, instead of the NS, giving clarifications (see chapter 4.2).

Functions of repetitions found in FT and NT interaction as used by NS can be listed as follows:

In beginner FT repeats are found as a response to a perceived comprehension problem when used
- -as a reaction to a non-response,
- -as a reaction to ambiguous or vague utterances, eg. to the learner's code-switching,
- -as a reaction to a clarification request,

in
- -tutorial sequences,
- -emphatic expressions,
- -corrections (not necessarily a comprehension problem) and
- -filling silences.

In advanced FT repeats are used
- -as a reaction to clarification requests and
- -for emphasis.

In NT repeats are found mainly in
- -acknowledgements and agreement,
- -confirmation checks and
- -emphatic expressions.

The functions of repetition in NT and FT differ in that in FT perceived comprehension problems give rise to repetitions in various ways, whereas this category is altogether missing from NT conversation. Similarly hardly any corrections and no tutorials are found in NT. In NT repetitions, however, also facilitate comprehension and production and create personal involvement (Tannen 1989:52). From the point of view of keeping the conversation going, any type of repetition used as a response to a perceived comprehension problem has the highest priority in FT. Other repetitions not directly concerned with a perceived communication problem (eg. emphatic repeats) would seem to have the lowest priority. The former keep the conversation going even when there clearly are problems, as do prompts and devices used for gaining time. Gaining time may be used for different reasons in FT and NT. In FT, the NS may be trying to fill possible or actual silences by talking herself and is in this way gaining time for the conversation, not for her own turn. In NT, the speakers may be in a more competitive situation and can gain time for their own turn through repetitions.

#### 4.3.2.5 Summary

The tactics used to repair trouble should tell us something of the speaker's willingness to negotiate. With the analysis of their use of context-dependent tactics, the original impression of Katja's and Caroline's conversations is reinforced: both Caroline and Katja use tactics to repair trouble when there are problems, but the sequences that follow are still different. The following two examples can be used to show the contrast and to summarize the discussion on context-dependent tactics:

**(65)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house

115 md: look my house Katja

116 kw: **what?**

117 md: look, my house [pause]

**(66)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Mei Kien (mk; aL)/44/F+F/play/at Katja's house [34, 4.2.4]

018 mk: that house is *, is it?

019 cw: **pardon?** request for clarification

020 mk: what that her name again?

021 cw: **eh?** request for clarification

022 mk: what that her...?

023 cw: **eh, what's the lady's name again?** request for confirmation

024 mk: yeah

In (65) Katja requests repetition, line 116, she receives it, and the matter is settled. In contrast, (66) is an example of a long side-sequence, where both speakers work together to clarify the original question, line 018, by requesting and receiving clarification and confirmation, lines 019-024. One NS is willing to employ the resources she has available to ensure that the learner's question can be dealt with; for the other, it is enough that the interlocutors are engaged in the task assigned and she does not consider it necessary continue the learner's topic.

Overall, the NSs studied exhibit different pattern in the use of tactics: frames, decomposition and repetitions are used differently. Caroline uses fewer frames, but her use of decompositions in beginner FT is noticeable. Slow pace and stressing key words are used by Katja as strategies for avoiding trouble and as tactics for repairing trouble. These are also used by Caroline, but in her speech they function as tactics, in a specific context in tutorial sequences.

Both girls use decomposition as a strategy to avoid trouble and repetition of their own and other utterances as a tactic to repair trouble. These two categories account for about one half of the strategies and tactics used. Decomposition in Katja's speech is used together with a frame, mostly as a strategy to allow the learner's entry into the conversation before any problems occur. The framing device combined with a stressed key word would seem like a powerful device for engaging the learner's attention and for securing participation, but there is no noticeable increase in learner participation after frames.

Repetitions are used both in NT and FT: in FT, perceived comprehension problems give rise to repetitions, as reactions to non-

response, vague utterances and explicit expressions of non-understanding, in addition to emphatic expressions and silence fillers. In NT, repetitions are used in acknowledgements, for emphasis and in confirmation checks, whereas no repetitions due to comprehension problems are needed. Repetitions used as responses to perceived comprehension problems have the highest priority in FT, since they provide the type of conversational support required in that discourse context.

The NSs' approaches to the conversation can be made apparent in the way in which they tolerate ambiguity. Caroline treats Matsumi's highly opaque Japanese utterances as contributions to the interaction and uses them to advance the conversation. Katja's tolerance in this respect cannot be evaluated, since Matsumi does not use Japanese or other ambiguous utterances with her. Katja does not always use even Matsumi's transparent contributions as material to build the conversation and, therefore, shows her tendency to talk parallel to her interlocutor instead of responding and incorporating her interlocutor's utterances into the interaction.

### 4.3.3 Speaker-dependent tactics

The tactics discussed above are to be found in every speaker's data. There are differences between speakers in the way these tactics are used, but they are part of every language user's competence by the time they have reached the age in question here (8-10). There are, however, speakers whose repertoire of tactics is considerably wider. Caroline, especially, and to a lesser extent some other speakers, use other means to draw the learner into conversation and to deal with problems when they occur. Such features found in the present data are the use of prompts, tutorials, ungrammatical language and language play. Some features are also found in the present data that are not usually discussed in other studies of comparable data, either because they have not been identified or because they have not been considered significant features of child-child interaction. These features will be called speaker-dependent features, since they can be defined as individual characteristics. At the same time, they are naturally also discourse-dependent, since they occur in certain types of registers. The majority of examples are from Caroline's conversations either with learners or other NSs. Examples from other interactions will be used where available.

#### 4.3.3.1 Prompts

In the L1 acquisition literature the term **prompting** is used to describe one means of facilitating the learning of socially appropriate norms of behaviour (Demuth 1986:51). For instance, in Basotho society in Lesotho, prompting is used to demonstrate the use of appropriate verbal behaviour to children. The types of prompts used are *bina* 'sing', *bala* 'count', *juetsa* 'tell', *botsa* 'ask'. Adults and older children prompt younger children to make them talk, to demonstrate polite behaviour, and to instruct them socially and in word games and correction. The present data exhibit the use

of similar prompts for various purposes, to instruct another child, to keep the conversation going and to construct role play.

The use of prompts of the imperative type are shown in the following examples. Imperatives like *say, sing* and *read* are used several times in this interaction (see also (53) above in 4.3.2.4).

**(67)** Caroline (cw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play, puzzle/at Katja's house
[Matsumi's preceding utterances in Japanese sound like *mama, dudu*]
010 cw: Matsumi, viuuh
011 mt: (Japanese 'don't imitate me, if you imitate me I'll scold you')
012 cw: Matsumi, **say** lala
013 mt: (Japanese 'no, I won't') )

**(68)** Caroline (cw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play, puzzle/at Katja's house [67, 4.1.4.4]
02 cw: Matsumi, is it good?
027 mt: (Japanese 'good, well done, this American is an expert') [sings]
028 cw: Matsumi, **sing a song**
029 mt: (Japanese 'no') [originally interpeted as English *yeah*]
030 cw: **come on then**
031 mt: (Japanese 'no no no') [said in a sing-song style]
032 cw: Matsumi **/you sing?/**
033 mt: /(Japanese 'this is not a song')/
034 cw: **you sing?**
035 mt: (Japanese 'I don't want to, because I don't want to) [sung]
036 cw: sing again (2) **sing /again/**
037 mt: /(Japanese 'no no')/ [sung]

Caroline uses prompting to let Matsumi participate in the conversation, not to instruct her socially. In each case, Caroline's prompting is triggered by something in the interaction. In (67) the trigger is Matsumi's Japanese utterances preceding the extract. They sound like *mama* and *dudu*, and probably trigger Caroline's *lala*, line 012. In (68) Matsumi sings her topically appropriate response, which, however, is said in Japanese, line 027. Caroline responds by prompting Matsumi to sing a song, line 028. Matsumi's answer was originally interpreted as English *yeah*, line 029, probably also by Caroline, who immediately says *come on then*, line 030. The rest of the sequence continues as Matsumi's Japanese refusals and Caroline's further prompts for Matsumi to sing. Since Caroline cannot understand that Matsumi expresses refusal, she reacts to the fact that Matsumi, in fact, sings every time she asks her to. In this manner the interaction is built from the NS's effort to react interactively and the learner's partial compliance to participate. From the NS's point of view, however, the learner's participation is what is required to carry on a "conversation".

In (65) in 4.1.4.4 Caroline's own reading of some play material triggers her to prompt Matsumi to read, line 131. Again, Matsumi consistently refuses to comply with Caroline's request, first in Japanese, lines 132, 134 and 136, and then in English, justifying her refusal, line 139. The refusal starts a side sequence, in which Caroline requests confirmation of what Matsumi has said, line 140 onwards.

As can be seen in these examples, Caroline uses every opportunity to carry on the interaction and does not spare any effort in drawing the learner into the conversation. Caroline employs tutorials in her interaction with Matsumi, and to an extent, the examples above can also be seen to contain a didactic element. This is especially the case when Caroline wants Matsumi to read, a familiar activity in any classroom. In contrast, Katja uses no prompts of this type in her conversations with learners, although a different type of prompt can be identified in her NT interaction with Caroline (see below).

Above, prompting was discussed as a tactic to keep the conversation going, and it was also considered to be a didactic device. In NT conversations, prompts take on the function of constructing the role play. Katja and Caroline are playing with dolls, and long stretches of conversation are devoted to role play. Different means are used to instruct the interlocutor about her role, as in (69)-(71).

**(69)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
094 cw: "she's dirty, mum"
095 kw: "doesn't matter" [Katja or Caroline?]
096 **say,** she, **tell her** she looks great

**(70)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
187 kw: "yes, darling"
188 **you said:** "oh mum, this pop's lovely"
189 cw: "oh mum, this pop's lovely"
190 kw: "thank you darling"
191 cw: **tell her** it was home-made
192 kw: I was just gonna say that
193 "it's home-made, darling"

**(71)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house
156 cw: "mummy, what are plaits?"
157 kw: "well darling"
158 cw: **it's the baby you're talking to now**
159 kw: "darling, see"...?

The imperatives *Say* and *Tell her*, line 096 in (69) and 191 in (70), the declarative *You said*, line 188 in (70), and a cleft sentence *It's the baby you're talking to now*, line 158 in (71), are used to help the interlocutor in constructing the character of the role and the play itself. Even Katja, who otherwise does not accept criticism easily, accepts the instructions and acts according to these prompts, perhaps precisely because they are directed towards her as a role character, not towards herself, both in (70) and (71). Here prompting can be understood to function in a way similar to prompting in the theatre, which is used "to help the memory" or in "the act of the prompter on the stage" (The Oxford English Dictionary 1989:619).

In NT context, another prompting technique can be identified. It is noticeable how Barry uses various types of short questions to prompt Farah in their conversation, as in (72).

(72) Farah (fa; NS) and Barry (bb; NS)/13/F+M/play with Lego/at school

061 fa: I don't like Aedy
062 bb: **why?**
063 fa: he made me fall down, that stupid boy, and then he kept laughing at me, when I fell down
064 bb: **and he laughed?**
065 fa: yeah, horrible boy
066 bb: **is he?**
067 fa: he is, I don't like him, oh no, he's nasty
068 do you like him?
069 bb: yeah, he's all right

Barry asks a prompting question several times, lines 062, 064 and 066, and receives a further explanation. Two of the questions, those on line 064 and 066, are also confirmation questions, but since there seems to be no comprehension breakdown or misunderstanding, they have a function similar to the first prompt *why*, line 062.

In the following example, Farah in her turn prompts Barry. Barry takes up the 'king' from Farah's utterance, line 096, as a new topic, even though this might not have been intended by Farah in the meaning in which Barry uses it.

(73) Farah (fa; NS) and Barry (bb; NS)/13/F+M/play with Lego/at school

096 fa: hey, it's the king
097 bb: I liked, did you watch that?
098 fa: **when?**
099 bb: when, when he wanted to get the boat
100 fa: **when, who?**
101 bb: king wanted to get the boat
102 fa: **when was it on?**
103 **tell me** when it was on and I remember

Farah does not know what program Barry is talking about. Her questions that prompt Barry to carry on, lines 098 and 100, seem to be aimed at finding out more in order to be able to take part in the discussion.

Another type of prompt can be identified in the use of *guess what*. Barry obediently answers using *What?* when in a long narrative Farah says *My mother had to bring our supper in for us and we had,* ***guess what!*** (interaction 13/line 202). In this conversation both speakers take their turn at furthering the conversation, supporting each other's topics, and keeping the topic afloat.

If one of the main functions of prompting in child-child interaction is to provide support to the interlocutor and to keep the conversation going, it might be asked whether prompting is, in fact, another type of side-sequence. It seems, however, that prompting furthers the conversation independently, not as a side-sequence. Most of the prompts shown above form sequences that could not be deleted without the content and the structure of the conversation suffering, whereas a side-sequence could be deleted. Only the prompts that resemble theatre prompting could perhaps be understood as side sequences, when the prompt can be seen as functioning as an aside in the script. This can be exemplified by reproducing one of the examples above in the format used for showing side sequences:

**(70a)** Katja (kw; NS) and Caroline (cw; NS)/9/F+F/play/at Katja's house

187 kw: "yes, darling"
188 kw: **you said**: "oh mum, this pop's lovely"
189 cw: "oh mum, this pop's lovely"
190 kw: "thank you darling"
191 cw: **tell her** it was home-made
192 kw: I was just gonna say that
193 kw: "it's home-made, darling"

Here the discussion on how the role play should proceed is shown on the right and the role play conversation on the left. The role play can be read as an independent discussion. None of the other types of prompting sequences can be restructured in this way. Although it might be justified to separate the different types of prompts, it is not necessary for the present purposes. However, in a larger corpus, which would include more role play and similar activities, the category of prompts, as it is established here, would have to be reconsidered.

### 4.3.3.2 Tutorials

Tutorial sequences are stretches of conversation where a clear didactic intention can be seen: one speaker takes on the role of a teacher intentionally or unintentionally (Wells 1975). Children can teach their peers and can act as helpers. Wiles (1985:87) points out how peer-reinforced language development is a strong motivation for language learning. Children are able to support each other and differentiate according to their interlocutor's skills (Wiles 1985:87; Hirvonen 1984). Children's discussions offer a different and wider linguistic range than is provided by an adult (Peck 1978, Cathcart-Strong 1986).

In the present data, the children were not assigned expert roles and they do not in general act as teachers. It may be a role that not everybody is willing or able to take. However, there are several examples of switching to didactic mode in Caroline's conversation with the beginner, Matsumi, which matches Caroline's overall attitude and willingness to modify and negotiate. Tutorials are here seen as yet another way of engaging the learner in the conversation and supporting both speakers' conversational efforts.

In (74) the NS initiates the sequence by asking a real information question as opposed to a display question, but then the sequence develops into a tutorial carried out by modelling and repetition.

**(74)** Caroline (cw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house [52, 4.3.2.4]

059 cw: you like Little Red...?
060 **say "Little Red Riding Hood"** prompt
061 mt: wha'?
062 cw: say Little Red Riding Hood
063 mt: (Japanese 'I can't say it, it's too difficult')
064 cw: no: **Little Red Riding Hood** modelling
[exaggeratedly slow, each word stressed separately]
065 mt: (Japanese 'I do not know') [imitating Caroline's rhythm and stress]
066 cw: **Little Red Riding Hood** (/r/ [R]) modelling
067 mt: * *

068 (Japanese 'I can't say it, so difficult to pronounce')
069 cw: (imitates Matsumi 'you fool')
070 mt: (Japanese 'you remember')

The question about whether the learner likes Little Red Riding Hood, line 059, is interrupted and possibly at that point the NS decides that here she will make the learner say something by teaching her to say *Little Red Riding Hood*. Where the impulse for this came from is not clear, since there were no pictures or anything connected with the Little Red Riding Hood story. The NS's efforts are not successful, as far as the actual teaching goes, since the learner responds in Japanese. However, she is successful at keeping the interaction going: Matsumi responds to each request by saying something. Again, the fact that she refuses to comply with Caroline's requests is not significant from Caroline's point of view, since Caroline does not know this, at least on the basis of linguistic information. Matsumi may, of course, use non-linguistic indicators, such as shaking her head, that give Caroline an idea of what she is saying. If anything like that goes on, the NS does not, however, let it deter her.

The tutorial sequence is started by prompting the learner to say the phrase *Little Red Riding Hood*, line 060. This phrase is then repeated and modeled three times, lines 062, 064 and 066, first verbatim as a response to a request for clarification, line 062, then as a correction to Matsumi's Japanese utterance, line 064, pronounced clearly, with exaggerated slow pace, each word stressed separately. Although Matsumi at this point imitates Caroline's rhythm of speech and stress pattern when answering in Japanese, line 065, she still refuses to say anything in English. Finally Caroline models the pronunciation of /r/, line 066, as if thinking that this is where the difficulty lies. She models /r/ as a strongly rolled variant [R], not normally found in Welsh English. After this the sequence continues as exchanges of Japanese utterances (from line 068 onward).

This tutorial sequence can also be considered as an instance of both task and repair negotiation. Certainly the learner keeps negotiating with regard to Caroline's requests, even though she does it in Japanese. At that level it does not succeed as task negotiation, since the learner does not give the NS enough information to negotiate about. Matsumi initially asks for repetition, line 061, but after that she understands perfectly well what Caroline wants and refuses (in Japanese) to cooperate, since she finds the task requested too difficult. Caroline, of course, does not understand what Matsumi says. Therefore, it is even possible that she interprets Matsumi's Japanese utterances as further requests for repetition and treats the sequence as repair negotiation, which is overlaid with didactic characteristics.

As pointed out in the discussion on repetition (see 4.3.2.4), tutorials are a special type of sequence where repetition is required. Both modelling and corrections found in tutorials tend to incorporate repetition. The correction in (74) is indicated with *no*, line 064, and occurs as part of prompting the learner to repeat *Little Red Riding Hood*. Some of the prompts discussed above show characteristic didactic features: requesting the learner to do something in a manner that is not expected in play between equals, for example all of a sudden asking the interlocutor to sing or to read (see eg. (68)

above in 4.3.3.1). However, not all prompts are didactic in their intention and there are didactic sequences that do not incorporate the use of prompts (see (75) below).

Similarly to (74), in (75) the NS initiates a sequence by asking an information question. Soon the sequence develops into something in which seeking for information is not the main concern. The didactic intention is carried out by repetition and modelling of the conversational structure.

(75) Caroline (cw; NS) with Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/at Katja's house [11, 4.2.2]

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 206 | cw: | Matsumi, your house gonna be big? | | | | |
| | | | 207 | mt: | wha*? | |
| | | | 208 | cw: | your house gonna be BIG? | |
| 209 | mt: | yes | | | | |
| 210 | cw: | **is your house gonna be BIG?** | | | | |
| 211 | mt: | ye::::s | | | | |
| 212 | cw: | **YOUR house gonna be big?** | | | | |
| 213 | mt: | yes, short | | | | |
| 214 | cw: | you got a brother? | | | | |
| 215 | mt: | yes, short | | | | |
| 216 | cw: | no, Matsumi: you got a brother, Matsumi? | | | | correction |
| 217 | mt: | yes | | | | |
| 218 | cw: | little brother? | | | | |
| 219 | mt: | big brother | | | | |
| 220 | cw: | big brother | | | | |
| 221 | | **is Koko your SISTER?** | | | | |
| 222 | mt: | no | | | | |
| 223 | cw: | **is YUKI your sister?** | | | | |
| 224 | mt: | no, no sister | | | | real new information? |
| 225 | cw: | **are Yuki and Koko FRIENDS?** | | | | |
| 226 | mt: | yes | | | | |
| 227 | cw: | **are Yuki and Koko, sisters?** | | | | pause before a key word |
| 228 | mt: | yes | | | | |
| 229 | cw: | **are you cousins?** | | | | |
| 230 | mt: | no | | | | |
| 231 | cw: | no | | | | |

This excerpt can be seen as an instance of modelling conversational sequences, as opposed to the modelling of pronunciation in (74). The sequence starts with Caroline's question about Matsumi's Lego house, and after a repair negotiation side sequence, lines 207-8, continues as repetitions of the same question. In two consecutive repetitions the final adjective is stressed, line 208 and 210, but then Caroline shifts the stress to the possessive pronoun as if asking whether it is Matsumi's house that is going to be big, line 212. Matsumi's answers are affirmative (in English). In one answer, line 213, she changes the adjective *big* to *short*. Caroline accepts this, although she corrects Matsumi's answer to her following question. The correction occurs when she does not receive the expected answer to her question *You got a brother?*, line 214. Matsumi answers *Yes, short*, line 215, repeating her previous answer, line 213. Caroline, however, does not accept this either as an appropriate or correct answer (Caroline knows Matsumi's

brother). Matsumi gives the correct and appropriate answer, line 217, to Caroline's repeated question.

Caroline continues on the topic of Matsumi's brother, asking whether the brother is a little brother, line 218. Matsumi answers *Big brother*, line 219, and Caroline acknowledges the answer by repeating her answer, line 220. Having started on the topic of family relations, Caroline continues asking questions about Matsumi's supposed relations to two other Japanese girls from their school, from line 221 onward. She switches stress when presenting a new lexical item dealing with family relations, lines 221 and 225. There is a pause before the word *Sisters*, line 227 either as a strategic pause before a key word or as a mark of hesitation when looking for yet another relationship to check on. In this way Caroline models, and has the learner rehearse, both a series of lexical items on relationships and the structure of conversational sequencing. It is doubtful how necessary the modelling of conversational sequencing is considering the learner's L1 competence by this age, but the learner can practise content questions that she is likely to encounter on other occasions.

In (75) the NS corrects the learner once, line 216. This is an instance of correcting an inappropriate answer, as discussed above in chapter 4.1, example (17).

Repetition is one of the features that characterize the tutorials. Repetition occurs as an acknowledgement in three-part question-answer-acknowledgement exchanges on two occasions: the NS repeats the learner's answer *Big brother*, line 220, and *No*, line 231. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975:51) have found such exchanges to be typical of teaching situations.

In addition to the difficulty of distinguishing negotiation from tutorials (see the discussion in connection with (74) above), it is not always easy to distinguish real negotiation from display information. In (75) it is assumed that Caroline actually knows about Matsumi's family and is aware of the fact that the other Japanese girls from their school are not Matsumi's cousins. If this is the case, then negotiation in this context, lines 214-231, is **display negotiation**, which is used to involve the learner and teach routines, and not to find out new information. On the other hand, Matsumi's answer on line 224 may contain real new information, since she might have a younger or older sister who Caroline knows nothing about.

It may be significant that the only corrections and rejections expressed in Caroline's conversation with Matsumi occur in tutorial sequences. Caroline distances herself from these few rejections and delivers them in her tutorial role, which is something that children at school learn to expect from their teachers. In this way she does not need to incorporate rejections in her role as a peer.

Since slow pace and stress are used elsewhere in the same conversation, it is not these features as such that make the sequences cited in (74) and (75) tutorial. Rather, it is the modelling in (74) and the modelling and asking display questions in (75) that call for such a definition. Display questions are questions whose answers are known in advance. Caroline uses these strategies almost exclusively in the tutorial sequence mode. She finds that it is possible to engage the interlocutor in conversation by

teaching her, and her teaching includes prompts, modelling, slow pace, stressing key words and strategic pauses.

In addition to constructing tutorial sequences of the kind discussed, some characteristics of tutoring learners can be found in sequences that do not have didactic purposes as their main aim. One such feature is a teacher-like quality used in expressions of approval. Some repetition and explanation of lexical items can also be considered in this connection.

Repetitions of single lexical items can be delivered in a teacher-like manner and used to emphasize the message, as in the following example.

**(76)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
016 at: uh Yasushi, one of these?
017 another one of these, we need
018 ym: door?
019 at: yeah, yes door
020 ym: door door
021 at: eh? no, **only one, one** Yasushi, **only one door, one door**

Especially interesting are efforts at explaining word meanings and naming objects, which can lead to negotiations. The NS in these examples is the only NS who makes extensive use of this device. The explanation can be given as a response to the learner's request for clarification, as below in (77) and (78).

**(77)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
037 ym: **what's *seal*?**
038 at: eh?
039 ym seal
040 at: **stickoes, stickers, stickers**

**(78)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
083 ym: **what is this?** (5) what is this?
084 at: **light, for uh the police car dee dee dee dee**
085 ym: a h
086 at: **beeboo beeboo wroom wroom**

The two examples differ in that in (77) the learner expressly asks what a word means, line 037, whereas in (78) he wants to know what an object is called or used for, line 083. In (77) after a repair sequence, lines 038-9, Anthony explains the meaning requested by providing a synonym, first given in a slightly deviant form, then repeated twice, line 040. In (78) Anthony names the object and then provides an additional explanation not through a synonym but through an onomatopoeic expression describing the sound of a police car siren, line 084. This explanation is reinforced with another similar expression, line 086, after the learner acknowledges the first one, line 085. Similarly, in the following the meaning of *police car* is emphasized with such an onomatopoeic expression, lines 014-5.

**(79)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
012 at: what more, trees?
013 ym: huh
014 at: **police wroom wroom cars**

015 you build **the police cars, the cars wroom wroom**, the

The other explanations are either elaborations, as in (80), line 033 and (81), line 060, or provision of a synonym, as in (81), line 066.

**(80)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
031 at: oh no no, we will build a park
032 ym: park
033 at: **park for playing**
034 we're going to the park

**(81)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
058 at: it's a *
059 ym: yeah (4)
060 at: **seat, seat to sit on, seats, seat, right?**
061 ym: one two three seat
062 at: * seat
063 ym: a:::h, look this (3)
064 at: trousers, trousers, Yasushi
065 ym: yeah
066 at: **pants** huhhuh (13)

In each instance the explanation is given after the learner's acknowledgement, without any indication of a comprehension problem. They do not seem to function as strategies for avoiding trouble either, especially since Anthony does not extensively use any other such strategies. Anthony does not so much try to avoid trouble as he attacks the problem, when it is encountered. For this he uses a variety of techniques to support his conversation with Yasushi (aL): decomposition, framing and repetition. On the other hand, his NT interaction with Sanjay is characterised by explanations, which are given as responses to Sanjay's questions. The explanations are much longer and more involved than they would need to be for him to simply answer the question. Therefore, it seems that giving explanations is a feature that characterises Anthony's conversations.

Although Caroline remains the only NS who constructs deliberate tutorial sequences of the kind discussed, there are two other NSs who show some characteristics of tutoring learners. These are Joanne and Anthony, whose expressions of approval and rejection were discussed above (see examples (24)-(29) in section 4.3.1). Both show a teacher-like quality in their expressions of approval. Moreover, Anthony uses some repetition and explanation of lexical items.

Tutorials have been discussed as one device that NSs can use to support the construction of conversation with a less than fully competent learner. Tutorials have been defined as sequences with a possibly deliberate didactic intent, teacher-like, and sometimes with pedantic expressions of approval and support together with provision of lexical explanations that support the flow of the conversation. Tutorials involve modelling and asking display questions; often they form three-part exchanges typical of didactic contexts. Tutorials are employed only by some NSs. The children were not assigned expert roles and only a few take up such a didactic role. One speaker, Caroline, is noticeable in how she switches to a didactic mode

with the beginner, Matsumi. Such behaviour matches Caroline's overall attitude and willingness to modify and negotiate.

#### 4.3.3.3 Language play

Play with language can cover any area of language organization or language use. This is not a prolifically studied area, but for example Garvey (1977) and Iwamura (1980) have looked at language play. Mostly it is considered in the context of early language acquisition and in the language of preschoolers. Language play progresses from simple vocalizations to play on speech acts and conversational structures, and at the same time the child's increasing experience with the world outside the home is incorporated in this play (Garvey 1977). By the time children have reached the age in question in the present study they can generate sophisticated play with language and with social materials. In the present data language play is used both in FT and NT, and there are instances of sound play initiated both by the NS and the learner and instances of role play.

A typical example of sound play, variations on a word using different vowels and consonants, although an isolated occurrence in this particular interaction, is the following from a game instruction interaction:

**(82)** David (dm; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/19/M+F/game/at school

093 ca: bill
094 dm: uh
095 ca: **hang**
096 dm: uh
097 ca: **hing**
098 dm: uh
099 ca: **ping**
100 dm: hey, come on

The learner initiates language play, lines 095, 097 and 099, which is not taken up by the NS. The NS is more oriented towards the game that the children are playing (the NS's request to return to the task at hand on line 100), and the learner has to abandon the language play. Sound play can also be what Garvey (1977:65) calls action-identifying tags, as in (78) above, where the action-identifying tags, lines 084 and 086, are used for didactic purposes, since the NS tries to explain to the learner what the light is for.

Another FT interaction, in addition to interaction 35, where language play is extensively used, is interaction 7, with Caroline and Matsumi. Quite minimal and uninterpretable responses lead to long exchange of sounds and Japanese expressions. A great deal of sound play and routine exchanges of words like *yes* and *no* together with various greetings are used in the effort to involve the learner. The following example incorporates several elements typical of these exchanges.

**(83)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

169 mt: (Japanese)
170 cw: (imitates Matsumi)
171 mt: (Japanese)

172 cw: daadaadaa
173 mt: (Japanese)
174 cw: Matsumi, wow wow wow
175 mt: (Japanese)
176 cw: "clap clap clap clap your hands, clap your hands together " [sings]
177 mt: uh?
178 cw: * * *
179 mt: /(Japanese)/
180 cw: /(imitates singing)/
181 mt: (Japanese)
182 cw: hello
183 mt: goodbye
184 cw: thank you
185 mt: goodbye
186 cw: hello, thank you, goodbye
187 mt: goodbye
188 cw: hello
189 mt: goodbye
190 cw: hello
191 mt: goodbye goodbye goodbye /goodbye/
192 cw: /hello/ thank you please, Matsumi please please
193 mt: goodbye
194 cw: please
195 cw: thank you
196 mt: goodbye
197 cw: thank you
198 mt goodbye
199 cw: hello
200 mt: goodbye (2) goodbye goodbye goodbye goodbye goodbye /goodbye goodbye/
201 cw: /goodbye/
202 mt: (Japanese *sayonara*)
203 cw: (imitates from earlier: kurukurupa Matsumi kurukurupa)
204 mt: (Japanese)

The first part of the sequence is concerned with Japanese utterances and singing. The NS imitates the learner, line 170, and then, after the learner's Japanese utterance, continues with a sound play element, line 172. Singing is used both together with sound play, line 174, or imitation, line 180, and without combining it with any other play activity, line 176. The latter part is made up of the learner's *goodbye* and the NS's varied attempts to introduce other elements into the game. The sequence starts with the NS's *hello*, line 182, which the learner responds to by saying *goodbye*, line 183. The learner tries to introduce another pair of politeness formulae by saying *thank you*, line 184, probably expecting the learner to say *please* (see line 192), but the learner repeats *goodbye*, line 185. After the NS repeats all the three phrases used so far, line 186, the learner initiates by repeating *goodbye*, line 187, and the NS responds with *hello*. This exchange is repeated, lines 189 and 190. After the learner's repetition, line 191, the NS again tries to introduce *please*, this time more explicitly by modelling and directing her utterance directly to the learner, repeating the new element, line 192. After repeated attempts, the NS gives up and returns to the pair *goodbye/hello*, line 199, and the learner very fast repeats the only word she produces in this game *goodbye*, line 200. After this the learner switches into Japanese, giving the

Japanese equivalent of *goodbye*, line 202, and the NS produces another Japanese word that she remembers form earlier in the interaction. Sound play, together with imitating, singing and playful repetition combined with didactic elements are all included in this play sequence.

In addition, there are some ungrammatical utterances and clearly didactic or tutorial sequences in this interaction (see section 4.3.3.2 above). It has been pointed out above that Matsumi's code switching may make possible and support the playfulness and vagueness of purpose in this interaction. The NS may feel free to explore different possibilities, since the learner has also decided to break the rules by using a language not shared by both interlocutors. The NS is quite willing to play the game and makes herself vulnerable by trying out strange things and thereby showing the learner that she can do the same.

The techniques for social play include talk about procedures and enactments. Enactments include any overt representation of the characteristics of the role or identity adopted (Garvey 1977:87). Enactments can be stereotyped or realistic. Children are able to produce realistic enactments quite early, for instance mimicking how doctors speak or how Mummy speaks to a baby. The roles adopted can be either stereotyped (doctor, nurse) or fictional (Santa Claus, Cookie Monster). Social play requires a great deal of knowledge of conversational and role conventions. Talk about procedures and enactment are incorporated into the following discussion on what role the Lego doll should take:

**(84)** Anthony (at: NS) and Yasushi (ym: aL)/35/M+M/play/at school

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 067 | ym: | what is this? | |
| 068 | at: | eh? | |
| 069 | | man: "hello" | [man's voice imitated] |
| 070 | ym: | no, girl | |
| 071 | at: | "hello, hello, hello" | [girl's voice imitated] |
| 072 | ym: | it's girl | |
| 073 | at: | yes, it's a girl, not not man | |

Both the NS and the learner participate in deciding whether the doll is a man, as suggested by the NS, line 069, or a girl, as suggested by the learner, line 070. After the NS enacts a second voice quality, the learner reaffirms his choice, line 072, and the NS acknowledges it, line 073. Further examples of play procedure and character roles can be found above in section 4.3.3.1, in the discussion on prompts in examples (69)-(71).

In the present data, examples of both language play and language play incorporating social play can be found. It is to be noted, however, that the use of language play is not extensive, with the exception of interaction 7. Moreover, any discussion on language play needs to take into account the prompting and tutorial sequences, which seem to be intertwined with both language and social play.

#### 4.3.3.4 Ungrammatical language

In his early studies on foreigner talk, Ferguson (1972:4; 1971:284) predicted the occurrence of certain ungrammatical forms in the language addressed to L2 speakers. They would come about as the result of omissions of inflections and the copula and of replacements of forms, eg. *me* as a subject form. However, the predicted ungrammatical forms have not generally been found in FT studies. Long (1981a:264) has proposed the following conditions which may predict the occurrence of ungrammatical forms:

(1) the NNS has very limited command of the language of communication,
(2) the NS is, or thinks she is, of higher social status,
(3) the NS has considerable FT experience, and
(4) the conversation occurs spontaneously.

Out of the proposed conditions, only one may apply here, that of the conversation occurring spontaneously. The play sessions were arranged for the recordings but involved the children in a free play situation with no adult present, and therefore the conversations can be considered spontaneous. The other conditions do not apply: some learners have a very limited command of English, but when all the FT is considered together the effect that this may have had on the grammaticality of the native speakers' language is probably very slight. Certainly two NSs, when speaking to the same beginner, behave differently in this respect: one NS's language contains ungrammatical utterances and the other's none at all. None of the children, and especially those who used ungrammatical forms, had extensive FT experience. Therefore, Long's proposed third condition does not apply.

The fourth of Long's proposed criteria is that when the native speaker is, or thinks she is, of higher social status, she is more likely to use ungrammatical speech. This type of criterion may be applied in work situations where for instance a non-native factory worker is addressed by a native speaker in a higher position (see eg. Clyne 1977). Children, of course, learn and imitate the attitudes and prejudices of adults around them but there are no clear indications in any of the conversations that a condescending attitude, as in interaction 1 noted above (section 4.3.1), would have led to ungrammatical speech. On the contrary, the one child, Caroline, in whose speech ungrammaticality is used as a FT strategy shows willingness to play and take on a role of a learner as well as that of a teacher, for example by imitating her interlocutor's Japanese utterances. This, of course, does not preclude the possibility that a teacher may also show condescension, but there is nothing in Caroline's language to indicate such an attitude.

In Ferguson and DeBose's (1977:104) proposed differentiation of "talking up" and "talking down" in a FT situation ungrammaticality is considered a feature of "down" talk. Similarly Long's criteria for ungrammatical language indicate features of "down" talk. Ungrammaticality is also a simplifying process, resulting from modifications that take into account the interlocutor's level of language skills. In the present data, most of the few ungrammatical utterances that occur in FT do not seem to be the result of either "talking down" or of modifying. Rather, they seem to

be performance errors caused by excitement or a need to communicate something quickly, as in *Did you **mixed** some of these up?* (Katja with Maisa (aL)/interaction 5/line 054). However, some ungrammatical utterances would seem to be the result of almost conscious modification, as in Caroline's speech and in that of some others. In the following example, in which the NS uses the learner's deviant form *your*, line 123, similar reciprocity can be noticed as Hatch (1978) reports in experienced FL teachers' language.

**(85)** Damian (dm; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/19/M+F/game/at school
122 ca: mine, your, mine, you hey, mine, yours, mine, yours
123 dm: mine, **your**

Also, there are a few examples of bilingual native speakers' errors, which may be caused by interference from their other language or indicate deficiencies in their English, as in the following examples, where the speaker is a speaker of English and Punjabi:

**(86)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school
066 sh: **what she is?** (pro *what is she?)*

**(87)** Anthony (at; NS) and Sanjay (sh; NS)/38/M+M/play/at school [45, 4.1.3; 41, 4.2.4]
166 sh: **why we came down here?** (*pro* why did we come down here?)
167 at: eh? why did we come down here?
168 sh: yeah
169 at: I told you, 'cause the girl is studying, people

Two NSs, both monolingual speakers of English, show a tendency to modify using ungrammatical structures. They are Caroline and Joanne, both of whom have been discussed above in the context of showing approval and using tutorial sequences or didactic language. When all these features are considered together, the use of ungrammatical language seems to indicate willingness to modify and negotiate.

The grammatical modifications in Joanne's speech to Chazal include omitting the copula and the article, as in (88)-(90).

**(88)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/F+F/play/at school
049 jn: good girl, nice
050 **is it dog**? (16)

**(89)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/F+F/play/at school
108 jn: o:::h **that no good**, look at that

**(90)** Joanne (jn; NS) and Chazal (ca; bL)/18/F+F/play/at school
112 jn: wonder who did it (13)
113 * * * *
114 steps, **that right**

In (88) the article is omitted from the noun phrase and the speaker says *dog* pro *a dog*. Similarly, in (89) and (90) the copula is omitted, lines 108 and 114, respectively. It is, of course, possible that these examples are also performance errors or expressions that children use among themselves, and

do not count as grammatical modification. There are similar examples in Caroline's language when talking to Matsumi. She uses intonation questions with no copula (eg. *this good?*/interaction 7/line 002). Caroline, however, on one occasion in negotiating about play, also uses clearly grammatically modified language, shown in (91).

**(91)** Caroline (cw; NS) and Matsumi (mt; bL)/7/F+F/play/in Katja's house

159 cw: Matsumi, we're gonna make **big house**?
160 mt: yes
161 cw: you **make house** and **me make house**, and (3) m, make a house and **me make** a house?
162 mt: yes (25)
163 cw: Matsumi, make a big, big house [makes a sucking noise]
164 mt: yes [laughs] (Japanese 'doesn't look good this looks better what to do with this I'm not skillful')

In this sequence, Caroline starts with a modified noun phrase, *big house* pro *a big house* in the object position, line 159. When repeating her suggestion about making a house, line 161, she again uses the noun phrase *house* without an article twice, line 161, and, after a slight pause, repeats her suggestion, this time including the indefinite article in both uses of *house* as an object. Caroline initially uses the subject *we*, which she modifies by indicating the subjects *you* and *me* separately (a type of decomposition without left-dislocation to make salient the subject *we*). In the last repetition, the subject of the first verb is not expressed, making it more like an imperative. Preceding the verb without a subject is a slight sound, possibly a hesitation over whether to call the learner by name.

Changes in the verb phrase in (91) can be considered part of the modification process. Initially Caroline uses an expression *we're gonna make* (line 159). Considering her verb phrases in general, an expression of modality is expected, either as used here or with the auxiliary *will/shall*. In her repetition, she, however, switches to using *make*, which in this context looks like the base form. The progress of modification can be described as follows:

| | **subject** | **verb** | **object** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **initial utterance** | *we*<br>unmodified | *are gonna make*<br>unmodified | *big house*<br>modified |
| **first repetition** | *you/me*<br>modified | *make*<br>modified | *house*<br>modified |
| **second repetition** | *-/me*<br>modified | *make*<br>modified | *a house*<br>unmodified |

The subject and the verb change from an unmodified to a modified form for the final repetition and the object from modified to unmodified. The object noun phrase is, however, simplified in that the adjective premodifier is used in the initial expression and subsequently omitted.

Since modification is often understood as simplification, it might be assumed that modification results in shorter syntactic constituents than found in non-modified speech. However, the increased redundancy achieved by repetitions and by giving definitions and other explanations often results in longer, not shorter constituents (see eg. Arthur et al. 1980 and Hatch 1978). This is the case also in children's language. In Hirvonen (1984) it was found that the length of the subject constituent differed significantly between FT and NT, but not in the direction of simplification in FT: there were significantly more one-word subject constituents in NT than in FT. The length of the verbal group attained near significance in the expected direction, ie. more short verbal groups were found in FT. It seems that the explanations and expansions necessary in FT result in longer constituents precisely in contexts where modification is required, ie. in noun phrases. It was seen above that a similar contradiction between modification and length also arises in negotiations. Brevity as a condition of successful negotiation does not seem to apply, in all cases in children's language. A brief negotiation, although possibly less intrusive, does not achieve the same level of participation from the learner as does a longer and more involved negotiation, which explores every aspect of the interlocutors' interests.

In children's foreigner talk the spontaneity of the occasion may be a condition under which ungrammatical speech occurs, although this cannot be tested here since no other type of data were collected. The other conditions suggested by Long cannot explain the occurrence of ungrammatical speech in children's language. Rather, individual differences in willingness to modify and errors in performance would seem more likely to account for the ungrammatical speech found. The condition of a learner's limited command of the language in question may possibly explain the need for modification, but the modifications only follow if the native speaker is willing to use this tactic and, in the present data, not all the native speakers are. Moreover, there are differences between the children in how aware they are of the possibilities for linguistic modification. When asked, some children said that one needs to speak slower and use simpler words to a learner. One boy's answer was: "You have to say *no you friend*, you cannot say *I'm not your friend.*"

#### 4.3.3.5 Summary

In this chapter, tutorials, prompts, language play and ungrammatical language have been discussed as speaker-dependent tactics that are found in some speakers' repertoire. Some subjects provide the type of modelling and asking of display questions that have been defined as tutorials. Explanation of lexical items is used by one NS. Also the use of prompts and language play is limited to a few interactions: prompts are used to overcome difficulties by overtly requesting the interlocutor to carry out an action. Examples of both language play and language play incorporating social play can be found in several interactions, but language play is not extensively used except in a couple of interactions. Prompting and tutorial sequences seem to be connected with both language and social play.

Some children in the present data also have a tendency to use ungrammatical language to help the learner understand and to support the conversational process. Free play seems to provide the type of spontaneous conditions in which ungrammatical language may occur. Caroline is the only speaker who uses ungrammatical language somewhat systematically. In Caroline's discourse there is a clear distinction both between her NT and FT, on one hand, and beginner FT and advanced FT, on the other: ungrammatical forms are used to support the interaction only in her beginner FT.

The speaker-dependent tactics identified in the present data are all interconnected: prompts can be connected with language play, since they can be used to initiate certain types of activities, eg. role play. Language play, on the other hand, can lead to tutorial sequences, where modelling takes place and the learner may again be prompted to try new vocabulary items or structures.

### 4.3.4 Learner tactics

The most obvious learner tactic in these data is the use of clarification requests. All the learners make requests for clarification, which range from requests for repetition (eg. *eh?* and *what?)* to requests to specify a referent and requests for confirmation. There is no difference between beginners and advanced learners in this respect, and therefore it seems that competence level does not affect the use of this device. The other tactics used by the learners are framing, decomposition and insisting on answers. Long's strategies and tactics (1983) have been defined as NS strategies but they can also function as learner strategies with a slight shift in emphasis. For instance, the learner's attention-getting devices, in addition to gaining the interlocutor's attention, may serve functions similar to NSs' frames.

***Requests for clarification.*** Among the clarification requests, requests for repetition are frequent and occur in all the interactions. Often the request is expressed as *eh?*, as in the following examples.

**(92)** Farah (fa; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/11/F+M/play with Lego/at school
037 fa: Muslims don't eat pork
038 aa: **eh?**
039 fa: Muslims don't eat pork (what I say to you)

**(93)** Farah (fa; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/11/F+M/play with Lego/at school
127 fa: two minutes to eleven
128 aa: **eh?**
129 fa: two minutes to eleven

**(94)** Farah (fa; NS) and Aedy (aa; bL)/11/F+M/play with Lego/at school
109 fa: is there another doll?
110 where? [decomposition]
111 aa: **eh?**
112 fa: where's the other doll?

The NS either repeats verbatim, as in (92) and (93), or via a slight reformulation, as in (94), where the yes/no question becomes a wh-question. The repetition is provided when requested for and the learner's comprehension is secured. Several of these sequences occur within negotiation sequences.

There is inter-learner variation both in the range and quantity of the tactics used. For instance, in interaction 1 (Vance/NS and David/bL) the only learner tactic for repairing trouble is requesting repetition. Requests are used repeatedly till about half-way through the session, but there they stop. The learner's attempts at securing clarification through requests are not very successful, as can be seen in the following examples.

**(95)** Vance (vn; NS) and David (dc; bL)/1/M+M/play/at school

017 vn: Mr Edwards talked on the tape
018 dc: **what?**
019 vn: Mr Edwards talked on there
020 dc: **what?**
vn: - [sighs] (12)

**(96)** Vance (vn; NS) and David (dc; bL)/1/M+M/play/at school

044 vn: David
045 dc: **what?**
046 ? * *
047 vn: your mum wants you
048 dc: **what?**
049 vn: **Mr E called you, he said "David"**

Half of David's requests for repetition receive a repetition that can be considered adequate or helpful, eg. in (95), line 019, the other half either receive no reply, line 020, or the message changes in a teasing sequence as in (96), lines 047 and 049. It is possible that the NS's behaviour discourages the learner from further attempts at achieving better comprehension.

The general impression of this particular conversation is that the learner does not contribute very much and that there are longish pauses. It seems to be a typical feature of the interactions with beginners that there are more and longer pauses than with more advanced learners or in NT. The impression is, however, slightly misleading in this instance: about one third of the learner utterances are requests for repetition or acknowledgements, which means that David contributes by letting the NS know about problems in interaction and in this way makes it possible for the NS to bear his responsibility. The NS, however, does not do everything he could to develop the interaction using the learner's contributions. Possibly it is the extensive use of requests for clarification in this interaction that leads to the termination of the topic development.

Differences between beginners in their use of tactics were discussed above. There are also differences between advanced learners. Mei Kien's role in meaning negotiation has been exemplified in long sequences (see chapter 4.2.4). It only needs to be repeated that she is a skilful negotiator and uses a wide range of tactics. Another advanced learner, Yasushi, does not make extensive use of either the strategies or the tactics identified here. Only a couple of times does he request repetition or confirmation, as in the

following, line 009, where the NS typically uses repetition to emphasize his answer.

**(97)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
008 at: flowers, more flowers
009 ym: **flowers?**
010 at: flowers, yeah, flowers, Yasushi

Although there is variation in the use of clarification requests, they are used by all the learners. The other tactics identified are, however, speaker-dependent tactics in the same sense as speaker-dependent tactics used by NSs: a tactic may be used by some subjects, or one subject only, in these data. The fact that this is the case points in the direction of more wide-spread individual variation. Insistence on answers and the use of formulaic speech are examples of such speaker-dependent learner tactics.

***Insistence on answers.*** Insistence on answers is a tactic used by Maisa, an advanced learner. Her interaction with the NS requires that the learner actively seek for this particular NS's support, since she does not necessarily respond to everything that the learner says. The tactic is available to the learner because of her fairly high competence level. As shown by the following examples, Maisa insists on an answer from Katja several times during the interaction.

**(98)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house [35,4.2.4]
015 md: oh, can we put there blues?
016 kw: we need two squares now
017 md: **what what colour?**
018 kw: one square now
019 md: **what colour?**
020 kw: any colour [impatient]

**(99)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/at Katja's house [5, 4.3.1]
095 md: **what's that?**
096 **what is it?**
097 it's not a good tree
098 **it's not a good tree**
099 kw: I made that so why did you say it's not good?

In the examples above the learner has difficulties in securing a response from the NS. In (98), as shown by the layout, the learner and NS talk parallel to each other about two different things (as discussed above in chapter 4.1): the learner keeps insisting till she receives a response, line 020. In (99) her repeated question, lines 095 and 096, and comment, lines 097 and 098, challenge Katja to respond, line 099, whereas the learner's pleas do not work in (100) below:

**(100)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house [6, 4.3.1]
208 md: that's her bed
209 can we do a bed for her, a nice bedroom, all right?
210 come on, shall we?
211 a nice, nice, nice bedroom for her no response

Katja's non-response results in the learner producing a kind of monologue, the purpose of which is probably to gain the NS's attention. The sequence is a plea directed at Katja, asking for Katja to allow Maisa to do something (because Katja is the hostess and to an extent controls the materials for the activity). There are other sequences, where Maisa develops her topic by commenting on it herself as in (101), lines 189-191.

**(101)** Katja (kw; NS) and Maisa (md; aL)/5/F+F/play/in Katja's house [13, 4.3.1]
189 md: she [the doll] haven't got a baby yet
190 all right, let's (2) find a boy
191 that's her his husband her husband
192 kw: no

One possibility is, of course, that Maisa talks too much for Katja to have her say. However, it is more likely that she produces these near-monologues, because Katja does not say anything. The latter reason is more likely also considering Katja's behaviour in her other interactions.

***Formulaic speech.*** The use of formulae is a feature frequently found in learners' interlanguage (see eg. Peters and Boggs (1986); Nyyssönen and Rapakko (1992) and House (1996b) for a review of routine formulae and their use in language teaching and in raising learners' metaphoric awareness). In the present data it is also found as a tactic, found especially in the speech of one learner, Aedy. The expressions frequently used are *There* (interaction 12/line 047), *Hey look* (interaction 11/line 052) or *Look that* (interaction 12/line 156), *It/that nice* (interaction 11/line 023).

There are other learners, who also use formulaic expressions. In Mona's speech they are often repeated, as in the following example, lines 027, 029 and 040:

**(102)** Christine (cc; NS) and Mona (ma; aL)/15/F+F/play/at school
027 ma: **no, give me, give me**
028 cc: I know, I know
029 ma: **give me, give me**

039 cc: just two more flowers
040 ma: no, that (3) and that's comes from the house **OK, all right?**

The NS has a tendency to repeat her expressions, which may have an effect on the learner. Above, the expression *give me* seems like a typical formula learnt by a beginner to make sure that she can contribute something to the activity (cf. Wong Fillmore's (1976) learner strategies). In (103) an expressive exclamation is used, which sounds like a formula:

**(103)** Christine (cc; NS) and Mona (ma; aL)/15/F+F/play/at school
048 cc: oh look at that, look
049 ma: **oh, isn't it special?!**
050 cc: a:::::h (4)
051 ma: window?
052 that's a window

053 cc: yes, I know

The learner is a beginner with a very limited command of English and it is fairly certain that *Oh isn't it special?!*, line 049, is a formula. It is acknowledged by the NS, line 050, and, therefore, functions as it should, helping the learner to enter the conversation and securing a response.

It was noticed in connection with NT meaning negotiation that the speakers are finely tuned to politeness. Similar attention to politeness can be identified in one learner's interaction. The learner in question, Yasushi is polite and gives positive evaluative comments of the type shown in the following example, line 047:

**(104)** Anthony (at; NS) and Yasushi (ym; aL)/35/M+M/play/at school
046 at: this is the garden, the house garden
047 ym: **good good**
048 at: yeah

Other examples are *This is very beautiful* (interaction 35/line 129) and *Oh yes it is, it is nice* (interaction 35/line 077). These are fairly frequent and are not found in other learners' discourse in play.

Politeness is one indicator of an interlocutor's orientation to the interaction. Above (see 4.2.4) NSs' orientation either to the task or interpersonally was discussed. Similarly, learners can show different orientation. An example of this is provided by David (interaction 1):

**(105)** Vance (vn; NS) and David (dc; bL) /1/M+M/play/at school
082 vn: see, look what you did * * [talks into the microphone, uses abusive language]
083 dc: **don't, Vance** [Vance continues playing with the tape recorder]

.
.

094 dc: **ooh, why did you do that?** [possibly playing with the tape recorder]

When Vance plays with the tape recorder, David does not like it and tells him to stop, lines 083 and 094. In general the learner seems very cautious compared with this rather loud and aggressive NS. The learner worries about the equipment and he is task-oriented, whereas in several other interactions it is the NS who is more task-oriented. Vance would prefer to play games but the task in this interaction was to play with the Lego. Several times, eg. lines 006, 052 ff. and 099, Vance either refers to the games available or suggests that they should play a game. Every time the learner refuses and returns to the original task.

The individual differences between the learners can be summarized as follows: those beginners who employ some tactic, eg. the use of formulaic speech, succeed in taking part in the interaction more equally with the NS, whereas those who do not use such a tactic do not gain entry into the conversation to the same extent. Among the advanced learners, an active negotiator can direct the interaction, but because of the higher proficiency level an advanced learner does not need to employ the same tactics as a beginner.

Although the basic assumption has been that the strategies and tactics employed by the NS are those that sustain the conversation and control the direction that it takes, the learner's contribution in each encounter has been acknowledged as important. In several instances it has been pointed out that the learner also directs the interaction, and it is acknowledged that learners have a major role in shaping the course of the conversations in which they are involved. Children may teach adults how to offer them optimal input rather than vice versa (Wells 1987:45-48; Bates 1982:49). Long (1981:263) argues that also in L2 acquisition the verbal feedback given by the learner triggers the modifications found in the NS's input. The learner's crucial role can be seen also in the fact that in addition to stimulating the NS to provide input the learner selects the input that she wants to receive. Thus the learner pays attention only to input which is meaningful to her (Sajavaara 1987:1192-1194). Hence, those learner strategies and tactics that are relevant in the present data have been discussed along with the NS strategies and tactics.

### 4.3.5 Summary

The realizations of conversational support required in interaction have been the topic of this chapter. The overall tone of the interaction as expressed in approval or overriding and the context-dependent and speaker-dependent tactics used to repair communication problems have been discussed. The term tactics has been used to indicate repairs and support which are employed locally at the point of trouble either by restructuring or circumventing the trouble point by changing the plan of action. For instance, switching from transmission of information to language play or tutorial mode serves as a device to circumvent an impasse, either imminent or arisen.

Differences between NT and FT appear between the use of all context-dependent and all speaker-dependent tactics. Those tactics that have either a high supportive function or a strong prospective force are needed more in FT, including child-child conversation. There are features that are used only in FT, ie. tutorials, ungrammatical forms and repetitions as response to perceived comprehension problems. Also, it seems that language play is limited to FT as opposed to social play, which in the present data is almost exclusively used in NT.

The lower the learner's proficiency the more processing capacity is expended on keeping the interaction going. In all its characteristics beginner FT shows more differentiation between FT and NT than advanced FT, ie. the NSs are able to react to the learner's level of proficiency. Slow pace, stressing key words, decompositions, frames and language play are needed in beginner FT to try to secure the flow of conversation.

Regardless of the fact that all the FT interactions show the use of some of the characteristics associated with modified language, the NSs show definite differences in their behaviour. There is variation in the use of context-dependent tactics (eg. Caroline's use of decompositions and Katja's use of frames) and in the way the overall tone of the conversation is realized in the use of approval or overriding (Katja's expressions of

overriding vs. Caroline's tolerance of ambiguity and expressions of approval). The speaker-dependent tactics are, by definition, individual features not found in every NS's data: Caroline employs tutorials, prompts, ungrammatical forms and a wide range of language play in her FT interaction to a much larger extent than any other NS, although language play and prompts can be found in other interactions as well. Caroline also distinguishes between beginner FT and advanced FT: ungrammatical forms are used to support the interaction only in beginner FT.

Issues such as involvement and positioning may be relevant when considering the types of context- and speaker-dependent tactics discussed. The lack of overriding and expressions of approval and support found in some interactions may indicate high involvement, which may predict certain types of behaviour. In addition, the speakers can assume certain postures in the interaction, apart from their roles of knower and learner. They can either orient themselves to the task given or interpersonally to their interlocutors.

# 5 CONCLUSION

Foreigner talk and modification studies are connected to language acquisition studies and discourse studies. They offer insight into the use of language in various learning contexts for L2 learners, in this case in children's native speaker–non-native speaker play talk. Compared with native speaker-native speaker interaction, native speaker–non-native speaker interaction highlights possible sources of communicative breakdown and the processes needed to manage conversations and rectify the communication situation.

The present study was undertaken to explore possible variation in one discourse register, ie. junior school children's foreigner talk in a free play context. Few studies have dealt with children's foreigner talk register from the NS's point of view. One factor in choosing the target group for the study was that, according to some studies, the age of eight is one age limit by which certain discourse skills can be assumed to have been learnt. Moreover, little work has been done on children's language beyond the age of eight. The present study explores one learning context, children's free play, and is, in that sense, a study on second language learning. Since the data have not been collected with developmental aspects in mind, no claims can, however, be made about the effects of native speakers' different discourse styles on acquisition or on language acquisition processes.

The method of discourse analysis chosen for the study is eclectic, with ideas drawn both from modification studies in native speaker–non-native speaker register and from child language studies. This approach was chosen because the aim was to cover as many characteristics of children's foreigner talk as possible. Interaction takes place at many levels and so many factors influence it that no study can account for the whole picture. What was attempted here was the broadening of the picture by a consideration of the conversational space and the various types of support that the learner can have in interaction.

Each learner was recorded in free play with two native speakers. For control data, the same native speakers were recorded with each other. Therefore, one set of three subjects (one learner and two native speakers) yielded three interactions for analysis: two foreigner talk (FT) interactions and one native talk (NT) interaction. In this way, the following comparisons became possible: two native speakers were compared in foreigner talk interactions with the same learner, and the same native speakers' native talk interaction could be compared with their foreigner talk interactions. In addition, two native speakers were recorded in interaction both with a beginner and an advanced learner, which made it possible to compare the effect of the learner's proficiency level on the native speakers' foreigner talk features. The subjects were age peers and were assumed to have reached a similar level in their cognitive development and L1 skills. In addition to the differences in their skills in the learners' target language (English), the children differed in their cultural backgrounds.

**Results and discussion**

The research questions presented at the outset were the following:

1. Do the native speakers show individual variation in their NT and FT?
2. If individual variation is found, can we identify features that define speaker-dependent styles and those that define a speaker's context-dependent strategic choices in discourse?
3. What effect does the learner's level of linguistic skills have in foreigner talk (beginner FT vs. advanced FT)?

The questions were explored analyzing a number of linguistic and discourse features at four levels. At the interactional level, expressions of approval and rejection and indicators of polite or impolite behaviour were analyzed. The sequence level analysis identified sequence types that were used to either build interactional space or support the interlocutor in the children's foreigner talk discourse. At the exchange level, the basic level of analysis, the structure of initiation-response pairs, and the use of different initiation and response types in different discourse types were used to analyze the interactional space created. At the functional level, various strategies and tactics used by the speakers were identified. *Strategies* were defined as devices used to avoid conversational trouble. They may therefore have a long-term impact on the discourse. *Tactics,* on the other hand, were devices used locally to repair communicational trouble. The features thus analyzed defined the **interactional space** built and the space allowed to each participant in interaction. **Meaning negotiation** takes place in the interactional space to negotiate either the task that the interlocutors are engaged in or to repair miscommunication. **Support** is then provided locally to advance the conversation and to create the types of sequences, within which it is possible to negotiate meanings.

Individual variation was shown to exist between the NSs in the ways in which they managed the three areas discussed: space allowed, meaning negotiation and support (question 1). At the exchange level, initiation types,

eg. questions vs. statements, varied fairly systematically between some speakers (see further in the discussion of speaker-dependent and context-dependent choices below). In consequence, there were differences in the interactional space allowed to the learner: in the interactions in which the learner was able to respond, she was naturally able better to participate, which potentially had positive effects on her language acquisition process. At the functional level, the learner's entry into the interactional space can be facilitated with the use of strategies to preempt trouble. Variation in the use of some strategies, notably decomposition and framing, was found in the data. However, the use of such potentially powerful devices did not always have the facilitating effect predicted. It may be that the use of one device, if it cannot be combined with other strategies and tactics at other levels, is not enough for the learner to claim her space.

Individual variation was shown also at the interactional level in the realization of meaning negotiations. Some speakers showed more orientation towards the content of the play activity, and consequently had a tendency to negotiate in relation to the task, whereas others oriented themselves to the demands of the interaction itself. This can lead to differences at the exchange and sequence level of responding or not responding to the learner's initiations and creating the types of sequences that either interest or do not interest the learner. In addition, the functional level support features will vary as a result of such orientation, since the NS's orientation can to an extent decide whether she will perceive comprehension problems. Moreover, as the present data made especially clear, it can highlight the native speaker's tolerance towards ambiguous and fuzzy situations, eg. the learner's using a language not known to the native speaker. Negotiation of meanings in the ways that makes it possible for the learner to participate fully, and support the learner locally when there is trouble, are closely tied together. In the same way there is a close interconnection between the support or non-support shown at the interactional level in the form of approval and rejection and the space allowed to the learner.

In addition to the individual variation discussed above, a question was posed about the possibility that there are features in interaction which reflect individual speaker-dependent approaches to an interaction, on the one hand, and strategic choices, on the other. In the building of the interactional space and in the provision of support features were found which were used strategically by some speakers and which to other speakers were speaker-dependent. Most clearly this could be seen at the exchange level in terms of initiation and response types. Questions in initiations was a strategy feature for at least one speaker, ie. it was used in foreigner talk noticeably more than in native talk. For other speakers it was a speaker-dependent stylistic feature, ie. it was used in all types of discourse. Other initiations and response types, which showed differentiation between speaker-dependent and context-dependent choices were the use of statements and miscellaneous forms as an initiation type and non-response as a response type.

There were indications that the speaker-dependent vs. context-dependent differences in support could be realized at the sequence and functional levels. There were features in foreigner talk discourse not found

in native talk, ie. tutorials and ungrammatical forms used as tactics. These can be posited as context-dependent features. At the same time, they are also highly individual, speaker-dependent characteristics, in that they were only found in some speakers' data. Not all speakers are willing to take on a teaching role and ungrammatical forms are typically a characteristic of FT discourse that has not been found in all types of data. It seems that spontaneity of discourse is a necessary condition for ungrammatical forms to occur. However, the learner's limited command of the language and individual characteristics of the native speaker, especially willingness to modify are also needed to account for ungrammatical forms.

Prompts and language play were also features that clearly differentiated between foreigner talk and native talk discourse. However, they did not occur exclusively in foreigner talk, as did tutorials and ungrammatical forms. On the contrary, their realizations were different in the two discourse types: in foreigner talk there was sound play and play enactment, while the play sequences in native talk were mainly role play. Similarly, prompts in native talk were clearly related to role play instructions, whereas in foreigner talk there were also instructive prompts.

The third research question concerned the effect of the learner's level of proficiency on foreigner talk discourse. It was shown that beginner and advanced foreigner talk could be differentiated using the analytical tools developed for the present study. First of all, at the exchange level in creating interactional space the native speakers differentiated their use of initiation types according to the learner's level of proficiency: in beginner foreigner talk more questions were used in topic initiations, whereas statements were prevalent in advanced foreigner talk and in native talk. Meaning negotiation processes were characterized by native speaker initiations and repair sequences in beginner foreigner talk. As the learner's proficiency level became higher, the interactions became progressively more like native talk interactions, ie. fewer repair sequences were required, and topics were dealt with at length. Repair sequences were, unlike other topics, long and involved in both beginner and advanced foreigner talk, especially if both speakers were determined to resolve the point of misunderstanding or miscommunication. Local support tactics were also used more in beginner foreigner talk: slow pace, key word stress, frames, tutorials, prompts, language play and ungrammatical forms were all used to overcome trouble.

It was assumed, on the basis of previous research, that children are able to modify their speech when talking to interactants not fully competent in the language being used, either younger children or peers who are learning a second language. The analysis reinforced this assumption: the discourse types studied, foreigner talk and native talk, were differentiated by the use of different initiation types, strategies and tactics. The result is dictated by the demands of different discourses: especially in beginner foreigner talk the main concern is to keep the conversation going, whereas in native talk available processing capacity can be used for other purposes. For instance, repetitions are used in foreigner talk mainly as responses to perceived comprehension problems and in native talk in a large variety of functions, eg. in acknowledgements and for emphasis.

The results can be demonstrated by speaker profiles in interaction, drawn for Katja and Caroline, the two native speakers whose interactions were discussed in most detail, and whose discourse contained a rich sample of the features used in the analysis. Caroline's and Katja's speaker profiles with the learners are shown in Tables 17 and 18. It can be seen that in Caroline's conversations several different topics were discussed during the interactions and that learner response was achieved, whereas Katja's conversations tended to be almost monotopical task-oriented interactions, and learner response was achieved much less consistently. The native speakers, except Joanne, achieved a fairly high level of learner participation. However, in the mode of child-child conversations, it is fairly typical that not all learner initiations receive a response. In the notes reference is made to other subjects who exhibited similar behaviours to the two profiles provided.

**TABLE 17 Caroline's speaker profile with learners**

| *CAROLINE* | SPACE | MEANING NEGOTIATION | SUPPORT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Features** | | | |
| INTERACTION | | - repair negotiation | - rejections avoided<br>- learner encouraged<br>- code-switching and erroneous information accepted for the sake of the interaction (1) |
| SEQUENCE | | | - tutorials (2)<br>- sound play |
| EXCHANGE | - questions answered<br>- learner initiations acknowledged<br>- use of questions a speaker feature | | |
| FUNCTIONAL | - learner response achieved<br>- decomposition | | - ungrammatical forms<br>- repetition<br>- prompts<br>- decomposition (3)<br>- confirmation checks (4)<br>- slow pace<br>- key word stress |

(1) in connection with code switching, Caroline is willing to make herself vulnerable by imitating the learner's L1 utterances

(2) teacher-like behaviour/attitude shown also by Joanne, Anthony

(3) decomposition used also by Joanne and Anthony

(4) request for confirmation used by Joanne and Anthony, not by David and Nia

**TABLE 18 Katja's speaker profile with learners**

| *KATJA* | SPACE | MEANING NEGOTIATION | SUPPORT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Features** | | | |
| INTERACTION | | - task negotiation (5) | - rejections (6) |
| SEQUENCE | | | - control<br>- no sound play or playful behaviour |
| EXCHANGE | - often no response to the learner<br>- few learner initiations | | |
| FUNCTIONAL | - decomposition<br>- framing | | - repetition |

(5) task orientation shown also by Nia
(6) rejections/overriding used by Joanne

The subjects of the present study came from different cultures: the majority English-speaking culture or a minority culture (immigrant children or visitors). Some native speakers were also members of a Welsh-speaking minority in Britain or bilingual speakers of another non-British language. Immigrants and visitors differ from each other in that immigrants come to stay in the country and have to adjust at least to a degree, whereas visitors may not see any need to adjust. However, children's perception of the adjustments required probably differ from that of adults. Moreover, children may not perceive differences between people and cross-cultural factors of the type suggested by Candlin (1982) in the same way as adults. The situations present in the study reflect many children's (and adults') everyday experiences of having to deal with peers of varying and widely different backgrounds. Both native speakers and learners have their own experiences and expectations, attitudes and prejudices, which affect their behaviour. They may have different schemata, through which they interpret each others' behaviour, and they may expect certain types of behaviour. For instance, two children from two different cultures may not reach an understanding as to the level of participation in play activities. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to distinguish the factors that influence children's cross-cultural interactions.

Factors to do with power relations and expertise cause asymmetry between children as they do between adults. Other factors such as cultural expectations may also be relevant. As was pointed out above, expectations about children's participation in the conversation vary from one culture to another. Such expectation is then transferred to the NS-NNS situation, and despite the native speaker's attempts they may have an influence on participation in the interaction. It is not possible to see whether such influences had a major effect on the children's behaviour in the present

data. The fact that the subjects were age peers and had reached more or less the same level in their L1 and cognitive development had to be accepted as the starting point for the analysis. It was proposed that the NS has a decisive role in children's FT conversations. This possibility arises from the NS's command of the code and other factors causing underlying inequalities in the situation. It was hypothesized that the quality of interaction is determined by the native speaker's willingness and ability to manage NS-NNS conversations. The NSs varied in their willingness to allow space to the learner, to negotiate and to give support: in this respect differences have been established between native speakers.

The underlying theme in the present study was to consider the native speaker's role in children's foreigner talk situations. However, the question has been raised whether the learner may at times exercise such power and influence that she might be able to sabotage an interaction and make it look like it is the NS who is responsible (cf. Katja's interaction with Matsumi). It has to be taken into account that both interlocutors have an effect on the conversation, ie. the learner influences the native speaker and the native speaker the learner. As was seen above, the learner can, too, be a skilful negotiator, who can influence the development of discourse. Roles are negotiable and the learner, even without an expert role assigned to her, can also become the knower. Moreover, it is evident that even native speakers can have handicaps. They may be insecure in the situation and require as much support as the learner, or they may have processing limitations that prevent them from acting as enablers.

The conversational roles of the speakers are defined according to the level of linguistic competence and the topic of conversation. Also, the native speaker's perception of her role in the situation may be important. If the native speaker sees herself as a teacher, she will give didactic help (the way Caroline does), whereas as a friend the help provided may not be instructionally directed. If the speakers see each other as casual co-speakers, their attitude may be more neutral and neither didactic nor friendly advice or help will be readily forthcoming (eg. Katja). Furthermore, willingness to interact may vary. There are a minimum of two interactants, but one participant can always act as the primary speaker, whose contribution moves the conversation forward and who at each possible juncture decides the direction it takes. In children's L1 acquisition it is the adults' special efforts as listeners, eg. in guessing, and their willingness to modify that make it possible for conversation to take place early in the acquisition process. Although peers may not be such easy partners to interact with, it may be especially important for learners to be exposed to varied conversations where different strategies and modifications are demonstrated and demands made on their conversational skills.

Each speaker has to take responsibility for her share on the interaction. If they do, reciprocity is achieved and interactants can rely on receiving correct information about the other interactants' comprehension. However, even two adult native speakers do not always achieve such reciprocity, and this is often the case between learners and native speakers. Klein (1986:45) points out that the NS may form incorrect hypotheses about the learner's proficiency level and not take into account the clues that she receives from

the learner (see Klein 1986:45; Derwing 1991a:51). In such a case neither advanced learners nor beginners will receive suitable input in such cases. This will prevent a beginner's progress, and if an advanced learner receives unnecessarily modified input, it may prevent the learner from participating fully, and may even offend the learner.

It might also be asked who has to take the responsibility over the communicative situation. It has been suggested that the learner has to be able to raise the native speaker's interest and to be persistent to gain the input necessary for her learning. There is also the question of politeness: it is the native speaker's responsibility to help and support, even when the learner is not the most interesting child to play with.

Despite the problems that can be found in conversational situations for L2 learning, conversations are still considered crucially important for language learning to take place. They provide, for most learners, the kind of social situation that makes it meaningful to start acquiring the language and, once the process is started, the environment in which learning is made possible.

**Limitations and further research**

The present study contributes to the discussion about foreigner talk and children's language by giving a detailed analysis of conversational management in a single context. The emphasis is on how modifications are used by children in free play. The study has attempted to broaden the point of view by raising the question of individual variation in NS behaviour in a research area that has been dominated by comparisons based on statistical analyses, without attention to individual variation. A wider range of variables has been used than in modification studies in general and some features used in the analysis either have not been not found in other studies or have not been identified as possible features defining this type of discourse.

The data consist of free play recorded in settings where children normally find themselves, but at the same time they are semi-controlled data to the extent that the children's play sessions were arranged for the recordings. Data collection was not planned and executed with the specific aims of the present study in mind. The data were originally collected for another study (Hirvonen 1984), and two task types, free play and game instruction, were needed for it. That the data are used for a study with quite different aims results in some limitations. Gaps in the data can no longer be filled, although not every set of three sessions has a full set of free play interactions. This can be seen for example in Figure 3 in chapter 3: there is only one free play FT interaction in the triad with Maisa; the other two (FT and NT) are game interactions. This has limited the amount of data and has narrowed the scope of some comparisons. However, this cannot be considered a severe limitation in that other interactions have been used for making comparisons and the amount of data is not crucial for qualitative analyses of the type carried out here.

The amount of data presents another problem for the types of comparisons to be carried out. To study the effect of gender on

modifications, more material would have been needed, either from single-sex male-male dyads or mixed-sex dyads. All but two interactions are single-sex, and the subjects studied are mainly girls. Of the single-sex dyads the majority (nine out of thirteen) are female-female dyads. Of the four male-male dyads, two are short recordings and could not provide enough material for gender based comparisons. Again, this is not considered a major limitation: as interesting as gender differences might have been, they were not an intended research area.

In addition to quantitative limitations, there are also qualitative problems. Only audio tapes were available for analysis and hence valuable information on non-verbal communication and children's play activities could not be used, either in the analysis or to clarify problems in interpretation. Another qualitative problem is the fact that the children came from many cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is difficult to know what the meaning of an act or behaviour (eg. silence) is in the particular culture that the child comes from. Although in many ways this reflects the situations that these and other children are faced with in their everyday lives, it limits the generalizability of the results. The subjects' age is another factor that may have had a bearing on the results, although the effect cannot be verified. By around eight years of age children have generally acquired the basic grammatical structures necessary for peer speech. Children may have different linguistic skills, if they happen to be at an age that shows transitional features. It can be asked whether all the subjects had already reached the same level of skills. If they had not, it might be the reason why there were some problems with register variation.

Using conversations as research material presents its own problems. Conversations are fuzzy and messy. There are many factors that cannot be controlled, even in the semi-controlled situation used here. For example, the subjects may have their own agendas that the researcher knows nothing about or they may misunderstand the instructions. There were glimpses of this in the data: Matsumi spoke Japanese in one interaction and indicated in one of her Japanese utterances that she thought that data were being collected for a study on Japanese. It is extremely difficult to know what effect this might have had on her behaviour. But her behaviour remains, no matter what the reason behind it, and the purpose of the study was to analyse behaviours, not factors causing those behaviours.

As a result of the arrangements outlined in the description of the data (see chapter 3.2.2) it can be assumed that the data represent children's play talk fairly well. For the purposes of this study, the data are considered technically, quantitatively and qualitatively adequate for the analyses intended.

There are a number of problems in the analyses themselves, both as a result of the development of the project and because the study borders on the areas of FT discourse, second language acquisition and child development studies. First of all, the study for which the data were collected was specifically a foreigner talk study, and this has had an effect on the terminology used in the present study. Although in a learning context, in their free play the children also act in their play roles in addition to their NS or learner roles. Secondly, although the eclectic model of analysis allows for

the use of a wide range of variables and explanations, it also makes it more difficult to formulate clear analytic categories. The notions of strategies and tactics in themselves could be argued to cover much the same ground, although efforts have been made to use them systematically. The fact that the analysis was carried out at different levels meant, within the scope of the study, that some analyses needed to be simplified. For example, a more detailed exchange level analysis would have provided more information about the context-dependent and speaker-dependent discourse choices at that level. Moreover, the inclusion of prompts, tutorials, language play and ungrammatical language in conversational support as speaker-dependent tactics could be questioned. Not only are they also context-dependent elements but some of them are closely connected to meaning negotiation.

The type of variation found in children's NS-NNS conversations and possible causes have been outlined in the study. The results obviously open up as many questions as they have answered, and some areas can be indicated where more studies could be carried out to further clarify the research area. Various lines of inquiry are implied by the possibilities for further studies: pragmatics, child developmental studies and conversation analysis..

As discussed, foreigner talk discourse can be considered to include both communicative and affective registers The variables in the study were mainly linguistic and discourse variables, although some affective register variables were included. More studies analysing affective variables (comity) and cultural dimensions and orientation need to be done. Such studies could also include analyses of children's attitudes towards the speakers of other cultures and the influence of personality traits on the interaction.

The question of the direction of influence in a language learning situation was addressed in the study. There were indications of convergence in both directions, and this implies a need for detailed studies in this area to include child-child encounters. Moreover, the effect of the size of the group that is interacting, the effect of the familiarity and unfamiliarity of the group and the effect of gender could be explored in the framework used for the present study.

The meaning negotiation aspect of the study could be further explored by considering the possibility of scales of behaviour or hierarchies of features. Features of a speaker's style may form closely related pairs, for instance on positiveness/negativeness, support/rejection or achievement/ avoidance scales. Co-occurrence of features may also predict uses of strategies and tactics. For example, monotopicality in an interaction may predict that little room is being left for negotiation, or the use of prompts may predict negotiation.

Some of the subjects showed special skills in drawing the learners into interaction. A kindergarten or school project could be devised to find out whether such skills are teachable. Most children encounter peers with other language and cultural backgrounds at school. The goals of enhancing communication and preventing misunderstanding that results in conflict between different groups in society should also include child language studies in intercultural communication.

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**Appendix 1** Background information about the subjects

| SUBJECT | SEX | INTER-VIEW AGE | MONTHS IN GB | LANGUAGES | SIBLINGS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| David/dc/bL | M | 8;8 | 5 | Chinese | sister 10;6, older sister |
| Harish/hk/NS | M | 9;4 | | English, Gujarati | brother 12;5 |
| Vance/vn/NS | M | 9;0 | | English | brothers 17, 14, 12, 7 |
| Maisa/md/aL | F | 8;9 | 8 | Kurdish, Arabic | brother 5;3 |
| Katja/kw/NS* | F | 8;5 | | English, Finnish | sister 1;11 |
| (Simon/sn/NS | M | 9;1) | | | |
| Matsumi/mt/bL | F | 8;4 | 5 | Japanese | brother 14 |
| Katja* | F | 8;7 | | | |
| Caroline/cw/NS* | F | 8;6 | | English | brother 2;8 |
| Aedy/aa/bL | M | 7;10 | 4 | Malay | brother 1;6 |
| Farah/fa/NS | F | 8;8 | | English, Urdu, Punjabi | sisters 22, 19, 14, 13, 10; brothers 12, 11 |
| Barry/bb/NS | M | 9;10 | | English | sister 13; brother 7 |
| Mona/ma/aL | F | 8;7? | 3 | Arabic | sister 6;6 |
| (Damian/da/NS | M | 7;9) | | | |
| Christine/cc/NS | F | 8;1 | | English | sister 10 |
| Chazal/ca/bL | F | 6;6? | 3 | Arabic | sister 8;7 |
| (David/dm/NS | M | 7;0) | | | |
| Joanne/jn/NS | F | 7;8 | | English | sisters 5, 1 |
| Yasushi/ym/aL | M | 10;6 | 5 | Japanese | brother 13 |
| Sanjay/sh/NS | M | 9;1 | | English, Gujarati | brother 12 |
| Anthony/at/NS | M | 10;2 | | English | - |
| Mei Kien/mk/aL | F | 8;10 | 18 | Chinese | sister 6 |
| Nia/nl/NS | F | 9;8 | | English, Welsh | brother 12 |
| Caroline* | F | 9;1 | | | |

* = subject recorded in two sessions
? = given birthday probably not accurate
( ) = data available from a game instruction task only

**Appendix 2** The analytical features

## INTERACTIONAL LEVEL

(1) monotopical conversation: Any conversation that has only one topic is labelled monotopical. In monotopical conversations the topic is expected to be the free play activity itself. A monotopical conversation may be an indication of task-orientation, although it could mean other things, eg. that the children have nothing else to say to each other.

(2) attitude of approval: Approval can be shown in many different ways; the expressions of approval in the present data have often been borrowed either from parents or, most likely, from teachers. They include phrases like *good girl, well done.*

(3) looking for approval: A speaker overtly looks for support and acceptance by asking for permission or seeking for the interlocutor's opinion.

(4) rejections/overriding : A speaker does not accept the interlocutor's suggestions and mostly overrides her, explicitly using negatives, eg. *don't, no.* This can be done in the interaction by not answering when a question is asked, or in dealing with the task, for example by not accepting the other speaker's suggestions in play. By correcting, the NS overrides the learner's intention by attending to form instead of content. By not answering, the NS overrides the interlocutor by ignoring her contribution.

(5) politeness/positiveness markers: Politeness formulas or overt expressions of positive attitude are used.

(6) aggressive, teasing behaviour: Both choice of words and tone are considered here. A speaker can also try to mislead her interlocutor.

## SEQUENCE LEVEL

(7) tutorial sequences: Any sequence which has as its main purpose to teach something, a word or even modelling conversational structure. Tutorials are characterized by display questions, where the person asking the question knows the answer.

(8) language play: Any play with sounds, rhythm or intonation, or play with words.

## EXCHANGE LEVEL

(9) initiation types: McTear (1985) analyses children's initiations using a division into the grammatical categories *question, request* and *statement.* The stronger the expectation of a response to an initiation is, the higher the prospective force of the initiation. The question as an initiation type is more prospective than the request or statement, and the request more prospective than the statement. Categories *miscellaneous* and *unanalyzable* were added to McTear's categories to cover all possible cases. *Miscellaneous* includes interjections and utterances that cannot be analyzed as full syntactic structures. *Unanalyzable* utterances are clearly in an initiating position but are either inaudible or cannot otherwise, in this context, be analyzed.

(10) response types: The response types are analyzed according to what extent they function as responses to an initiation. In addition to *no response,* McTear (1985:54-55) uses the following categories: *inappropriate or irrelevant response, minimal predicted response, response with additional content* and *other appropriate response.* In *minimal predicted responses* the response is given in accordance with "the expectations set up by the preceding utterance", but nothing is added to continue the conversation. *Responses with additional content* respond and initiate simultaneously. *Other appropriate responses,* in the present analysis, include for instance requests for repetition. As such they are highly prospective, but are not expected or unmarked responses.

(11) learner's initiations reacted to: + = at least half of the learner's responses are reacted to; - = less than half are reacted to.

## FUNCTIONAL LEVEL

### Strategies

(12) speak slowly in the beginning: Speech rate in the beginning can be an indicator of the NS's willingness to try to assess the learner's level of competence. Utterances with a noticeably clear and slow articulation are included in this category, separately from slow rate and clear articulation elsewhere (see 18).

(13) topic control relinquished with questions: By asking questions the NS can pass control of topics to be discussed to the learner. Especially or-choice questions can have this function of allowing the learner to choose the topic. Questions are also used to ensure the interlocutor's participation, and it seems that in general more questions are used in FT than in NT conversations (Long 1981b).

(14) check comprehension: Comprehension checks like *OK?* or *do you understand?* are used in FT to prevent communication breakdowns and are used more frequently in FT (Long 1983).

(15) code-switching: Alternate use of two or more languages.

### Tactics

(16) accept code-switching & topic switches: Long (1983:136) argues that NSs are willing to treat topics briefly and accept even unintentional topic switches when they are due to misunderstanding or non-comprehension. In children's language topic-switching can be rather abrupt anyway, but is included as a possible feature of child -child FT conversations as well. Code-switching may be another feature that takes place and is tolerated in children's conversations perhaps as a kind of language play. It certainly results, if not necessarily in a topic switch, at least in a kind of gear change, and is therefore included as a feature together with topic switches.

(17) stress key words: Key word stress is one way of making topics more salient, eg. *are you **cousins** or are you **sisters**?*

(18) pause before key words/slow pace/clear articulation: New topics can be made salient by pausing, slow pace or clear articulation. These features can also be found in repair sequences as tactics.

Requests for clarification (19)-(21)
(19) request for repetition: Requests for repetition are utterances that are meant to elicit a repetition of the interlocutor's previous utterance (Long 1983:137). Mostly a simple question *what?/wha'?* or *eh?* is interpreted as a request for repetition. Sometimes a fuller wh-question or a yes-no question is used, eg. *would you please say it again?*

(20) request for confirmation: Any expression designed to "elicit information that the utterance has been correctly heard or understood" (Long 1983:137), eg. *a doll?* following an utterance *can you find me a doll?* is a request for confirmation. They are marked by rising intonation, involve repetition of all or part of the preceding utterance and are answerable by a simple confirmation or negation or giving the correct expression if what was said was not heard or understood properly.

(21) request to specify: Requests to specify are utterances in which a speaker asks her interlocutor to point out or verbally specify which object was meant of those in view. For example, an intonation question *this doll?* after *give me that doll, please?* or a wh-question *which one?* after a request *give me a doll, please* are requests to specify. To fulfil the request a simple affirmation *yes* or *that one,* respectively, is enough, although it is possible to answer non-verbally by nodding or pointing, in which case the information on the fulfilling of the request is lost when the data are recorded on audio tapes only.

## Other localized functions

(22) prompts: There are two kinds of prompts to be considered: those used in the construction of the role play and those used to control the other's behaviour by telling her to do something (usually in the imperative form). The former include imperatives like *say* and *tell her,* or instruction on appropriate role behaviour, eg. *it's the baby you're talking to now.*

(23) insisting on answers: Insistence on answers when the interlocutor does not provide a response, either by repeating the initiation or using phrases like *come on, come on.*

(24) grammatical modification: Grammatical modification resulting in ungrammatical utterances has been suggested as a characteristic of at least certain types of foreigner talk. It is assumed that some children, like adults, will use grammatical modification as a means to clarify their messages. Ungrammatical forms that are clearly performance errors are excluded from the analysis.

(25) decomposition: Decomposition is a device whereby the topic is moved via left-dislocation to the front to clarify the topic before the comment as in the following example given by Long (1983:134): ***Sunny?*** *Is that a woman or a man?*

(26) framing: Frames are used to introduce new topics and to indicate the end of a sequence. Expressions like *well, OK* and *now* are used.

(27) repetition: Any repetition, partial or full, of either the speaker's own utterances or the interlocutor's utterances. Repetitions can have many functions which are discussed in chapter 4.3.

(28) giving up: Giving up is an avoidance strategy: instead of committing herself to a possibly lengthy negotiation, the speaker gives up trying. This can be accompanied by expressions like *oh, never mind* or *nothing,* when the interlocutor requests for an explanation or a clarification. This strategy is used by both NSs and learners.

(29) request for explanation: Request for explanation includes requests that are expressed with a question *what is it/that?* or any other request to either name an object or explain what something is used for. These are typically learner utterances but can, of course, especially in the course of play, be asked by NSs as well. Such a request implies that the speaker really does not know the answer (cf. didactic questions in 7).

(30) explain meanings: An explanation given independently or to a request in 29.

# YHTEENVETO

## Keskustelun tukeminen natiivin ja ei–natiivin lapsen puheessa

### Tausta ja tavoitteet

Tutkimuksessa käsitellään lasten kielenkäyttöä tilanteissa, joissa syntyperäisesti englantia puhuva lapsi vapaassa leikkitilanteessa kommunikoi englantia oppivan lapsen kanssa. Lapset joutuvat—samoin kuin aikuiset vastaavissa kommunikaatiotilanteissa—ottamaan huomioon kielenoppijan kyvyn käyttää kieltä ja ratkomaan ymmärtämisongelmia. Tutkimuksessa selvitetään 8–10-vuotiaiden lasten yksilöllistä variaatiota kyvyssä modifioida kielenoppijalle suunnattua puhetta sekä variaatiota, joka johtuu kielenoppijan kielikyvyn tasosta. Lisäksi haetaan oppijalle suunnatun puheen piirteitä, jotka ovat puhujasta riippuvia muuttujia, sekä piirteitä, jotka ovat kontekstisidonnaisia, rekisteristä johtuvia muuttujia.

Toisen kielen tutkimuksessa on 1970-luvulta lähtien selvitetty modifioidun kielen piirteitä. Ensimmäisen kielen oppimistutkimuksissa on tutkittu huoltajapuhetta ja toisen kielen oppimistutkimuksissa toisen kielen oppijalle suunnattua kieltä. Kyseessä on ollut enimmäkseen aikuisten puhe toisille aikuisille tai lapsille. Kielenoppijalle suunnatussa kielessä on piirteitä, jotka kieltä syntyperäisesti puhuvat hallitsevat osana kielellistä kompetenssiaan. Aikuiset puhuvat lapsille selkeää, rakenteellisesti yksinkertaista kieltä ja käyttävät usein liioiteltua intonaatiota. Puheelle on luonteenomaista sen liittyminen puhehetkeen ja runsas toisto. Toisen kielen oppijalle suunnatussa puheessa on samanlaisia piirteitä. Aikuisten lapsille suuntaama puhe eroaa kuitenkin tehtäviltään aikuisten välisestä puheesta: toista aikuista kohdellaan tasavertaisena puhekumppanina, jonka kanssa keskustellaan ja vaihdetaan informaatiota, kun taas lasten kanssa keskustellessaan aikuiset usein ohjaavat lapsen toimintoja.

Niissä tutkimuksissa, joissa on tarkasteltu lasten välistä puhetta, on keskitytty oppijan kieleen ja hänen kielenomaksumiseensa. Tässä tutkimuksessa kiinnitetään huomio syntyperäisesti kieltä puhuvan lapsen osuuteen lasten välisissä keskusteluissa. Oppiakseen kieltä oppijan täytyy kuulla hänelle suunnattua puhetta. Keskustelu on luonnollisessa kielenoppimisessa ratkaisevan tärkeä oppimistilanne. Oppimistilanteen luonteen ratkaisee oppijan mahdollisuus osallistua keskusteluun sekä syntyperäisen puhujan kyky ottaa huomioon oppija, antaa hänelle tarvittavaa tukea ja neuvotella merkityksistä.

Krashenin teoria oppijalle suunnatun puheen keskeisestä asemasta ja Longin tutkimukset modifioidusta puheesta ovat osa tutkimuksen teoreettista viitekehystä. Oppijalle suunnattua puhetta tarkastellaan omana diskurssityyppinään (foreigner talk discourse).

**Aineisto ja analyysimentelmät**

Tutkimus on diskurssitutkimus, jossa muuttujina on käytetetty tunnettuja modifioidun puheen piirteitä ja tutkittavasta aineistosta esille nousseita piirteitä. Tutkimusyksikkö oli vaihtopari (exchange), josta voidaan muodostaa laajempia yksiköitä (sekvenssit ja interaktiot) ja joka voidaan analysoida pienempiin yksiköihin (siirrot ja aktit).

Aineistona oli lasten ääninauhalle äänitettyjä vapaita leikkikeskusteluja. Kukin keskustelu kesti noin 30 minuuttia. Tutkimusta varten analysoitiin kymmenen syntyperäisesti englantia puhuvan lapsen ja kahdeksan oppijan kahdenkeskiset keskustelut. Kontrolliaineistona olivat samojen syntyperäisesti englantia puhuvien lasten keskustelut. Oppijat olivat joko aloittelevia tai pitemmälle ehtineitä oppijoita. Lapset olivat ikätovereita, ja näin ollen voidaan olettaa, että he olivat vertailukelpoisia kognitiivisilta taidoiltaan.

Aineisto analysoitiin neljällä tasolla, jotka olivat interaktio-, sekvenssi-, vaihtopari- ja funktionaalinen taso. Interaktion tasolla tarkasteltiin interaktion yleistä ilmapiiriä ja natiivin puhujan oppijalle antamaa hyväksyntää tai hänen ilmaisemaansa torjuntaa. Sekvenssitasolla tutkittiin tutoriaali- eli opetusjaksoja ja leikkipuhetta, vaihtoparitasolla taas topiikin aloituksia ja aloituksen vastaustyyppejä. Funktionaalisella tasolla tarkasteltiin ensinnäkin strategioita ja taktiikoita, joita käytetään ongelmatilanteiden ehkäisemiseen ja niiden ratkaisemiseen. Tämän lisäksi tutkittiin muita paikallisia keinoja keskustelun ongelmatilanteiden ja ymmärtämisongelmien selvittämiseen, mm. toistoja ja epäkieliopillisia muotoja. Eri tasojen piirteet yhdessä muodostavat verkoston, joilla rakennetaan interaktiotila, jonka sisällä voidaan neuvotella merkityksistä (tehtävämerkitys ja korjaukset). Tilassa otetaan samalla käyttöön erilaisia keinoja, joilla voidaan paikallisesti tukea oppijan osallistumista keskusteluun ja näin luoda edellytykset hyvälle oppimistilanteelle.

**Tulokset**

Tutkittavien syntyperäisten puhujien välillä on yksilöllisiä eroja siinä, kuinka he antavat tilaa oppijalle, kuinka he aloittavat uusia topiikkeja ja

kuinka he tukevat oppijaa. Joidenkin lasten välillä on systemaattisia eroja topiikin aloituksissa (väitteet vs. kysymykset). Jos käytetään sellaista topiikin aloitusta, että oppija pystyy vastaamaan, hän myös pääsee paremmin mukaan keskusteluun ja pystyy käyttämään kieltä aktiivisemmin, millä on mahdollisia myönteisiä seurauksia kielenoppimiselle. Ongelmien syntymistä voidaan estää strategioilla, joiden käytössä aineistossa on yksilöllisiä eroja.

Interaktion tasolla merkityksen neuvottelut toteutuvat eri tavoin eri keskusteluissa. Joillekin natiiveille on luonteenomaista keskittyä annettuun tehtävään, jolloin neuvotellaan tehtävästä. Jotkut taas kiinnittävät enemmän huomiota interaktioon ja siihen, miten oppija osallistuu keskusteluun. Tällaiset erot johtavat eroihin siinä, miten oppijan topiikin aloituksiin vastataan Samoin näkyy eroja siinä, miten natiivi suhtautuu oppijaan yleisesti, joko rohkaisten ja hyväksyen tai torjuen hänen aloituksiaan ja ehdotuksiaan. Oppijalle annettu tila ja tuki ovat läheisesti sidoksissa toisiinsa.

Toinen tutkimusongelma olivat yksilölliset puhujasta riippuvat tyylipiirteet ja strategisista valinnoista johtuvat piirteet. Erityisesti kahden tutkittavan lapsen puheessa on tunnistettavissa eroja tässä suhteessa: Aloitusten ja vastausten käytössä jotkut puhujat käyttävät enemmän kysymyksiä oppijalle puhuessaan kuin natiivien välisessä puheessa. Joidenkin toisten puheessa kysymysten käyttö saattaa olla puhujan kielenkäyttöä leimaava piirre kaikissa puhetilanteissa. Sekvenssitasolla ja funktionaalisella tasolla löytyy myös strategisia keinoja, kuten oppijan opettaminen (tutoriaalit) ja epäkieliopillisten muotojen käyttö. Nämä ovat kontekstisidonnaisia piirteitä, sillä niitä käytetään vain oppijalle puhuttaessa. Samalla ne kuitenkin ovat hyvin yksilöllisiä piirteitä, sillä vain jotkut natiivit käyttävät niitä.

Oppijan kielitaidon tasolla on selvä vaikutus natiivin oppijalle suuntaamaan puheeseen. Esimerkiksi topiikin aloituksissa käytetään enemmän kysymyksiä aloittelijoille kuin pitemmälle ehtineille oppijoille. Puhuessaan aloittelijan kanssa natiivi puhuja aloittaa merkityksen neuvottelun todennäköisemmin kuin paremmin kieltä hallitsevien kanssa.

**Arviointia**

Tulokset nostavat esiin monia kysymyksiä lasten välisistä keskusteluista. Lapsilla on samoin kuin aikuisilla erilaisia rooleja kanssakäymisessään muiden kanssa. Joku lapsi voi ottaa ohjaajan ja auttajan roolin, kun taas toinen ikään kuin katselee tilannetta hieman etäämpää eikä tällöin sitoudu siihen yhtä paljon. Jollain lapsella, myös oppijalla, voi olla asiantuntijan rooli, jolloin hänen osallistumismahdollisuutensa paranevat. Olennaista on natiivin puhujan halukkuus neuvotella: jos hän haluaa neuvotella oppijan esittämistä merkityksistä tai sallii oppijalle asiantuntijuuden silloin, kun sitä ei ole ulkoapäin määrätty, oppija pääsee osallistumaan paremmin kuin sellaisen natiivin kanssa, joka ei ole halukas neuvottelemaan.

Lasten välisissä keskusteluissa lapsi joutuu ottamaan itselleen tilaa aivan eri tavalla kuin lapsen ja aikuisen välisissä keskusteluissa: aikuinen yleensä tukee lapsen aloituksia ja suostuu lapsen ehdotuksiin, kun sen sijaan kahden lapsen keskustelussa kummallakin lapsella on sama tavoite, saada toinen mukaan omiin leikkeihin ja keskustelemaan omasta aiheesta. Joka tapauksessa kukin kanssapuhuja joutuu ottamaan oman vastuunsa keskustelun kulusta. Natiivin ja oppijan keskustelessa natiivin tulee tukea ja auttaa oppijaa ja oppijan puolestaan tulee antaa natiiville tarvittava tieto ymmärtämisvaikeuksista, jotta natiivi pystyy sopeuttamaan oman puheensa oppijan kielitaitoon.

Tutkimusaihe, valittu analyysimalli sekä aineiston laatu ja määrä rajoittavat tutkimuksen tulosten yleistämistä. Analyysi on toteutettu tapaustutkimuksena, ja jo tämä rajoittaa yleistettävyyttä, mutta se on toisaalta mahdollistanut monenlaisten piirteiden tutkimisen muutaman lapsen puheesta. Valittu eklektinen malli on samoin mahdollistanut laaja-alaisen tarkastelun, mutta on rajoittanut syventämistä. Lopulta se seikka, että lapset ovat monista erilaisista kulttuuritaustoista, vaikeuttaa tulkintoja.

Arkikäsitys oppijalle suunnatusta puheesta on, että täytyy puhua kovaa, toistaa paljon samoin sanoin ja ehkä jopa käyttää epäkieliopillisia muotoja. Tämä tutkimus osoittaa, kuinka monimuotoista ja yksilöllistä myös lasten kielellinen käyttäytyminen on natiivin ja ei–natiivin keskusteluissa. Se selkiyttää kuvaa lasten kyvystä hallita kielenkäyttö-tilanne, johon yhä useammat lapset yhä aikaisemmin joutuvat myös Suomen kaltaisessa maassa.