Negotiation for Meaning and Feedback among Language Learners

Jiyon Cook

Sogang University, Seoul, South Korea

Abstract—**Negotiation for meaning (NfM) in second language acquisition is defined as an attempt to overcome comprehension problems. This paper addresses a level of NfM: Requests for clarification in terms of communicative intent that are not generated from linguistic problems or communication breakdowns. It also explores reasons for the emergence of this level of NfM from the view of a language user. With particular reference to the meaning of utterances, the paper discusses whether certain inputs are able to be resolved through NfM. This paper points out that this type of negotiation may provide the learner with an opportunity to acknowledge language use in terms of intentions, rather than solely focusing on achieving comprehension.**

Index Terms—**negotiation for meaning, feedback, semantic meaning, pragmatic meaning, maxim of manner, maxim of quality**

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been acknowledged that when L2 learners interact with one another or with native speakers through conversation, their language development is promoted (Lightbown & Spada, 2002). The benefit of conversational interaction in the classroom has been a focus of research in the contexts of both nonnative speaker/native speaker (NNS/NS) interaction (e.g., Long, 1996; Oliver, 2000; Pica, 1994; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Swain, 2000) and nonnative speaker/nonnative speaker (NNS/NNS) interaction (e.g., Adams, 2007; Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Varonis & Gass 1985). One area of frequent focus is *negotiation for meaning* (henceforth NfM). In second language acquisition (SLA) theory, NfM is "the process by which two or more interlocutors identify and then attempt to resolve a communication breakdown" (Ellis, 2003, p. 346). It is a repair-oriented process that involves the intentional resort to a meaning-based as opposed to a grammar-based repair, distinct from generic negotiation of meaning. Research has been carried out exploring the question of the existence of NfM and its function and frequency (Foster, 1998; Foster & Ohta, 2005). Research has also considered the relationship between task types and the amount of NfM, as well as between the language proficiency of learners' speech partners and the amount of NfM the learners engage in (e.g., Ellis, 2003; Pica & Doughty, 1986; Storch, 2002).

Long (1996) suggests that by causing learners to do the work of negotiation with native or more competent speakers, NfM triggers beneficial changes and results in a more effective language learning experience. This is because NfM "connects input, internal learner capacities and output in productive ways" (p. 452). According to Long (1996, p. 418), NfM is defined as "the process in which learners and competent speakers provide and interpret signals of their own and their interlocutor's perceived comprehension, thus provoking adjustments to linguistic form, conversational structure, and message content." Lightbown & Spada (2006, p. 203) define NfM as "interaction between speakers who make adjustments to their speech and use other techniques to repair a breakdown in communication." Long (1996, pp. 422–423) gives the examples of adjustments such as *simplification* and *elaboration*. Simplification truncates complex sentences by employing fewer verb tenses and modifiers, as well by the reduction of semantic content, whereas elaboration makes use of repetition and paraphrasing in order to explicate semantic structure. This is illustrated as follows (Long, 1996, p. 422):

a. NS baseline version

Because he had to work at night to support his family, Paco often fell asleep in class.

b. Simplified version

Paco had to make money for his family. Paco worked at night. He often went to sleep in class.

c. Elaborated version

Paco had to work at night to earn money to support his family, so he often fell asleep in class next day during his teacher's lesson.

As Long states, learner comprehension is achieved through these kinds of adjustments. NfM may help comprehension, but some confusion still remains for L2 learners trying to understand the message content of L2 productions at a level beyond their proficiency. The concept of NfM may be somewhat difficult to interpret in part, because previous studies on NfM do not specify the types of meaning or the details of the underlying assumptions and motivations at work in initiating negotiation. This paper presents a critical view of the range of meanings that are difficult to resolve at the level of meta-awareness (by indirectly involving in the process of inferring), and whose automatic resolution is not universally or cross-culturally guaranteed. Ultimately, the paper will address the ways that

this type of NfM and feedback play a role in L2 learning. It will show that NfM, in some cases, can serve as an opportunity for learners to become aware of aspects of language use, rather than helping them achieve full comprehension.

The paper is organized into the following sections. Section 2 presents a theoretical discussion of interactionist perspectives on SLA, focusing on the ways in which NfM and feedback play a role in the classroom. Section 3 looks at negotiation from the language user's perspective by exploring some reasons for its occurrence. Finally, learner responses are considered in light of the role of feedback during interaction.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. The Role of Negotiation: An Aid to L2 Comprehension

Krashen (1985) claims that language acquisition takes place as learners come to be able to process input that contains language slightly above their current developmental level of language comprehension (thus, increasing that level). Employing the notion of *comprehensible input*, Long (1996) argues that input is made more comprehensible through the NfM process. The term *negotiation* here refers to the *modification* and *restructuring* of interaction between interlocutors when they experience comprehension difficulties (Pica, 1994, p. 494). The features of negotiation in this case include the listener's *request for message clarification* and *confirmation*; the speaker may then *repeat*, *elaborate*, or *simplify* the original message (Pica, 1994; Long, 1996).

The majority of NfM is particularly concerned with lexis, as unfamiliar words can be *substituted* or *defined* in isolation (Pica, 1994). Consider the example below (Pica, 1993, p. 437; cited in Pica, 1994, p. 513):

(1) NS: it's a rectangular bench
    NNS: rectangular?
    NS: yeah it's in the shape of a rectangle with um you know a rectangle has   two long sides and two short sides
    NNS: rectangle?
    NS: re-rectangle it's it's like a square except you you flatten it out
    NNS: square except
    NS: uh a rectangle is a square
    NNS: uhuh[1]

In this example, the learner (the NNS) signals with "rectangular" and "rectangle". The partner (the NS) tries to repair the failure in communication by providing descriptions. When the learner interprets the meaning incorrectly, "square except," the NS rephrases his previous statement by positioning "square" as similar to a rectangle. In such a situation, opportunities to negotiate meaning help language learners obtain comprehensible input (Pica, 1994; Long, 1996).

These opportunities occur most frequently during NNS/NNS interactions (Pica, 1994; Varonis & Gass, 1985) and expert/novice interaction (Storch, 2002). The role NfM plays in terms of feedback in L2 learning will be discussed below.

B. Negotiation and Feedback

Signals (or as Long calls them "negotiation strategies") such as *repetitions*, *clarification requests*, *confirmation checks*, and *recasts* are examples of negative feedback (Long, 1996; Oliver 2000). When there is a communication breakdown, negative feedback can be implemented *explicitly* through overt error correction or *implicitly* through NfM strategies (Long, 1996). Consider Long's (1996, p. 429) example from an NNS/NS conversation:

(2) NNS: Uh, yes, … a woman drinking (and bottle) wine, uh, bottle and man   drinking (a) beer
    NS: Yes and she's drinking a glass or a bottle of wine?
    NNS: No, uh, she? She's drinking in (no) glass.

The NS's question here exemplifies implicit correction. Feedback of this type is helpful because it occurs when the NNS is unsure whether he or she has been understood.

The learner's error can be successfully corrected by the NS's feedback, since the learner understands the change the NS is trying to elicit in the previously produced utterance, as shown in the following example (Pica, 1994, p. 515):

(3) NNS: and tree with stick
    NS: you mean the trees have branches?
    NNS: yes

The NS's signal provides the learner with an alternative form and meaning by focusing on the subject, "tree," and by modifying it to plural form "trees," and also by introducing "branches," which replaces "stick".

Negotiation leads interlocutors to modify their output as they receive feedback on their utterances (Pica 1994). In the following example, the NS explicitly asks the learner to elucidate the meaning of "patton" (Pica, 1989, p. 88 cited in Pica, 1994, p. 517):

(4) NNS: we have common patton in this case
    NS: I don't know that word … can you describe what it means
    NNS: yes uh uh if I can explain the car's nature, we understand easy because car has a few a lot of nature …

---

[1]That is, presumably, *uh-huh* 'yes', not *uh-uh* 'no', although Pica's notation does not make this clear.

As Pica states, negotiation contributes to the processes and outcomes of L2 learning; NS's utterance influences the learner's modification.

Lyster and Ranta (1997) examine the effectiveness of various types of feedback in ESL classrooms. They find that types such as *negotiation strategies* (clarification requests, repetition), *elicitation*, and *metalinguistic feedback* (feedback "which contains either comments, information" pertaining "to the well-formedness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form", p. 47) lead to student-generated repair, while explicit types such as *correction* and *recasting* do not. Lyster (1998) argues that recasts (yes/no questions functioning as a confirmation check), which are mostly used by teachers rather than learners, do not lead to negotiation and are not as effective in promoting language learning as teachers expect. In a similar vein to Lyster's (1998) analysis of contexts, Oliver (2000) identifies some cases of negative feedback through NfM and establishes how negative feedback is utilized by learners in ways that vary by age and context. He considers interaction patterns contextually (teacher-fronted lessons vs. pair-work tasks) and concludes that negative feedback occurs in both contexts, and that young learners especially tend to use this feedback in their subsequent utterances.

C.   Issues

Prior examples of negotiation work (Foster, 1998; Long, 1996; Oliver, 2000; Pica, 1994) are limited in their scope to lexis, phrases, and syntax. In these cases, acts of NfM aimed to resolve problems related to these aspects of language, as learners' ungrammatical utterances were followed by feedback in the form of implicit corrections (negotiation strategies such as clarification requests, as in (3), (4) and confirmation checks, as in (2)). In my experience these aspects of negotiation and negative feedback commonly occur when learning languages. It seems, however, that NfM does not necessarily lead to comprehension in some cases. For example, in the interaction in (4), contrary to expected modification, although modification by the learner does occur in the example above, it does not affect the success of comprehension; the interlocutor may still have trouble getting the meaning of "patton".

Furthermore, it appears that there is also another level of meaning that learners attempt to negotiate, revealed in the form of the repetition or clarification request. Some examples exhibit partial understanding relating to "what is said" in an utterance and let it rest there, while some students seek "what is meant" in an utterance, as discussed in detail in the following section. According to Grice (1975, 1989), an utterance's meaning is composed of "what is said" and "what is meant"; Grice's term for the latter is "implicature". "What is said" here refers to the lexical-semantic meaning (or sentence meaning), rooted in linguistic knowledge, whereas "what is meant" indicates the pragmatic meaning (or speaker meaning), which cannot be understood on the basis of knowledge of linguistic structure alone, but also requires knowledge of language use in context and of social norms.[2] In some cases negotiation of comprehensibility does not necessarily require a complete communication breakdown (as Long (1996) Ellis (2003) and Lightbown and Spada (2006) suggest); rather, it can also emerge and be useful in situations characterized by insufficient understanding. To help understand the distinction of the two levels of meaning and negotiation of them, consider the following conversation:

(5) Peter: Did you eat all of the biscuits?
    Mary: I ate some of them.
    Peter: some of them?

In this conversation, Mary has a meaning such as {*I had some of the biscuits*} (semantic meaning) and has another meaning in context such as <*I did not eat all of the biscuits*> (pragmatic meaning). The latter is not the literal meaning of her words, but can be conveyed in the context of conversation. Here, Peter's concern is more in understanding the pragmatic meaning rather than the lexical-semantic meaning. This kind of particular meaning negotiation should also be addressed.

III.   NEGOTIATION FOR PRAGMATIC MEANING

In 2011 I taught a General English Reading class conducted in L2 English over the course of a semester at a university in Seoul. The class consisted of 40 first-year students who were intermediate-level English speakers. In order to involve those students more in class, I used a task-based method to encourage them to interact with each other. The aim of the task was to connect reading, speaking, and writing skills. The students discussed the content of an article from a text and gave presentations in groups of four.[3] The textbook was *Strategic reading 2* by Richards and Eckstut-Didier (2003). While I was teaching, some students asked me the meaning of the second pronoun "you" in the text. The students had noticed unusual uses of "you" in the sentences "The sensations you feel are sometimes awful" and "You often pick up the pain of the victims" (paragraph 3, p. 100); however, the students were unable to articulate

---

[2]The terms "pragmatic meaning", "speaker meaning", and "intended meaning" are roughly equivalent; similarly, "linguistic meaning," "semantic meaning", and "sentence meaning" are all treated as rough synonyms in this paper. For Grice, recovering the sentence meaning is equivalent to recovering the propositional form; any other meanings communicated by the utterance fall into the category of implicatures (Carston 2002, pp. 101–115).

[3]Presentations included several tasks: stating the main idea of each paragraph, summarizing information, and providing related background knowledge, as well as sharing personal experiences. During the presentations, I was able to observe students' group-related interactions. I noticed that these interactions helped students focus on meaning by assisting in text comprehension. This experience inspired me to learn more about NfM.

why these usages were different from the norm. My students' question prompted me to consider "what is meant" in cases when communication breakdown does not occur. This question had never been raised when I used the grammar-translation method, or when students had not had the opportunity to interact in a teacher-fronted class.

The students discussed potential interpretations of "you" during group work, as shown in the following example:

(6) A: … "you," … who is "you"?
    B: … what?
    C: what are you ... thinking?
    A: I mean "you" in the sentence "The sensations *you* feel are sometimes awful"
    C: … writer?
    B: no… not me ...
    D: it should … could … be "they"

The deictic expression "you" is often used non-deictically (Levinson, 1983). This non-deictic meaning is often confusing to Korean learners because the corresponding usage is uncommon in the Korean language. In English, when the speaker refers to nonspecific, generic people, "you" can be used. For example, in "*you* can never tell what sex they are nowadays" (Levinson, 1983, p. 66), "you" does not signify any particular person, even though it sounds like it refers to a specific person, the listener. That is, without context, this utterance actually could refer to a deictic "you", but the non-deictic usage is more natural in most contexts and given most plausible speaker intentions. In Korean, *ne* ("you") as a second person singular pronoun is rarely used unless the speaker is referring to a specified listener. The forms *saramtul* ("people") or *nehuytul* ("you", as a second person plural pronoun) are instead adopted for generalized use. Crosslinguistically, deictics are used to keep the text coherent (Hatch, 1992); however, in the text, "you" is used empathetically to involve the listener (cf. "empathetic" meaning; Grundy 2008, p.25). Although for NSs, this type of non-deictic use of "you" is natural, for native Korean speakers speaking English as a foreign language (EFL), it may cause confusion. According to Long (1996, p. 414), negative feedback "obtained during NfM" can facilitate L2 development in relation to lexis, morphology, and syntax, and is "essential" when learning certain L1/L2 contrasts. But the pragmatic meaning of "you" was unresolved through negotiation, but the process helped the learners notice the different uses of the pronoun. This was despite the fact that there was no explicit instruction on the use of "you" during the class.

Words in English (or any language) can have a variety of meanings. Students may negotiate the intended meaning, as shown below:

(7) A1: "… refusing seconds" … what is "seconds"?
    B1: what? … second?
    A2: … seconds … not second
    C: …um…
    D: second …second call… no… second menu ... dessert
    B2: uh … second plate?
    A3: … oh maybe second plate … another dish

This conversation between students took place during group work in my classroom. The task was to discuss the contents of a passage from the book *Strategic reading 2* and prepare a presentation on it. A's repetition of the phrase "refusing seconds" (paragraph 4, p. 78) signals a clarification request. Here, the meaning of "seconds" is a second serving of food. The students are inferring the intended meaning by providing unspecified content related to the context. A was able to understand "seconds" via B2's provided enriched meaning, even though B2 and A3 use the non-standard "plate" and "dish" rather than "serving" or "helping".

Some learners are interested in the *way* something is said rather than *what* is being said. Consider the following:

(8) A1: um ... "He thought he was being polite by refusing seconds, when he should have followed my father's example, who made …"
    B1: what are you saying?
    A2: huuh
    C: he thought he was being polite by… uh, … however, he should have …
    A3: no … why is this sentence too long?
    D: … uh … but it's one sentence …
    B2: um … the writer's mind...?

Student A's repetition of the sentence from the text ("He thought he was being polite by refusing seconds, when he should have followed my father's example, who made …"; paragraph 4, p. 78) may have come about for a number of reasons. It is apparent in the example that student A is struggling with input, though it is unclear why; perhaps he is having difficulty understanding the sentence's meaning or is unable to comprehend its structure. His subsequent utterance, as shown in A3 above, helps to elucidate this confusion. Interlocutor C acknowledges A's struggle by interpreting the repetition as a request for an explanation of the sentence's structure. C provides this assistance by parsing the original complex sentence: he uses simple sentences and adds the conjunction "however" in order to make input comprehensible ("simplification" and "elaboration" in Long's (1996) term). That is, C uses his linguistic

knowledge to help A comprehend the text; however, A seems less concerned with the text's message and more with its delivery.

Intermediate learners can easily understand the meaning of sentences like these. However, some of them still have difficulty understanding the speaker's meaning. The following is a good example:

(9) A1: why does she say her dish has no flavor?

B: she's saying … the dish has no taste because it is less salty to satisfy her taste

C1: uh … she's just saying that …

A2: … so?

C2: she doesn't mean … you know …

Another group also discussed the same part of the text:

(10) A1: "This dish" is "not salty enough, no flavor" … what does she mean?

B1: … right …

C: she is saying … the dish is not delicious

B2: oh no … people can say that … like … my mom always says her food doesn't taste good although it's very delicious

D: uh? What?

A2: really? my mother doesn't say that way … she says, "this is very delicious food, try it!" …

B3: … it's … but … here …

A1's repetition of the sentence ("This dish not salty enough, no flavor"; paragraph 6, p. 78) in (10) does not occur due to some issue with the structure of the L2, because he added the missing verb ("is"), which is not in the original sentence, to the subject "dish." In (9) and (10), A1's questions do not originate from a lack of linguistic knowledge, although some of interlocutors' responses (B in (9) and C in (10)) relate to semantic knowledge.

A.   Beyond Negotiation for Linguisitc (Semantic) Meaning: Intrusion of Gricean Maxims

According to Grice, people communicate by observing certain maxims (Grice, 1989, pp. 26–28) that allow them to meet one another's expectations. For instance, people are expected to speak truthfully, as expressed in the maxim of Quality, "do not say what you believe to be false," and succinctly, as in the maxim of Manner, "be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)" (Grice, 1989, p. 27). The expectation that these maxims will be observed by a speaker seems to influence the listener in some cases of negotiation of meaning. Speaker A1 in (9) and (10) might have expected the speaker in the text to speak truthfully, and thus may have been confused when he encountered the situation described in the text. The passage the students were discussing was about a misunderstanding between a Chinese host and an American guest. The Chinese host, who is also a mother, says "This dish not salty enough, no flavor". The context involves Waverly, her daughter, inviting her American fiancé, Rich, to dinner with her parents. The family is Chinese but now lives in the United States. The mother's utterance is a display of the expression of a humble attitude that is commonly found to be part of Asian values. She would rather minimize her contribution to the dinner party than overtly express her belief that her food is really well prepared and delicious. Rather than observing the maxim of Quality, the mother expresses politeness by conforming to the maxim of Modesty ("minimize praise of self and maximize dispraise of self"; Leech, 1983, p. 136). But her meaning is intended to be interpreted as <*this food is really delicious, please enjoy yourselves*>. To Rich, the American boyfriend, however, the mother's utterance is likely to be taken literally in relation to his expectation that she is following the maxim of Quality. Accordingly, Rich provides a suggestion, saying "You know, all it needs is a little soy sauce" (paragraph 7, p. 78). However, from a Chinese perspective, his suggestion may be interpreted as criticism. Some of my students who encountered the Chinese family's reactions were confused, and, like Rich, did not understand the Chinese mother's meaning.[4]

If we accept Grice's (1975, 1989) distinction between "what is said" and "what is meant", or between linguistic meaning and pragmatic meaning in utterances, we can consider A1 in (9) and (10) to be examples of learners looking for the latter. Student A1's negotiation in these cases occurs due to the *partial* understanding of the utterance's meaning; his concern is with the pragmatic meaning and not with understanding the linguistic meaning. There is a low correlation between linguistic and pragmatic comprehension among language learners (Garcia 2004). As Garcia (2004, p. 1) asserts, the understanding of pragmatic meaning is important for overall understanding, in that "learners need to be able to understand a speaker's intentions; interpret a speaker's feelings and attitudes". Pragmatic comprehension involves a different set of skills than semantic comprehension, for example, recognition of implicatures; it includes comprehension of underlying meanings and recognition of "sarcasm and joking" (Garcia 2004). In this case, understanding the implicature of the utterances ("This dish not salty enough, no flavor", "You know, all it needs is a little soy sauce") requires specific knowledge about language use in Chinese culture and American culture.

Another example of initiating NfM in repetition can also be explained with reference to the Gricean maxim of communication. In (8) student A may have expected brevity, instead of a long sentence. Thus, the input is not consistent with A's expectation under the maxim of Manner, which he struggles to express (in the form of a clarification request). This may lead him to question beyond linguistic meaning, and start to think about the underlying meaning.

---

[4]This example can be seen as a clash between the Quality maxim and the Modesty maxim. Rich's attitude might be seen as critical or rude in China but approved as an example of friendly banter (intended to build rapport) in the United States.

In summary, like most people, learners often have expectations about language use. If these expectations are not met, they can attempt to (re-)negotiate the meaning in a way that meets expectations. Often, some learners have difficulty understanding specific implicatures even without a complete communication breakdown.

B. Clarification Requests, Metalinguistic Cues, and Exemplification as Adjustment

The initial turn in each of the above interactions relates to an implicit or explicit clarification request. The interlocutors readily use explicit clarification requests such as "what?" "what are you saying?" or "what are you thinking?". Contrary to Aston's (1986) claim, I do not think this indicates that learners regard NfM as a face-threatening act; it may instead be related to intimacy among group members. The speakers' reactions are multifarious; some speakers provide more comprehensible input by using paraphrase as a form of simplification or elaboration. This kind of feedback, however, fails to identify speaker A's intended question and respond in a way appropriate to it. Some acknowledge a disjuncture between sentence meaning and speaker meaning but are unable to articulate it fully, as in "she's just saying", "she doesn't mean", and "you know". One speaker avoids providing clear corrective feedback: "um … the writer's mind". In another case, an interlocutor provides information about his own mother's use of a specific expression as a response to A's question. Interestingly, some interlocutors use metalinguistic cues such as "people can say that", which acknowledge the difference between what people say and what they mean. The negotiation involved in the students' exchange in (10) is shown below:

(11) a. *Original L2 sentence*
   This dish not salty enough, no flavor.
   b. *Implicit clarification request as meaning adjustment*
   "This dish" is "not salty enough, no flavor" (repetition)
   c. *Explicit clarification request as meaning adjustment*
   what does she mean?
   why does she say?
   d. *Simplification as meaning adjustment*
   she is saying … the dish is not delicious
   e. *Metalinguistic cue as meaning adjustment*
   people can say that
   my mother doesn't say that way
   f. *Elaboration as meaning adjustment*
   she's saying … the dish has no taste because it is less salty to satisfy   her taste
   g. *Exemplification as meaning adjustment*
   like … my mom always says her food doesn't taste good although it's very delicious

As shown in (11d) the speaker deletes the word "salty" from the original sentence, and changes the phrase "no flavor" to "not delicious", in an application of semantic knowledge. In (11f), the speaker incorporates a consideration of the relationship between cause and result by adding "because". However, speaker A's problem has more to do with communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) rather than linguistic competence.[5] The social perceptions underlying the speaker's use of language are related to sociopragmatic competence (Leech, 1983). Sociopragmatic knowledge helps them to interpret the host's meaning in situations where the host deliberately uses humble language to describe her well-prepared meal. In this case, due to a lack of sociopragmatic knowledge, some intermediate EFL students interpret the Chinese mother's utterance literally. Some students, who have been exposed to pragmatic input or acquired knowledge of discourse strategies, are able to adjust their perception of meaning by referring to other people's language use. They may not fully understand however, and use an utterance such as "like" as in (11g). Using 'like' exempts one from commitment to the truth of a statement (Channell, 1994). Some learners use language in a way that relies on their schematic knowledge when reading a dinner invitation as in (11e).

C. Negotiation and Feedback as Aids to Inference of Speaker Meaning

The interactions shown in the above conversations do not focus on correcting errors; neither do they provide an answer. This is partly because the required comprehensibility is not related to structural linguistic problems such as problems of lexical meaning or structure. We have seen above that A's repetition and clarification requests can be influenced by the maxims of Quality and Manner, which govern conversation. This is related to expectations about language use, which leads listeners to look for implicit meaning. Lexical meanings can be found in a dictionary, and thus feedback on lexical issues can refer back to specified meanings—solid ground. It has been acknowledged that NfM makes input comprehensible and functions as a source of negative feedback (e.g., Long, 1996; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Oliver, 2000; Pica, 1994; Adams, 2007). In terms of pragmatic meaning, however, negotiation between NNSs does not seem to guarantee comprehensible input. Providing feedback for pragmatic meanings is much more difficult. The responses in (11b)–(11g) do not relate to corrective strategies in the sense that they are not followed by ungrammatical

---

[5]According to Canale and Swain (1980), communicative competence must also consider pragmatic ability in a second or foreign language. Pragmatic ability for the language learner is "to be able to comprehend the pragmalinguistic action" and "also be able to produce it in a target language (TL) and following its cultural norms, using one's own pragmatic knowledge of a TL" (Yamashita, 2008, p. 202). For discussion of the teaching of pragmatics, see Ishihara & Cohen (2010, chapter 6).

utterances; and this is because learners at this level do not have enough expertise to correct these aspects of language use. The pragmatic knowledge we need occupies a different level of language use than semantic and linguistic knowledge (cf. Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1995). EFL learners have been less exposed to pragmatic knowledge (cf. Thomas, 1983), so it is natural that they may be deficient in pragmatic ability. Accordingly, students may have lower expectations regarding their peers' feedback and may be more tolerant of incomplete understanding on their peers' part (for discussion regarding learners' expectations and the perception of feedback, see Sheen, 2004).

Feedback can, however, satisfy the desire for reciprocity by encouraging successful inference of meaning. Making sense of meaning requires complex cognitive inferencing (Sperber & Wilson, 1995; Carston, 2002). Although A's interlocutors do not provide solutions to some of his clarification requests, such feedback types as (11e) and (11g) may reveal language use in a different context or aspect. Thus, by identifying the context, speaker A may ascertain the (pragmatic) meaning. The examples shown above do not show modification of output on the part of the learners. This negotiation work may, however, encourage consciousness in the sense that learners are made aware of certain pragmatic features in the input.[6] This may be beneficial to the process of learning by fostering several goods, as follows.

● *Consideration of context and agent:* Students paid attention to the context of the expression during negotiation and feedback (as in Examples 7-10). This indicates that negotiation for (pragmatic) meaning may lead learners to recognize that a nonlinguistic problem can exist in a given case, and thus to emphasize both the context and the language user. When students scaffold their peers, some of them reflect a self-image as language users, rather than language learners. Thus, by engaging in this behavior, learners are taking advantage of the opportunity to approach language as a communicative tool to use, rather than as a resource or content to memorize.

● *Giving opportunities to notice use, meaning, and form:* Negotiation helped students realize that they were not familiar with the use of "you" exhibited in Example 6. This indicates that negotiation for (pragmatic) meaning encourages listening learners to recognize the purpose of a speaker in making a specific linguistic choice. Inferring an unspecified meaning also encourages learners to attend to form (as in the use of "seconds" in Example 7). This kind of acknowledgment of meaning and form will be essential when learners use language in real life outside of the classroom.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper addresses a level of negotiation for meaning which is generated for reasons other than those that previous researchers have identified (such as linguistic problems or breakdowns of communication). The reasons for this difference have been explored from the language user's point of view. Key features of feedback as used in this particular type of meaning negotiation have been discussed, including clarification requests, metalinguistic cues, and exemplification. This discussion may ultimately help us find ways to better foster learners' communicative competence as part of their language development, including explicit pragmatics instruction. Additional research, however, will be necessary to further explore the complexities of NfM in relation to L2 proficiency and cultural difference and awareness.

REFERENCES

[1]   Adams, R. (2007). Do second language learners benefit from interacting with each other? In R. Mackey (ed.), *Conversational interaction in second language acquisition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 29–51.
[2]   Aston, G. (1986). Trouble-shooting in interaction with learners: The more the merrier? *Applied Linguistics 7*.2, 128–143.
[3]   Canale, M. & M. Swain (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics* 1.1, 1–47.
[4]   Carston, R. (2002). Thoughts and utterances: The pragmatics of explicit communication. Oxford: Blackwell.
[5]   Channell, J. (1994). Vague language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[6]   Ellis, R. (2002). The place of grammar instruction in the second/foreign language curriculum. In E. Hinkel & S. Fotos (eds.), *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates,17–34.
[7]   Ellis, R. (2003). Task-based language learning and teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[8]   Foster, P. (1998). A classroom perspective on the negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics 19.* 1, 1–23.
[9]   Foster, P. & A. S. Ohta (2005). Negotiation for meaning and peer assistance in second language classrooms. *Applied Linguistics 26*.3, 402–430.
[10] Garcia, P. (2004). Pragmatic comprehension of high and low level language learners. *TESL-EJ 8.2,* 1–13.
[11] Grice, H.P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In P. Cole & J. L. Morgan (eds). *Syntax and semantics 3: Speech acts*. New York: Academic Press, 41-58.
[12] Grice, H. P. (1989). Studies in the way of words. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
[13] Grundy, P. (2008). Doing pragmatics. London: Holder Education.
[14] Hatch, E. (1992). Discourse and language education. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[15] Ishihara, N. & A. D. Cohen (2010). Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where Language and culture meet. London: Longman.
[16] Krashen, S. (1985). The input hypothesis: Issues and implications. London: Longman.
[17] Leech, G. (1983). Principles of pragmatics. London: Longman.
[18] Levinson, S. C. (1983). Pragmatics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---

[6]According to Ellis (2002, p. 29) two kinds of linguistic awareness can be distinguished. The first relates to learners' coming to notice the "properties of the language" from input. The second relates to learners' output in terms of fostering the "explicit representation of a target form".

[19] Lightbown, P. & N. Spada. (2002). Second language acquisition. In N. Schmitt (ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics*. London: Arnold, 115–132.

[20] Lightbown, P. & N. Spada. (2006). How languages are learned. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[21] Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W. C. Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition*. New York: Academic Press, 413–468.

[22] Lyster, R. (1998). Recasts, repetition, and ambiguity in L2 classroom discourse. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 20.1, 31–81.

[23] Lyster, R. & L. Ranta. (1997). Corrective feedback and learner uptake. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 19. 1, 37–66.

[24] Oliver, R. (2000). Age differences in negotiation and feedback in classroom and pairwork. *Language Learning* 50. 1, 119–151.

[25] Pica, T. (1994). Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about second-language learning conditions, processes, and outcomes? *Language Learning 44*.3, 493–527.

[26] Pica, T. & C. Doughty. (1986). Input and interaction in the communicative language classroom: A comparison of teacher-fronted and group activities. In S. Gass & C. Madden (eds.), *Input and second language acquisition*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 115–132.

[27] Pica, T., Young, R. & C. Doughty. (1987). The impact of interaction on comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly 21*, 737–758.

[28] Richards, J. & S. Eckstut-Didier. (2003). Strategic Reading 2. New York: Cambridge University Press.

[29] Sheen, Y. (2004). Corrective feedback and learner uptake in communicative classrooms across instructional settings. *Language Teaching Research* 8.3, 263-300.

[30] Sperber, D. & D. Wilson. (1995). Relevance: Communication and cognition. Oxford: Blackwell.

[31] Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of interaction in ESL pair work. *Language Learning 52*.1, 119–158.

[32] Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf(ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 97–114.

[33] Swain, M. & S. Lapkin (1998). Interaction and second language learning: Two adolescent French immersion students working together. *Modern Language Journal 82*.3, 320–37.

[34] Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics 4*.2, pp. 91–112.

[35] Thomas, J. (1995). Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics. London: Longman.

[36] Varonis, E. & S. M. Gass (1985). Non-native/non-native conversations: A model for negotiation of meaning. *Applied Linguistics* 6.1, 71–90.

[37] Yamashita, S. (2008). Investigating interlanguage pragmatic ability. In E. Alcon Soler & A. Martinez-Flor (eds.), *Investigating pragmatics in foreign language learning, teaching, and testing*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 201–223.

Jiyon Cook is a lecturer in the department of English Literature and Linguistics at Sogang University, Seoul, Korea. She completed her Ph.D. in English Linguistics from Sogang University. She has taught General English, Linguistics related courses, and TESOL in various universities in Seoul. Her research interests include semantics, pragmatics, and second language learning.