

**An analysis on native speakers and non-native speakers' interaction:  
Negotiation of meaning**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this research is to find out what the negotiation of meaning between native speakers and non-native speakers' interaction is like. This research is a descriptive quantitative. The subjects of the research were ten students of the second grade of junior high school in ACCESS class aged around 13-14 years old, and they can also be categorized as beginner level students in studying English. The data were elicited through the conversational interaction between the students as the non-native speakers and the native speakers of English in the form of video recording. The negotiation of meaning were analysed by categorizing the speakers' utterances into four categories to see the frequency and the factors affecting the negotiation of meaning. The result of this research showed that clarification request as the subcategory of signal was the most used category by the the speakers in the interaction (30.54%). On the other hand, the least used categories were trigger, other-modification, and follow-up (2.1%). Furthermore, the factors affecting the negotiation of meaning were pronunciation, self-confidence, and culture based on the researcher's assumptions from observing the video recordings of the interaction. This suggests that the negotiation of meaning can happen in conversation interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers, and some factors seem to be affecting the process that can cause misunderstandings and communication breakdowns.

**Keywords:** *negotiation of meaning, interaction, native speakers, non-native speakers.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Interaction means acting upon each other, and this definition contains a concept that there are two parties involving in an interaction (Malamah, 1987). Brown (2001) states that in the era of communicative language teaching, interaction is the heart of communication. From this concept, it is clearly stated that communication is the main factor in the communicative language teaching, and communication must appear in every language learning activity.

Besides its function as a tool of communication language has other functions. Freeman and Larsen (1986) state while we speak, we use the language to accomplish some functions such as arguing, persuading, or promising and we carry out these functions within a social context. It means that, when people speak, they express their ideas, feelings, or responses to other people. When two or more people discuss a similar issue, they are in a process of communication. Scott (1995) states that communication is an activity involving two or more people in whom the participants are listeners and speakers have to listen to what they hear and make the contribution at speech. There are two kinds of communication: verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication such as arguing or persuading can be influencing. Meanwhile, non-verbal communication is like showing mimics, body language, and gestures, and when they try communicating, they may use such as (“umm”, “pardon”, “aaa”, etc.). To solve their problems in speaking, the students used negotiation of meaning. It can help them to communicate and minimize misunderstandings.

Negotiation of meaning is defined as a series of exchanges conducted by addressees and addressees to help themselves understand and be understood by their interlocutors (Pica in Yufrizal, 2007). In this case, when native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) are involved in an interaction, they work together to solve any potential misunderstandings or there is no understanding occurs, they can do that by checking each other's comprehension, requesting clarification and confirmation and by repairing and adjusting speech (Pica and Doughty, 1988). Negotiation of meaning is regarded to be more effective to avoid misunderstanding in a conversation. The more students negotiate, the more interaction occurs; moreover, it occurs when two or more students involve in oral interaction and they find a possibility to have a communication breakdown.

There have been several studies conducted in analyzing the negotiation of meaning. Scarcella and Higa (1981), in a study comparing conversations involving native speakers and non-native children and conversations between native speakers and non-native adolescents, found that there was a greater amount of simplified input to children than to adolescents, but that the adolescents 'worked' harder than younger learners at sustaining the discourse because they were more involved in keeping the conversation going. Besides, Varonis and Gass (1985) researched to see the negotiation of meaning of non-native speaker (NNS) and non-native speaker (NNS), they have established that negotiations of meaning occur with greater frequency in NNS-NNS than including native speakers. Among NNS-NNS pairs, this need for negotiation is probably due to the lack of shared background between non-native speakers. Flora (2016) stated that students of English department of Teachers Training Faculty-lampung university made some types of negotiation when they had discussion using target language, English. In addition, Nakahama et

al. (2001) analyzed the negotiation of meaning in conversational and information gap activities, he found that both the NS and the NNS interlocutors struggled to get their meanings across through negotiation in a broader sense instead of dropping the topic; moreover, this study found differences between conversational and information gap interaction not only in the number of negotiation sequences but also in their quality.

Since the negotiation of meaning is a part of the language, we need to understand how it happens in the conversation. Henceforth, the researcher believes that this research needs to be conducted to see the negotiation of meaning between native speakers and non-native speakers during the online conversation to find out the factors affecting misunderstandings and communication breakdowns.

## **II. METHODS**

The design of the research is a descriptive quantitative. Descriptive quantitative was used in this research because the data obtained by the researcher based on quantitative data, then the researcher explained the results of the data into descriptive form. The population of this research is the second grade junior high school students. Ten students of junior high school in ACCESS class aged around 13-14 years old were chosen as the sample. The data were collected by video recorded the students and native speakers' interaction to see the negotiation of meaning happened in the conversation. Then, the data were transcribed and analyzed into some categories of negotiation of meaning. After that, the data were calculated to see the frequency. Besides, the researcher also assumed the factors by watching the video and took notes while doing the research so that it could be concluded.

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Results**

This analysis deals with a conversation between native speakers and non-native speakers in a conversational interaction to investigate the negotiation of meaning that happened between the speakers. Negotiation refers to the role of students and teachers in which they take turns and exchange meaning in a conversation to convey their ideas so that the conversation keeps going. After conducting the research, the researcher analyzed the conversation between native speakers and non-native speakers. The result is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Result of negotiation of meaning between native speakers and non-native speakers' interaction

Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Trigger</b>	5	2.1%
<b>Signal</b>		
a. Clarification Request	73	30.54%
b. Confirmation Check	37	15.48%
c. Comprehension Check	37	15.48%
<b>Response</b>		
a. Response Self-Repetition	44	18.41%
b. Response Other-Repetition	8	3.34%
c. Response Self-Modification	17	7.11%
d. Response Other-Modification	5	2.1%
e. Confirmation and Negation Response	8	3.34%
<b>Follow-up</b>	5	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	239	100%

Based on Table 1. there are four categories of negotiation of meaning, there are the trigger, signal, response, and follow-up. The table provides the result of the negotiation of meaning between native speakers and non-native speakers' interaction. It indicates the percentages of four categories of negotiation of meaning. Furthermore, the most noticeable difference concerns on the most frequently used category and the least frequently used category. To begin, clarification request as one of the subcategories of the signal was the most frequently used category in the speakers' interaction (30.54%). It is followed by response self-repetition, which is a part of response categories (18.41%). Furthermore, the other two subcategories of signal: confirmation check and comprehension check are at the same percentage followed by response self-modification (15.48% and 7.11% respectively). The least subcategories of response are response other-repetition and confirmation and negation response with the same percentage and response other-modification (3.34% and 2.1% respectively). It is followed by the other two categories of negotiation of meaning: trigger and follow-up with the same percentage as response-other modification (2.1%). Above all, it shows that the categories and the subcategories do not have significantly different results.

### Discussions

Pica (1989) proposed four categories of negotiation of meaning. They are the trigger, signal, response, and follow-up. The speakers used these four categories when they were having conversations to understand the meaning of the interlocutors. Here is the part of the speakers' conversation:

*NS: What time is it there?*

*NNS: What?*

*NS: What's the time?*

*NNS: Aaa... fourth a.m. eh, fourth p.m.*

As we can see, the underlined word shows that non-native speakers did not understand what the interlocutor had said, so that he said “*what?*” to clarify what the native speaker meant. This is called clarification request, as the speaker used “*what?*”—the form of WH-question with raising intonation to get what the interlocutor had stated. The bold sentence shows the subcategory of response which is self-repetition. The speaker repeated his utterance because the interlocutor did not gather the information well. Moreover, in the conversation, the speaker also used triggers to show doubt or hesitation when he told the time to the native speaker. While in other parts of the conversation, they used other categories as follows:

NS: *Okay..what’s your favourite food?*

NNS: *My favourite food is Nadel*

NS: ***Noodles?***

NNS: *Yeah*

NS: *Okay, fair enough. When’s your birthday?*

NNS: *Aaaa... **Can you repeat?***

NS: *I said when is your birthday?*

NNS: *My birthday in July. Twenty six of July.*

By identifying the conversation above, we can see that the native speaker used confirmation check by repeating what the interlocutor had said to confirm whether the information he had got was right. The native speaker said “*noodles?*” to confirm what the non-native speaker told him about her favourite food. Moreover, another category used in the conversation is clarification request; whereas the bold sentence “*can you repeat?*” means that the non-native speaker did not get what the native speaker said, so that to elicit the meaning, the non-native speaker asked the interlocutor to repeat his question. In the conversation, the speaker also used comprehension check to make sure whether the interlocutor understood what they meant. The underlined sentence shows that the native speaker repeated what he had said only to know that the interlocutor understood what he had said.

On the other parts of conversation, it shows how the speakers utter to negotiate the meaning with other categories and subcategories.

NS: *Okay, so what do you like to do?*

NNS: *What do you like to do? What?*

NS: *What’s your hobby?*

NNS: *umm... I...*

NNS: *My hobbies are swimming, reading novel, and...and cooking*

NS: ***Swimming?***

NNS: *Yeah swimming*

As we can see the underlined sentence above, it shows self-modification to response the confusion of the interlocutor. Moreover, the bold sentence indicates other-repetition in responding the interlocutor’s utterance to confirm the meaning.

NS: *Blue. When's your birthday?*

NNS: *In..one June.*

NS: *First of June.*

Response other-modification is found on this part of the conversation. The underlined sentence provides the modification did by the native speaker to clarify the non-native speaker's utterance.

NS: *What kind?*

NNS: *Like Avengers.*

NS: *Sorry?*

NNS: *Avengers*

NS: *Oh Avengers.*

NS: *Okay, which Avengers movie do you like the most?*

NNS: *Aaaa..the title or what?*

NS: ***Yeah***

NNS: *Aaaa.. Avengers Endgame like that's it I like the movie is Avengers Endgame Sir.*

In this part of conversation, the researcher found some categories and subcategories of negotiation of meaning. Two of them are follow-up and confirmation and negation response. The underlined sentence shows the follow up, as it indicates that the speakers had achieved an agreement of something they had talked about. Furthermore, the bold sentence indicates the confirmation and negation response. The speaker said "yeah" to confirm to what the interlocutor had stated.

Jungmi (2003) investigated the negotiation of meaning between Korean and Japan students in English class. The result showed that the most frequently used in negotiating the meaning was confirmation check. This is in line with Hartono and Ihsan (2016) on analyzing the negotiation meaning strategies used in conversation by undergraduate EFL students. The results revealed frequently used negotiation of meaning strategies (confirmation checks, repetitions, and self-corrections) were used to help the interlocutors understand and comprehend meaning. Furthermore, Samani et al. (2015) conducted a research to see the pattern of negotiation of meaning in English as a second language learners' interaction. The result showed that the learners mostly used confirmation (26.61%) to understand the meaning from the interlocutors when they were interacting.

Having considered the theories above, this research is not in line with the previous studies explained above, as in this research, the researcher had analysed the data and found that the most frequently used category is clarification request with 30.54% of all categories. On the other hand, this research supports the previous research conducted by Flora (2020). She stated that empirical data showed that the students did negotiation of meaning in the form of clarification requests if they had linguistic problems. The result of the research may be influenced by pronunciation. Since it was the interaction between native speakers and non-native speakers, it might be difficult for students to understand precisely when they were

talking, as the native speakers spoke in a normal speed and in their dialects. The students are still learning English, and they might not fully understand every words pronounced by the native speakers; therefore, they kept asking the native speakers to repeat what they had said to clarify the meaning so that it can be understood well. Besides pronunciation, students' confidence also affected the interaction. The students tended to be quiet instead of asking questions when they were talking to the native speakers. Furthermore, It might be also affected by the excitement of the students, as we know that most of our people could feel really excited when it comes to see the foreigners, and this can be said as a culture. It probably made them had lost words to say to the native speakers and ended up being passive. In addition, the learning outcomes on accuracy could be affected by the way conversation happened, as the native speakers mostly spoke in a good grammatical term so that the students tried their best speaking in grammatical correct to be understood by the interlocutors; moreover, students got input for their pronunciation understanding by listening to the native speakers' utterances and being corrected when they did some mistakes in pronouncing the words. The students also gained more knowledge in using other expressions to say something in a conversation. The researcher assumed this by watching the video recording of the speakers' interaction.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

##### **Conclusions**

The objective of this research is to investigate the negotiation of meaning between native speakers and non-native speakers' interaction. From this research which has been conducted, it can be concluded: first, the negotiation of meaning happened in students and native speakers' interaction as they used it to gather the meaning from the interlocutors' utterances. Second, the most frequently category used was clarification request which helping the speakers to understand the interlocutors mean in the conversation. It could be proven by the analysis done by the researcher. Third, pronunciation influenced the negotiation of meaning between native speakers and non-native speakers, which caused the difficulty in understanding the meaning of the interlocutors' utterances. Fourth, students' confidence played an important role in the conversations, because when they were not confident, they tended to be quiet instead of asking questions. And last, This research was intended to give the students an experience in facing real English by having a conversation with the native speakers of English.

##### **Suggestions**

Before coming to the suggestions, there are some limitations of the research: firstly, the researcher did not provide focused tasks on accuracy or to see the students' understanding about grammar terms of everything they had talked about with the native speakers. Secondly, the researcher presented the factors affecting the negotiation of meaning between students and the native speakers only by giving assumptions based on the video recordings without collecting the data by interview or questionnaires. And thirdly, the researcher did not group the samples based on their capability in speaking English to find more factors affecting the negotiation of meaning.

After doing this research, the author found something that need to be considered for further research, it is suggested that the researchers investigate more about negotiation of meaning in the interaction, for example the factors affecting the negotiation of meaning. Then, the subjects

of the research can be grouped based on their capabilities in speaking English, so that we can see the differences and the factors affecting the negotiation of meaning. Last, the researchers can compare the results by providing two or more native speakers with different dialects to see whether it influences the negotiation of meaning.

Additionally, there are also some suggestions for the teacher who wants to find out the negotiation of meaning in the teaching and learning process. First, in applying techniques and media, teachers can observe the negotiation of meaning among the students or between the teachers and the students during the learning process. Second, analyzing the negotiation of meaning between students with different level of English capability can be done to see the comparison of their efforts in negotiating the meaning during conversations. Third, the teacher can see the negotiation of meaning not only in conversational interaction but also in classroom interaction. Fourth, focused tasks on accuracy can be provided after collecting the data by video recordings to see the students' understanding during speaking class.

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