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Interrelationship between Interactions, Communication Strategies, and Social, Personal Traits in L2 Conversation*

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This study explores what factors influence a conversation between native and non-native English speakers. In second language acquisition (SLA) studies, a conversation between a native speaker (NS) and a non-native speaker (NNS) has been researched in terms of the effects on second language acquisition and learning. Focused on conversational interactions, interactionsists understand a conversation as an opportunity for negotiating meaning, which promotes L2 acquisition. On the other hand, communication strategy (CS) research has examined NNS's strategic language use for communicational purposes. While these approaches have investigated the nature of NS-NNS conversation and L2 learning, socio-affective and contextual factors have not been the focus of the research. However, with the increasing interest in the social and contextual factors, there is a growing need to expand conversation research to include these factors. Therefore, this study examines comprehensively conversational interactions, communication strategies, and intra- and inter-personal factors with three dyads of NS-NNS conversation participants. Six informal free conversations and interviews with all participants were conducted, and all conversations and interviews were transcribed for analysis. The results of the analysis indicate different communication performance across conversational dyads and interrelationship between conversational interactions, CSs, and intro- and inter-personal factors.

[communication competence/communication strategy/conversational interaction/ negotiation for meaning/NS-NNS conversation/L2 acquisition]

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s when Hatch (1978) began to explore the impact of conversation on language learning, conversational performance has been extensively studied, especially by

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interactionists, who have focused on implicit and explicit interactions between conversation participants. Interactionists recognize a conversation between a non-native speaker (NNS) and a native speaker (NS) as a major conduit of second language (L2) learning and formulate the role of conversational interactions for L2 acquisition through negotiation of meaning. Many studies have examined conversational interactions and evidenced the positive effects of the interactions on L2 acquisition across ages, languages, and educational settings (Mackey, Abbuhl, & Gass, 2012). To expand the scope of interaction research, researchers are paying attention on other aspects of conversation, such as task types, topics, activities, and personal and social traits of conversation participants (Mackey, Abbuhl, & Gass, 2012).

While interaction research has primarily focused on the cognitive processes of L2 learning and development, there are increasing interests in socio-affective factors, such as contextual factors, interpersonal relationships, and personal traits (Mackey, 2012, p. 135). The interaction studies based on the cognitive approach have reinforced the monolithic concepts of second language acquisition (SLA). For instance, as shown in the fundamental concepts of *learner, non-native, and interlanguage,* traditional SLA studies have viewed a L2 learner as a defective communicator, and a native speaker is idealized to have complete language competence (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Pointing out the skewed perspective on L2 conversation focused on the cognitive aspects, Firth and Wagner (1997) request multi-dimensional approaches including contextual and interactional aspects of language use, as well as cognitive development of language. Within the socially and contextually oriented approaches, a NNS is no longer a *learner or deficient communicator* but a participant as a language user (p. 286). The recent interests in social and contextual factors have led the expansion of related research on various social and personal aspects of conversation, such as cultural backgrounds, speech styles of the interlocutors, types of tasks, interpersonal relationship, and personal traits of participants (Mackey, 2012).

While studies on L2 conversations have been dominated by interaction-driven research focusing on L2 learning (Mackey, 2012), another aspect of L2 conversation has been investigated by communication strategy (CS) research. With the emphasis on NNS's strategic language use, CS research has shed light on L2 learners' conversational performance with native and non-native speakers. The notion of L2 communication strategies was introduced to depict L2 learners' strategic language use to handle difficulties or breakdowns in communication in the early 1970s (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Since Selinker (1972) first coined the term "communication strategy (p.229)" as one of five central processes of L2 learning, scholars have presented various definitions and taxonomies for the strategic language use (Bialystok, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Færch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1977). In their review of the CS research, Dörnyei and Scott (1997) defined that CSs are systematic language use to solve communicational problems.

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Later, Nakatani (2006) proposed classification of oral communication strategies from language learners' self-reports. Nakatani (2006) categorizes actual communication behaviors encompassing cognitive, affective, and social aspects of strategic language use.

Although CS and interaction studies have different perspectives on the role of NNS in conversation, both studies have focused to reveal the nature of conversation processes and L2 development. As a result, the contextual and social aspects of language use have been peripheral issues in L2 conversation research. In addition, there is a lack of understanding to consider the three approaches comprehensively. To address current limitations of conversation studies, this study examines how L2 conversation proceeds in the integrated approach. Due to the emphasis on actual conversational performance, this study adopts Nakatani's (2006) classification of CS as the frame for analysis of communication behaviors of NNS and includes intra- and inter-personal factors, such as language proficiency, patterns of dialogue, attitude and motivation, and interpersonal relationship, to explain the context of conversation.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Conversational Interaction

Research on the nature of L2 conversation and interactions for L2 learning has suggested that conversational interactions provide ample opportunities for L2 acquisition through negotiation for meaning and other supportive communication strategies. Especially, negotiation for meaning has been examined extensively on its role to promote language acquisition by interactionists (Mackey, Abbuhl, & Gass, 2012). Long (1981, 1996) has shaped the Interaction Hypothesis, formulating the role of the conversational interaction to promote L2 proficiency. After revisions of the initial perspective, the recent interactionist approach portrays that interactional adjustment in L2 conversation, especially negotiation for meaning, occurs to resolve communication difficulties (Kim, 2008), making input comprehensible to the NNS learner. In other words, in an interactive conversation, the NNS can notice the discrepancy between his/her interlanguage and the target language through selective attention on linguistic forms. In addition, the NNS' productive output and the NS' feedback on NNS talks also enhance L2 acquisition (Gass, Mackey, & Pica, 1998).

Over the past 20 years, interaction research has investigated comprehensively how conversation facilitates L2 learning and presented solid support for conversational interactions to promote L2 learning (Mackey, 2012). The benefits of conversational interactions have been evidenced in research with children, adolescents, and adults in both classroom and experimental settings as shown in meta-analysis studies (Kech, Iberri-Shea,

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Tracy-Ventura, & Wa-Mbaleka, 2006; Li, 2010; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Russell & Spada, 2006). Interaction research proposes several types of conversational interactions: recast, elicitation, metalinguistic feedback, and modified output (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Swain, 1995, 2005). Recast is the most common type of feedback on NNS' erroneous utterance, which provides correct reformulation without explicit corrections (Ellis et al., 2001). Long (1996, 2007) posits that recasts are effective for L2 learning because the implicit and unobtrusive nature of recasts allows learners to pay attention to form and meaning at the same time. However, other researchers claim that recasts are not salient enough, so that learners may not notice the errors (Lyster, 2004; Truscott, 1999). The disagreement on the effects of recasts seems to be caused by the various types of recasts in terms of their length, prosody, and the number of errors (Ellis & Sheen, 2006; Loewen & Philip, 2006; Sheen, 2006).

Another common interaction is elicitation, which invites NNS to self-correct. Repetition and clarification request are typical forms of elicitation (Loewen, 2012). Elicitation is more obvious in its corrective intent than recasts, so that learners are explicitly prompted to self-correct focusing on form (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). The most explicit interaction, metalinguistic feedback, is a type of negative feedback that directly indicates incorrect utterance, sometimes, with metalinguistic terminology to explain the nature of errors (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). Due to the salient nature of correction, metalinguistic feedback can be disruptive to communicative interaction, which may hinder comprehensive input due to excessive focus on form rather than meaning. However, Norris and Ortega (2000) report that the explicit feedback is more effective for L2 learning than implicit ones. Modified output, uptake, is the NNS learner's response to NS's feedback (Ellis et al., 2001) or the result of self-monitoring (Mackey, 2012). Research results evidence the benefits of modified output for L2 development in various ways, such as enhancing fluency and automaticity (Swain, 1995, 2005), noticing the gap between learners' interlanguage and the target language (Schmidt & Frota, 1986), and improving production of certain grammar forms (McDonough, 2005).

2. Communication Strategies

While interaction research postulates NS's initiation of conversational interaction, communication strategy (CS) studies emphasize the active, strategic language use of non-native speakers in L2 communication. The notion of "communication strategy" was introduced by Selinker (1972), and defined first by Tarone and her colleagues (Tarone, 1977; Tarone, Cohen & Dumas, 1976). Since Tarone's (1977) definition of CS, *the process of meaning negotiation between interlocutors*, there have been proliferation of research on definitions and taxonomies of CSs (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Canale and Swain (1980)

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suggest a communication competence model and include "strategic competence" as one of four subcomepetencies: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Færch and Kasper (1983) recognize CS as conscious planning to achieve a particular communication goal in psycholinguistic approach. They classify CSs into two types: reduction strategies and achievement strategies. Furthermore, Bialystok (1990) and the Nijmegen Group, a group of researchers at Nijmegen University, Netherlands, posit that CSs are mental procedures, focusing on the cognitive "deep structure" of CSs. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) conceive that CSs are primarily intended for problem-management in L2 communication. Integrating concepts from previous research, they define CSs as every intentional attempt to solve any language-related problems during communication.

Nakatani (2006) examines how the constructs from CS studies are valid surveying L2 learners' perception on communication strategies. For parsimonious examination of the constructs and development of the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI), he follows three steps of vilification and development process: surveying L2 learner's general perceptions of CSs, selecting test items through a pilot factor analysis, and finalizing self-reported instrument for strategic language use. The final version of OCSI comprises of eight strategies for speaking and seven listening strategies. In examination of applicability of OCSI, the test results confirmed the reliability and validity of the instrument.

3. Social and Personal Factors Influencing L2 Conversation

For several decades, interaction and CS research has greatly advanced the understanding of L2 conversation and L2 learning. However, research on factors influencing the conversation performance has not been conducted much. Firth and Wagner (1997) and Mackey (2012) point out the biased emphasis of SLA research favoring cognitive processes over social and contextual factors. However, the increased recognition on those factors has led conversation research to expand the scope of research.

Besides research on definitions and taxonomies of CSs, some studies investigate the factors affecting L2 learner's use of CSs. For instance, Paribakt's (1985) study with adult Persian ESL students identified different preference of CS depending on the level of proficiency. Poulisse (1987) also found that the level of proficiency affected the use of certain types of CSs. In addition, the choice and the use of CSs are known to be influenced by task types (Dobao, 2001; Rabah'ah & Bulut, 2007) and learning environment (Lafford, 2004). However, the factors mostly concern the individual variances rather than interpersonal or social relationship. Thus, further studies on CS are required to include social and contextual aspects of CS use.

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In interaction research, there is definite imbalance between cognitive and mentalistic orientations, and social and contextual orientations. Since Firth and Wagner (1997) requested to alleviate the severe skewedness in interaction research, the contextual, interpersonal, and personal factors have been important topics for interaction studies (Mackey, 2012). For instance, Philip and Mackey (2010) reveal that L2 learners' interactions are widely influenced by the types of relationship with their interlocutors, in pairs and in small groups, and the quality of interpersonal relationship, such as the degree of trust or friendship. Tannen (2005) identifies differences of discourse styles, such as tempo of speech, turn-taking patterns, and topic presentation between New Yorkers and people from California. The findings suggest the impact of culture on conversation interactions. In the examination of L2 learners' conversational interactions, Foster and Ohta (2005) found that conversations are driven more by the socio-affective desire, the purpose to maintain a friendly and supportive discourse, than cognitive achievement goals to obtain comprehensible input. Thus, the studies, even small in numbers, suggest the L2 conversation is affected by social and personal factors.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Although there have been several attempts to investigate affecting factors on conversation performance, further examination is required for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how the factors interact with each other and influence conversation process. The integrated approaches are required considering conversational interactions, CSs, and contextual and personal factors at the same time. Therefore, instead of examination of the effects of interactions and CSs which have been examined extensively in previous research, this study explores the interrelationship between conversational interactions, CSs, and other affecting factors in L2 conversation with the following research questions.

1) Are there differences between NS-NNS conversation dyads in terms of conversational interaction, use of CSs, and intro- and intra-personal factors, such as patterns of dialogue, NS-NNS relationship, attitude and motivation for L2 conversation?
2) Are there certain patterns of interrelationship between conversation interaction, CS use, and other factors?

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IV. METHODS

1. Participants

The participants were recruited at a volunteer program, which aimed to support international students at a university in the mid-Atlantic area of the U.S. The program was Language Consultant Program (LCP), in which a NS and a NNS meet weekly through a semester and talk freely on various topics. The program is designed to support international students' adaptation to the new environment and improvement of oral communication skills. At the orientation session of the LCP program, the researcher introduced this study and recruited participations; three NS-NNS dyads volunteered for this study.

Non-Native Speaker 1 (NNS 1) is a Korean female doctoral student who came to the university a year ago with her husband. She studies Nursing and is taking internship training at a hospital. NNS1's conversation consultant is Native Speaker 1 (NS1), who is a first year female graduate student majoring in Education. She is a Caucasian. They have maintained the same dyad of conversation since the last semester. Non-Native Speaker 2 (NNS2) came from China three years ago. She is a doctoral student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. She lives with a Chinese roommate and works at a lab of her department. Native Speaker 2 (NS2), NNS2's language consultant, is a first year undergraduate student majoring in History. She is a Caucasian and has little experience with Asian cultures. Non-Native Speaker 3 (NNS3) came from China three months ago for her doctoral study in Statistics. NNS3's language consultant is Native Speaker 3 (NS3), who is a first year undergraduate student studying Economics. She is an Asian American, who came to the U.S. from Hong Kong in her early childhood. She has rich cultural and language knowledge of both China and America.

2. Data Collection and Analysis

To investigate complex interactions in a NS-NNS conversation, the researcher observed six conversations of three LCP groups and interviewed the six participants: three NSs and three NNSs. The conversations and interviews were recorded using an audio recorder with field notes. Each conversation lasted about from 30 minutes to 50 minutes. From the interview data, the researcher collected information about personal and cultural background of participants, LCP and English learning experience, and English use environment. The audio-recorded conversations were transcribed and analyzed. First, conversational interactions were measured by the number of recasts, elicitations, metalinguistic feedback, and modified outputs for each dyad. Second, use of CSs was counted according to the categories of Nakatani's (2006) Oral Communication Strategy

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Inventory (see Table 1). Last, characteristics of interlocutors, their relationship, and communication performance were measured and analyzed to find the effects of personal, social, and contextual factors on L2 conversation. The factors include L2 oral proficiency, attitude and motivation for conversation, ratio of talks between NS and NNS, the number of words, and frequency of turn-taking. Frequency of turn-taking was counted for each turn of dialogue between a NS and a NNS. Using a word processor program, the number of spoken words of each NS and NNS was calculated from the transcribed conversations. Due to different conversation hours in each group, all the measuring indexes were standardized for the occurrences per 60 minutes.

TABLE 1

Nakatani's (2006) Categories for Oral Communication Strategies

Category	Behaviors
Speaking Strategies	
Social Affective	To control anxiety, enjoy dialogue, encourage using English, and behave socially
Fluency-Oriented	To pay attention to the rhythm, intonation, pronunciation and clarity of their speech for better understanding of listeners
Negotiation for Meaning	To modify interaction by comprehension check, repeat their speech, and give examples for comprehensible input
Accuracy-Oriented	To pay attention to forms and seek grammatical accuracy by self-correcting
Message Reduction and Alteration	To avoid a communication breakdown by reducing an original message, simplifying their utterances, or using similar expressions
Nonverbal Strategies	To use eye contact, gestures, or facial expressions to achieve communication goals
Message Abandonment	To give up their attempt to communicate, leave the message unfinished, or seek help from others to continue the conversation
Attempt to Think in English	To think in English and show negative attitude toward thinking in their native language and then constructing the English sentence
Listening Strategies	
Negotiation for Meaning	To repeat what the speaker said, make clarification requests, or show their difficulties in comprehension
Fluency-Maintaining	To focus on the speaker's rhythm intonation, and pronunciation to capture their intentions
Scanning	To focus on specific points of speech, such as subject and verb, the interrogative, and the first part of the speaker's utterance
Getting the Gist	To pay attention to general information rather than to specific utterances considering the context and previous sentences
Nonverbal Strategies	To use eye contact, facial expression, and gestures

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Less Active Listener	To translate into their native language little by little and depend heavily on family words
Word-Oriented	To capture the meaning of speech by paying attention to individual words

V. RESULTS

From the conversation and interview data, different characteristics of each conversation dyad were found, which relate with the conversation pattern in each group. Data analysis identified the relationship between factors.

1. Differences between Conversation Dyads

1) Conversational Interaction

The measure of conversational interaction, CS use, and personal, social, and contextual aspects of conversation showed differences between dyads. First, the numbers of conversational interactions were different between Dyad 1 and the other dyads as shown in Table 2. Dyad 1 frequently attempt interactions of recasts and modified output while Dyad 2 and Dyad 3 showed the limited use of recasts.

TABLE 2

The Number of Recast, Elicitation, Metaliguistic Feedback, and Modified Output

Group	Recast	Elicitation	Metalinguistic feedback	Modified Output	Total
Dyad 1	58	2	3	52	115
Dyad 2	7	-	-	4	11
Dyad 3	3	-	-	-	3

As shown in the extract 1, NS1 provided recasts, and NNS responded with modified in most cases. The other types of interactions, elicitation and metalinguistic feedback, were observed only in Dyad 1 two and three times, respectively. However, NS 2 & 3 rarely practiced conversational interactions, and NNS 2 & 3 seldom produced modified outputs.

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(extract 1)

1 NNS1: Actually, she, the nurse who made .. who made the same kind of mistakes in the hospital, she, she was my friend and we told her, we asked her why you.. you.. do… why you, you

2 NS1: Why do you? **(recast)**

3 NNS1: Why do you **(modified output)** make this mis.. this kind of mistake always?

4 NS1: Over and over **(recast)**.

5 NNS1: Over and over **(modified output)**. You need more pay attention.

2) Communication Strategies

The use of CSs also varied between dyads. As shown in Table 3, ten of fifteen speaking and listening strategies were observed. Among the observed strategies, three speaking and two listening strategies are most frequently used, while two strategies are less frequently used, and the other three are occasionally found. In general, all dyads show frequent and various uses of strategies. However, each NNS has a different preference of specific strategies.

TABLE 3

Use of Communication Strategy per 60 Minutes

Strategies	NNS 1	NNS 2	NNS 3	Total	Average
Speaking Strategies					
Social Affective	1.50	-	5.16	6.66	2.22
Fluency-Oriented	8.25	0.86	4.52	13.62	4.54
Negotiation for Meaning	8.25	1.71	3.87	13.84	4.61
Accuracy-Oriented	12.75	0.86	1.29	14.90	4.97
Message Reduction/Alteration	0.75	-	0.65	1.40	0.47
Nonverbal Strategies	-	-	-	-	-
Message Abandonment	-	0.86	-	0.86	0.29
Attempt to Think in English	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-sum	31.50	4.29	15.48	51.27	17.09
Listening Strategies					
Negotiation for Meaning	4.50	17.14	5.81	27.45	9.15
Fluency-Maintaining	3.75	6.00	10.97	20.72	6.91
Scanning	-	-	-	-	-
Getting the Gist	-	6.00	0.65	6.65	2.22
Nonverbal Strategies	-	-	0.65	0.65	0.22
Less Active Listener	-	-	-	-	-
Word-Oriented	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-sum	8.25	29.14	18.06	55.46	18.49
Total	39.75	33.43	33.55	106.73	35.58

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NNS 1 uses the Accuracy-Oriented speaking strategy most frequently, then, negotiation for meaning and fluency-oriented speaking strategies. Two listening strategies—negotiation for meaning and fluency-maintaining—are less frequently observed. The high frequencies of accuracy and fluency oriented speaking strategies indicate that NNS 1 concerns much about her speaking. The following extract from their conversations shows NNS1's frequent modifications and interactions in Dyad 1.

(extract 2)

1 NS1: So, how was the hospital this week? **(making a question-encouraging)**

2 NNS1: This week. Um… This week, my preceptor was too busy **(fluency oriented – restate)**. And, he.. he is ..she was **(accuracy oriented-modification)** a little angry. Actually, there.. there.. there are **(fluency oriented-restate)** several kinds of problems in nursing home.

3 NS1: Oh really? **(question or response-encouraging)**

4 NNS1: Because I think there, nursing home has like limited re- resource **(fluency oriented – restate)** to provide… sometimes to provide **(fluency oriented – restate)** enough or adequate care to patients. Also, there are various people, I mean, there are… there are… there are….um…

5 NS1: Multiple? **(question or suggestion-encouraging)**

6 NNS1: Not multiple. There are several kinds of nursing people, like some people has like BSN bachelor.. bachelor's **(accuracy oriented-modification)** science of nursing and some people got graduated from community college, or some people graduate from diplomat…

In the extract 2, NS 1 encourages NNS 1 to talk, and NNS 1 attempts many corrections and slows her speech down to make it clear and accurate. In the extract, NS 1 asks NNS 1 to talk about the life at the hospital and responds to NNS1's mention about some problems. In addition, NS 1 suggests a word in line 5, "*multiple*," when NNS 1 is struggling to find an appropriate expression saying, "*I mean, there are… there are… there are….um…(line 4)*." NNS1's concerns about accuracy and fluency of her speaking are shown in frequent restatement and corrections. For instance, as NNS 1 says, "*And, he.. he is ..she was (line 2)*," she corrects the pronoun and tense of a verb: *he->she, is->was*. For the other instance, she adds possessive expression, saying "*BSN bachelor.. bachelor's (line 6).*" Accuracy oriented corrections are mostly done to make her speech more native-like. As NNS 1 says, "*This week. Um… This week, my preceptor was too busy (line 2),"* she tries to smoothly connect "*This week"* with the following parts of a complete sentence. Likewise, the other restatements are made to make the word or phrase sound native-like: "*Actually, there..*

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there.. there are several kinds of problems in nursing home, re- resource to provide... sometimes to provide (line 2)."

The use of negotiation for meaning during speaking is also commonly observed in NNS1's talks. The following extract shows an example of negotiating for meaning.

(extract 3)

1 NNS1: right. And the other patient is… how to, end of life? **(negotiation for meaning1)**
2 NS1: she what?
3 NNS1: she is in the end of life? **(negotiation for meaning2)**
4 NS1: final stages.
5 NNS1: final stages.**(modification)**

In the extract 3, NNS1 describes a patient's condition, but she cannot figure out how to express herself. So, she uses a circumlocution, "*end of life (line 1),*" and raises her intonation of the words, checking NS1's understanding or asking proper words to describe the condition. At first, NS1 does not understand. Then, NNS1 repeats "*end of life*" in a complete sentence in line 3. Now, NS1 catches the meaning and suggests words, *"final stages (line 4).*" In the extract 3, negotiation for meaning is also acting as seeking help. By using the suggesting expression, "*final stages*," NNS1 completes her negotiation for meaning. Thus, NNS1's communication strategies reveal that NNS's conversation performance and her communication strategies are largely dependent on interactions with NS1.

Unlike NNS 1, NNS2 mostly employs listening oriented strategies—negotiation for meaning, fluency-maintaining, and getting the gist. NNS2 usually asks questions and listens to NS2, maintaining the dialogues through negotiation for meaning and fluency maintaining during listening as shown in the following example.

(extract 4)

1 NS2: Yeah, there… in the corner. You know, the corner?
2 NNS2: Yes. Do you know any good restaurant? **(questioning)**
3 NS2: um, the mellow mushroom is good. That's more of like a sit-down restaurant.
4 NNS2: the mushroom? **(negotiation for meaning during listening, getting the gist)**
5 NS2: the mellow mushroom.
6 NNS2: oh, mellow mushroom. **(fluency-maintaining)** Is that Italian? **(questioning)**
7 NS2: um, it's like a pizza and sandwich place.

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8 NNS2: oh. **(fluency-maintaining)**
9 NS2: and I think there's soup. Um, salad as well. Um, Little Johns, it has, um, sub-sandwiches and they're pretty cheap. Um, Christian's pizza, has the pizza.
10 NNS2: oh, Christian's pizza? **(fluency-maintaining, getting the gist)**
11 NS2: uh-hm. Um… I don't really eat in other places down there, so…
12 NNS2: so you have been here for two months? Three months? (**questioning**)
13 NS2: uh-hm. Since August. So… um…
14 NNS2: I don't know, Haha…

In the extract 4, NNS 2 maintains the conversation through frequent questions, fluency-maintenance strategies, and negotiation for meaning. The conversation is about restaurants around the school. Negotiation for meaning during listening is a listener's strategy to understand what is unclear to her. NNS2 repeats *mushroom (line 4 & 6)* to request further information about what she heard. As fluency-maintaining strategies, NNS2 says "*oh (line 6, 8. & 10)*" or repeats to indicate that she understands what NS2 means. Getting the gist is another frequent strategy that NNS2 uses. In both examples of getting the gist, NNS2 picks key words up from NS2's talk, *mushroom* and *Christian's pizza*. Both words are the names of restaurants, which are the main topics of this talk.

While NNS2 largely depends on listening strategies, NNS3 uses speaking and listening strategies evenly: 46% for speaking and 54% for listening. In addition, in listening strategies, NNS3 prefers fluency-maintaining ones to negotiation for meaning, which is contradicting to NN2's inclination toward negotiation for meaning.

(extract 5)

1 NS3: ...it's like a romance novel because the vampire falls in love with a human so... It's interesting about them ... - they are coming out with a movie. Do you read a lot of the ... English books?
2 NNS3: No. No...I'm so busy...with homework.
3 NS3: That's true...that's true. I think most college students have class. College undergrad and grad find like reading...
4 NNS3: Yeah. Yeah. **(fluency-maintaining)**
5 NS3: ...like for leisure, time and pleasure... very useful.
6 NNS3: I'd like to read. But, I have much to study...so much.
7 NS3: Yeah that's more than enough. So, I mean.....you seem to have pretty much work to do...
8 NNS3: ..(giggle) .yeah **(fluency-maintaining)**- I had to stay up.
9 NS3: Yeah. I didn't go out very much. I didn't go out and have fun. Oh, but yesterday I went to .... the Taiwanese Student association.

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10 NNS3: Uh huh **(fluency-maintaining)**
11 NS3: .... dinner, they had ... rice, pork ...uh the.. It seems like type of ... - not sure but marinated egg. ... it's like dumpling but I think...oh wait. No. That's..... I think it's...I think it's chicken.
12 NNS3: Uh huh. **(fluency-maintaining)**
13 NS3: Chicken egg....but I don't quite know what...
14 NNS3: Yeah. **(fluency-maintaining)**
15 NS3: ..it was, it was… like… The whites were darker.
16 NNS3: Uh huh **(fluency-maintaining)**
17 NS3: ...and they had.
18 NNS3: Ahhh (as if she recognized what it means). It's cool...

The above extract 5 shows how NNS3 uses listening strategies. With high level of oral proficiency, NNS3 maintains the conversation cueing her understanding to NS3, which is the fluency-maintaining strategy. In addition to listening strategies, NNS3 employs social-affective and fluency-oriented speaking strategies as shown in the extract 6. NNS3 pleases to share about her academic tasks and enjoys conversation with NS3. NNS3 explains how hard her study is, and NS3 sympathizes with NNS3's challenges. However, the mode of conversation is not serious but cheerful and casual.

(extract 6)

1 NNS3: I have 3 courses this semester, but… and um... end of them we have final exam.
2 NS3: Oh, that is not fair.
3 NNS3: (laugh) But, I still have two midterm exams.**(social-affective)**
4 NS3: Oh, after thanksgiving?
5 NNS3: Yeah, after thanksgiving.
6 NS3: It's not really a midterm anymore... We're not in the middle of this semester, not really.
7 NNS3: You know why professors… **(social-affective)**
8 NS3: How many midterm… like… how many midterms in total are in this classes that have of these two?
9 NNS3: Um… two courses. They have two midterms and um… one course have three midterm exams. So that's why there's a lot after thanksgiving.
10 NS3: Oh, I see. So, you're gonna be studying during thanksgiving, right?
11 NNS3: Yeah, that's true. I think every holiday during the semester is the time to study for maybe.after every holiday there will be exams. **(social-affective)**
12 NS3: I think the mindset, the mindset of the professors is "Oh, they have time."

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13 NNS3: Yeah (giggles). **(social-affective)**

Except for the aforementioned strategies, other strategies are seldom or never observed mostly due to the limitations of using transcribed conversations. For instance, attempting to think in English, scanning, less active listener, getting the gist, and word-oriented strategies are not explicit to observe, which are usually surveyed through NNS's reflection of their speech. In case of nonverbal strategies, the transcripts do not describe nonverbal behaviors precisely. The rare use of message reduction or abandonment indicates successful communication of all NNSs without giving up their messages, which may attribute to their English competence as graduate students. Additionally, while there are different preferences for specific CSs between NNSs, all NNSs employ CSs actively.

3) Characteristics of Participants

Interview data reveal the characteristics of each individual and each conversation dyad. NNS 1 is less confident in her English oral proficiency although she has learned English for more than ten years in Korea. Before coming to the U.S., she had rare opportunities to learn and practice English oral communication skills due to strong focus on grammar and translation in Korea. NNS 1 feels great pressure for fluent English oral communication at her internship site, a hospital, because she has to deal with various people including doctors, nurses, and patients and their families. To improve her English, she has been participating in LCP program for two semesters with NS 1. Out of her study and internship, she usually communicates with Koreans. While NS 1 does not have much knowledge about Korean cultures, she shares common interests and understanding about graduate study with NNS 1. NNS 1 and NS 1 have kept good relationship and often go out for lunch or dinner together. NNS 1 feels comfortable when she talks with NS1.

NNS 2 is in her third year in the U.S. and has difficulties to communicate with her professors and English speaking colleagues at her laboratory due to a lack of English oral proficiency. However, because her duties are mostly concerned with research, there is not much communication in the lab. She is reluctant to communicate with her colleagues and other English speakers as well. Although she had had English education for more than eight years in China, she felt very uncomfortable speaking in English. The LCP sessions are only opportunities for her to learn and practice English oral communication skills. Except the LCP sessions, she seldom speaks English at home or in her lab. At home, she mostly speaks in Chinese with her Chinese roommate. NS 2, a Caucasian female undergraduate student, has had several volunteer opportunities serving Hispanic communities. However, NS 2 has little experience and understanding of Chinese culture. NS2 and NNS2 meet only in LCP sessions, and their relationship is a little formal.

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NNS 3 is fluent in speaking English although it is her first semester in the U.S. She actively participates in student activities and has a few English speaking friends. In addition to LCP sessions, she meets another English coordinator once a week to speak English and do various activities. She also watches several American TV programs regularly. In her home country, she had various lessons and practices for English speaking and listening. NS3 is a Chinese American. Although she was born in Hong Kong, NS3 has been raised in American culture. She can speak and understand Cantonese Chinese, which is used in Hong Kong, Mandarin Chinese, some Spanish, as well as English. Due to her cultural background as a Chinese American, NS 3 has rich knowledge about Chinese language and culture. NNS 3 also possesses deep understanding of American culture. Both are participating in a Chinese student's association as well. They have many common interests and social connections.

4) Conversation Performance

The communication performance was measured by the numbers of dialogue turn, spoken words by each participant, and ratio of talks between the NS and the NNS. The results shown in Table 4 illustrate different patterns of conversations between three conversational dyads.

TABLE 4

Communication Performance per 60 Minutes

Group	No. of Turns	Total No. of Spoken Words			No. of Spoken Words each Turn			Ratio of Talks[1]
		NS	NNS	Sum	NS	NNS	Avg.	
Dyad 1	206	2,627	1,836	4,463	12.7	8.9	9.4	0.70
Dyad 2	268	4,385	2,073	6,458	16.3	7.7	10.8	0.47
Dyad 3	260	4,566	1,825	6,391	17.6	7.0	11.0	0.40

1. The ratio of talks indicates the ratio of spoken words of NNS to ones of NS.

In the total number of turns and spoken words, Dyad 1 differs from Dyad 2 and 3. The results indicate the conversations in Dyad 1 are slower in speed than ones in others. Between Dyad 2 and 3, the numbers of turns and spoken words are similar. In measure of the ratio of talks, Dyad 1 has the higher ratio of NNS's talk to NS's than the other dyads. In Dyad 1, the conversation is more balanced in the number of words spoken by each conversation party. On the contrary, Dyad 2 and 3 are much similar to each other in their numbers of words and ratios of talks between a NS and a NNS. The conversations in Dyad 2 and 3 are more dominated by NSs.

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2. Relationship between Factors

In the measurements of conversational interactions, CS use, and personal and social factors, conversation dyads are different to each other, and the differences in each measurement seem to be interrelated with each other.

NNS1's overtly more conversational interactions than the other two groups can be attributed to NNS 1's lack of L2 knowledge, NS 1's frequent recasts, and close relationship between NNS 1 and NS 1. That is to say, NS 1 is willing to encourage NNS 1 to correct L2 errors and improve L2 proficiency. In addition, NNS 1 seems not to lose her face by NS 1's frequent recasts, which may relate with close personal relationship between them. However, NS 2 seems reluctant to point out NNS 2's errors and passively responds to NNS 2's questions. Thus, in spite of NNS 2's frequent errors, Dyad 2 focuses on maintaining conversation without negotiation for meaning or attention on forms. On the other hand, the lack of communication interactions in Dyad 3 is mostly caused by NNS3's fluent English. Their conversation is like native-talk, where there are rare communication problems or errors. Therefore, the conversational interactions are largely influenced by NS-NNS relationship, NNS's L2 proficiency, and NS's willingness to improve NNS's English.

In addition, NNS 1's more use of speaking CS than NNS 2 and 3 is related with Dyad 1's balanced ratio of NS-NNS talks. In Dyad 2 & 3, NNSs prefer listening to speaking and use more listening communication strategies than speaking strategies, which is related with NNS's inclination to listening. In addition, NNS 1's frequent use of accuracy and fluency oriented strategies is partly caused by NS1's persistent recasts on NN1's mistakes as in the following extract 7.

(extract 7)

1 NNS1: so she dislike,
2 NS1: dislikes…**(recast)**
3 NNS1: she dislikes **(accuracy-oriented modification, modified output)** his disease called as Alzheimer dementia. So she just mentioned like that, hmm, my husband has some problem. He is.. um.. Maybe head? Like that. So she denied all symptoms and pro, pro, pro…
4 NS1: progression?**(recast)**
5 NNS1: progression, progression (**modified output**).
6 NS1: digression, actually. Well, his digression and the disease's progression. (**explicit feedback**).
7 NNS1: Right…

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At first, NS1 recasts NNS1's saying of *she dislike (line 1),* which contains an error on subject-verb agreement; then, NNS1 modifies her discourse into *she dislikes (line 3)*, which is accuracy oriented modification or modified output. In addition, NS1 points out a pragmatic error of *progression* by clarifying the distinction between *progression* of disease and *digression* of health condition. During conversations, NS1 often gives recasts, elicitation, and explicit feedback on grammar, pronunciation, and pragmatic errors while encouraging NNS1's talks. That is to say, the NS1's recasts behaviors have led the increase of NNS1's accuracy related communication strategies.

Unlike NNS 1, NNS2 mostly employs listening oriented strategies—negotiation for meaning, fluency-maintaining, and getting the gist. NNS2's great tendency to listening is related with NNS 2's reluctance to speak and her lack of confidence for oral communication. In conversations in Dyad 2, NNS2 usually asks questions and listens to NS2, maintaining the dialogues through negotiation for meaning and fluency maintaining during listening. Only 13% of NNS 2's communication strategies are for speaking, while majority of her strategies are for listening. NNS2's preference of listening is evidenced by the ratio of her talks to NS2's, 0.47, which means less than half of the amount of spoken words by NS2.

In terms of the ratio of NNS's talk to NS's, NNS3 shows a similar pattern with NNS2. As NNS2 did, NNS3 speaks words less than half of NS3's. However, use of communication strategies is very different in Dyad 3. Although NS3 dominates the dialogue, NNS3 also actively participates in the conversation responding to NS3 frequently. The dominance of NS3 in the conversations is the result of NS3's voluntary talks, while NS2 is passively responding to NNS2's questions. In addition to NNS3's use of strategies, Dyad 3 is distinctive in that both conversation parties correspond to each other spontaneously and naturally. The less frequent use of negotiation for meaning seems to be caused by NNS3's fluent oral communication skills. That is to say, NNS3 does not have serious difficulties to communicate in English. Thus, NNS3's strategies are mostly for maintaining dialogues although she employs negotiation for meaning if it is necessary. The conversation is much similar to the dialogue between native speakers.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the exploration of NS-NNS conversations reveal the dynamics of L2 conversation and describe the interrelationship between conversational interactions, communication strategies, and personal and interpersonal traits of conversation participants.

First, the conversational interactions largely depend on NS's attitude and motivation, and NSs are a little reluctant to provide conversational interactions in informal NS-NNS

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conversations while NNSs are actively adopted communication strategies for speaking and listening. The results are quite contradicting to the L2 learning model of interactionists, who formulate L2 learning through interactions for meaning negotiation. Although negotiation of meaning was frequently observed, the negation was usually initiated by NNS as a form of communication strategies, which is different from NS-initiated meaning negotiation. The findings support Firth and Wagner's (1997) assertion to consider NNS not as "a deficient communicator," but as "an active participant of communication." Furthermore, research on and practices on L2 learning through conversations need to focus on proactive roles of NNS.

Second, while there are different patterns of communication strategy use among NNSs, strategies for negotiating meaning and maintaining dialogue are the most common both in speaking and listening. The results partly support Foster and Ohta's (2005) research that found a strong drive to maintain dialogue in NS-NNS conversation rather than negotiation for meaning. The results indicate that NNS's choices of communication strategies are affected by both cognitive need for comprehensive input and social-affective need for maintaining friendly and comfortable communication.

Third, NS's attitude toward L2 conversation and relationship with NNS affect the ratio of NS-NNS talks. NS1 invites NNS1 to speak resulting relatively high portion of NNS talk in the conversation. In Dyad 2, NS2 usually answers to NNS2's questions rather than encouraging NNS talk; NS3 enjoys talking sharing many things with NNS3 voluntarily, *spontaneous talk,* in Dyad 3. As a result, conversations in Dyad 2 and 3 are more dominated by native speakers with different reasons. Consequently, the dominance of native speakers affects NNS's communication strategies. For instance, due to fewer chances of talks, NNS 2 and 3 use fewer speaking strategies than NNS1 does.

In addition, NS's persistent practices of conversational interaction can reinforce NNS's accuracy- and fluency-oriented communication strategies. Furthermore, the oral proficiency has an impact on the use of communication strategy and performance. The more proficient English learner, NNS3, prefers maintaining dialogues to negotiating for meaning. However, NNS 1 and 2, less proficient English learners, adopt more negotiation for meaning. In addition, NNS3 shows more balanced use of strategies between speaking and listening while the other NNSs' uses are skewed toward either of speaking or listening. Therefore, a NS-NNS conversation accompanies complex processes including language learning, social relationship, and interactions between conversation participants.

In conclusion, this study has explored NS-NNS conversation drawing on previous studies including the interactionist approach and CS research. The finding shows that a NNS is an active communicator rather than a passive learner, initiating interactions for meaning negotiation as well as for maintaining conversation. In addition, there are obvious interrelations between conversational interactions, CSs, and intra- and inter-personal

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factors. The research findings provide implications for NS-NNS conversation programs. As shown in the study, NS's role and interpersonal relationship between NS-NNS are important to encourage conversational interactions for L2 learning. Thus, to prepare NSs in the conversation programs, initial trainings should help NSs understand their roles and the importance of personal relationship with NNSs. In addition, educators and NSs have to acknowledge NNS as an active conversation partner not a deficient language user. Whether NNSs speak much or not, they actively employ strategies and language knowledge for meaning negotiation and maintaining dialogue.

However, the results need to be carefully interpreted for pedagogical practices because of some limitations. First, the study is explorative research, which examined conversational performance of a limited sample: three graduate Asian female students and their conversation partners. The issues of gender, culture, NNS's L2 proficiency, and interpersonal relationship need to be addressed and examined with diverse population. Therefore, the further studies are requested to verify the contradicting findings with previous studies, to generalize the findings across different populations, and to investigate the nature and patterns of interrelations between factors.

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Examples in: English
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Applicable Levels: Post-secondary

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