An investigation into multimodal identity construction in the EFL classroom:
A social and cultural viewpoint

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ABSTRACT

In communicative and task-based classrooms learners spend much of their time in interactions with one another, and it is through the practices of small-group and pair work that many learners experience language education. The present study aims to shed light on what learners do when engaged in these small-group interactions in Japanese university EFL classrooms. In particular, the study aims to shed light on the relationship between identities, interaction practices and potentials for learning.

One of the motivations for doing this project is that, while much research has investigated teacher-student interactions, less attention has been paid to peer interactions in the classroom, and our understandings of learners' interactions with one another are arguably less developed than our understandings of their interactions with the teacher. The findings of this study should be of interest to practicing teachers who wish to gain insights into how learners in small groups organize their classroom practices, as well as researchers investigating classroom interaction.

Analysing two groups of 15 participants over one university semester, the approach that I adopted was informed by the methodological framework of Multimodal Interaction Analysis, which combines moment-by-moment analysis of interactions with an ethnographic approach to data collection. The interaction analysis also made use of concepts and tools from Conversation Analysis. This allowed me to come to understandings not only about the structure of classrooms interactions, including turn-taking and repair practices, but also about the learners as social beings.

The study found that participants often followed predictable turn-taking practices in small-group interactions, which gave the interactions a fairly 'monologic' character. However, it also found that, over the course of the semester, certain participants began to perform off-task personal conversations in English, which more resembled the sort of conversational talk found outside of the classroom. These conversations provided students with opportunities to negotiate meaning in more dialogic interactions in which they performed a wider range of actions, which also included some use of the L1. I argue that this personal talk can play an important role in the language classroom, and suggest
that teachers may need to rethink attitudes to off-task talk and also to learners' use of the L1 in the classroom.

This was a localized study of just two groups of learners, and further research would thus be needed to confirm how far we can generalize these findings. Furthermore, more research is needed to investigate whether or not the learning opportunities provided in off-task classroom conversations actually do lead to long-term learning.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the project

The motivation for doing this study comes from years of experience of teaching in foreign language classrooms and my attempts to better understand what happens in them. Much (although certainly not all) of the research into English language learning and teaching that I read, as I attempted to learn how to do my job better, seemed somewhat removed from my actual teaching experience. While it provided me with a good understanding of current theories about how languages might be learned, and introduced me to language teaching methods and activities, the focus was more on experimental research conditions than on the language classroom that I found myself in everyday. Where the research discussed classroom matters, it seemed to do so more often than not from a curriculum designer’s or analyst’s perspective (for example, by describing the steps in a sequence of classroom activities for a particular methodology) and rarely dealt with the kind of day-to-day issues that occurred in my classrooms. There seemed to be more of a focus on the teacher’s workplan as it exists on paper, rather than the process as it is lived out in the classroom (to borrow Breen’s (1989) distinction).

While this research has made major breakthroughs in helping us to understand how languages are learned, and has been of great help to me in developing my skills as a language teacher, I feel that it is my classroom experiences, and careful reflection upon them, that have truly helped me to develop as a teacher. I see myself as not just teaching English, but also as managing a social space with real people in it. This is one of the reasons I enjoy teaching so much. I get to work with new people all of the time, and each student and each group of students that I work with provide me with interesting challenges and rewards. What keeps me engaged as a teacher is the complexity of the classroom and trying to understand (and manage) what is happening in it, from both a pedagogical and social perspective. I often think of my role as being something like a conductor, attempting to get all the elements in the classroom working in harmony. I imagine a teacher as managing what I think of as the “energy” of the classroom – keeping things moving forward at the right pace to maintain students’ interest and focus. My attempts to try to maintain harmony
and the right energy levels have caused me to think very carefully about the little
details of the classroom as I teach. It is my desire to learn more about these
intricacies of classroom life that has inspired me to engage in this project.

This study investigates two classes that I taught at a Japanese
university. As an EFL teacher from a Western background teaching at this
particular moment in time, I cannot help but be influenced by communicative
approaches to language teaching pedagogy, and it is therefore important to
introduce these here, paying attention to their use in non-Western contexts such
as the one that I work in. After I have done that, the rest of the introduction
chapter will then go on to introduce key concepts and ideas that are important to
my project.

1.2 Communicative approaches to language teaching
For a number of years now, English language teaching (ELT) has been
dominated by communicative approaches that see interaction as being both the
goal of learning, and also the means through which the goal is achieved (Bax,
2003; J. C. Richards, 2006). Communicative approaches were first developed
with the aim of improving learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1964),
or their ability to communicate effectively in the target language. The approach
has been developed since it first surfaced, and some of the original ideas have
been challenged, including the concept of communicative competence, as will
de discussed in Section 1.3.

While some of the original ideas have been developed and different
communicative approaches exist, they share a focus on improving learners’
ability to use language competently in interactions with others. In order to
achieve this aim, communicative classrooms have moved away from more
traditional approaches that focus on the mastery of grammatical structures, and
instead focus on learners expressing meaning in pairs, small-group work, role
plays, discussions, and so on (J. C. Richards, 2006).

One development of the communicative approach has been
task-based teaching, and over the last decade or so there has been great
interest in using tasks in language classrooms (Willis and Willis, 2007). In tasks,
as with other communicative approaches, the focus is more on meaning than on
language structures. Tasks are holistic activities that aim to promote language
learning by requiring learners to work together and use language to achieve some non-linguistic outcome (Samuda and Bygate, 2008). They are often specially designed to push learners to engage in particular interactional processes that are thought to help language development (J. C. Richards, 2006). For example, an information gap task might give two learners different sets of information that they need to exchange in order to complete a challenge. The process of negotiating meaning (e.g. explaining one’s own information in a way that can be understood while attempting to understand the partner’s information) is thought to help language learning (see Section 1.7).

As communicative classrooms promote high levels of learner-learner interaction in which the teacher often does not play any part (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 120), learners often spend more time in face-to-face interaction with one another than with the teacher (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, communicative classrooms are less likely to be teacher-centred, and often require learners to take on a more active role in the classroom than might be traditionally expected. Learners are expected to be cooperative and comfortable in participating in activities together, rather than individualistic and relatively passive in listening to the teacher.

1.2.1 Applying communicative approaches in non-Western contexts

Communicative approaches were developed in Western contexts, and are often implemented by teachers from a Western background in non-Western countries. Ellis (1996) argues that communicative approaches may not be suitable in non-Western countries, where learners will often have had no previous experience of similar classrooms, and therefore may be especially confused by what is expected of them. In a classroom environment where different language and educational cultures meet, such as happens in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms across the world, participants are engaged in processes of constructing meaning and producing identities in complex interactions at the intersection of the native language culture and the target language culture (Kramsch, 1993). Cultures come with varying expectations and beliefs about the nature of interaction and also education, including beliefs about the effectiveness of particular classroom methodologies and the rights and obligations associated with the roles that participants must take in the classroom.
This means that EFL teachers from Western countries and EFL students from non-Western countries may find that they are working according to different expectations and beliefs about what constitutes good educational practice and appropriate classroom interaction (Moore, 2008), and it has been argued that a communicative approach may not be culturally appropriate in Asian countries, such as Japan (Ellis, 1996).

Many Western EFL teachers and researchers have criticized East Asian learners for taking a passive approach to classroom interaction and learning and for often remaining silent (e.g. Anderson, 1993; Cheng, 2000). On the other hand, East Asian learners have been found to value student silence in the classroom, and teachers who encourage students to talk have been reportedly viewed less positively by East Asian learners (Sanders and Wiseman, 1990, cited in Quinlisk, 2008). There is, then, some (potential) conflict in the EFL classroom that must be negotiated in classroom interactions as participants attempt to teach and learn according to their own ideas of what should happen in the classroom. In a classroom that promotes interpersonal interaction, they must do this while also building and maintaining social relationships.

1.3 Interactional Competence

In Section 1.2, I very briefly introduced the notion of communicative competence, which rather than focussing on language as an abstract system, focuses on the individual learner in a social context, and so helps us understand the knowledge and skills needed to use language in order to communicate in specific situations. However, Young (2013, p. 17) argues that this focus on the individual should be problematized, as "abilities, actions, and activities do not belong to the individual but are 'jointly' constructed by 'all' participants". Instead of communicative competence, we should therefore be looking at Interactional Competence (IC). IC "cannot be reduced to an individual participant's competence" (Kasper and Wagner, 2014, p. 28), and rather than being what a person knows of language, "it is what a person does together with others" (Young, 2011, p. 430).

IC is a broad concept (Galaczi, 2013, p. 572) that does not just include language, but involves "the development of 'methods' for action" (Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 2). That is, IC is concerned with how interactions are managed using particular methods (Walsh, 2014), and IC researchers
attempt to uncover "the fine-grained techniques that are needed to successfully engage in L2 interaction" (Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 1). These methods for organizing interactions include the ways in which turns are taken in conversations, problems are resolved, conversations are opened and closed, and so on (Barraja-Rohan, 2011, p. 481; Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 2). IC can, therefore, be seen as what people need in order to get by in interactions (Walsh, 2012, p. 2).

IC is not seen as a general ability that is applied to all contexts equally, but is instead highly context specific. Different methods are needed for different situations, as the resources needed for ordering a cup of coffee (for example) differ from those needed to take part in a conversation (Walsh, 2014, p. 4). Young (2008, p. 101) suggests that we can observe IC in particular discursive practices, which are "recurring types of face-to-face interaction that are significant for particular social and cultural groups" (Young, 2013, p. 15). Particular discursive practices have particular resources that are specific to them, and we can only acquire competence in a particular practice by participating in it (Young, 2013, p. 32). So, on this view, individuals do not acquire a general communicative competence, but instead develop specific IC for specific practices.

The focus on interaction, rather than language, allows us to look at all of the abilities learners have that allow them to take part in interactions, rather than on their deficiencies as speakers (Hall and Pekarek Doehler, 2011). IC studies reveal how learners develop resources which become more context-sensitive, and IC development "basically involves a growing ability to design turns and actions so as to provide for their fittedness to the local circumstantial detail of the ongoing interaction, allowing for increased 'local efficacy' of interactional conduct" (Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 21).

1.4 The EFL/ESL distinction

Learners may study English in both foreign language (EFL) and second language (ESL) contexts (e.g. Ellis, 1996, p. 215). ESL education takes place in a largely English-speaking environment, such as the US or the UK. In this context, language learners are living and studying in an environment where English is needed to communicate in everyday situations. EFL students, on the
other hand, are studying in a context where English is not spoken outside of the classroom, and the classroom may represent their only access to the target language. This means that they will often have no immediate need to use English outside of the classroom, and often (especially for learners in compulsory school classes) may have no intention to use English in the future.

1.5 English as a Lingua Franca and translanguaging

However, the terms ESL and EFL have been questioned, as communication environments become increasingly diverse and multilingual (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 23). There has been a move away from a focus on the origins of English and native speakers and towards a focus on English's status as a world language used by people from a large variety of linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds in order to communicate with one another. Seidlhofer (2011) notes that, while there has been a persistent belief that there is one kind of 'proper' English that is spoken by native speakers, this belief has been challenged by the emergence of research into English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), which may be defined as English as it is used among speakers of different first languages (Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Non-native speakers of English do not simply adopt English as native speakers use it, but rather adapt it to suit their communicative needs, so that they speak English in their own ways. Because of this, native-speaker English has not become the dominant form of English world-wide, but rather it is the English used by non-native speakers, in various and diverse situations, that is dominant. For these users, rather than seeing English as a foreign language, it has more recently been conceived of as an additional language (Dewey, 2012).

While early ELF studies focussed on form in the belief that it may be possible to describe and codify varieties of ELF (Jenkins, 2015), what typifies ELF talk is in fact its variability (Firth, 2009). ELF talk is seen as a non-codified "dynamic means of communication" (Dewey, 2012, p. 161), and research has shown how non-native speakers can achieve mutual understanding with non-standard and creative language use (Jenkins, 2015). The emphasis of ELF research has, therefore, shifted to the function and use of ELF, rather than on defining its formal features, and ELF users are placed at the centre-stage (Kalocsai, 2014). These users cannot be seen as a single speech community
speaking a particular variety of English, because unlike *World Englishes*, which focuses on definable non-native varieties of English, ELF is seen as transcending boundaries so that it is, in effect, indescribable (Jenkins, 2015, p. 55). From this perspective, ELF interactions should be investigated in their own terms, and not be held up to the standards of native-speaker talk.

ELF has not been uncontroversial, and there have been critics. For example, O'Regan (2014) has argued that ELF researchers have detached the term from its original use to describe interactions in which English is used as a common language, and that it has become a reified, and fetishized, thing-in-itself. He argues that the focus on process and variability is contradicted by ELF researchers abstracting ELF in their discourse, so that it is made to appear as if it were an already existing variety. When describing something as an 'ELF interaction', he argues, researchers present it as a given that the participants are interacting in ELF. This is argued to be similarly true of phrases like 'ELF settings', 'written ELF', 'spoken ELF', and so on. He also argues (p. 548) that the ELF movement makes no distinction between learners in compulsory school classrooms and actual users, which he sees as problematic, because those who are exposed to English in the classroom may never go on to use it.

ELF is just one of a number of important developments that question monolingualism and the traditional focus on standard varieties of a language. *Multilingualism*, for example, refers to "the coexistence of several languages in a particular social situation" (Marshall and Moore, 2013, p. 474), while the concept of *plurilingualism* may be thought of as multilingualism at the level of the individual (Council of Europe, 2001). That is, plurilingualism refers to individual repertoires, while multilingualism refers to the broader social context" (Taylor and Snoddon, 2013, p. 440). While multilingualism keeps languages distinct and stresses mastery of each language, plurilingualism "is focused on the fact that languages interrelate and interconnect particularly, but not exclusively, at the level of the individual" (Piccardo, 2013, p. 601).

As such, plurilingualism is a good fit with the concept of *translanguaging*. Translanguaging is related to the concept of *code-switching*, which describes how speakers move back and forth between different languages as they speak. However, although translanguaging does include code-switching, it involves a wider set of practices (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Whereas the concept of *code-switching* describes how a speaker shifts between
two (or more) languages, translanguaging refers to the use of complex and interrelated practices that cannot easily be assigned to any one language, but that are part of the speakers' semiotic repertoire (García and Wei, 2014). Rather than seeing languages as distinct codes that speakers can switch between, the focus is instead on how distinctions between languages "are the results of particular language ideologies and how language users manipulate the multilingual resources they have available to them" (Otsuji and Pennycook, 2010, p. 241).

On this view, boundaries between languages are seen as being socially constructed. A traditional view of bilingualism sees the speaker as having two separate linguistic systems within the mind. However, from a translanguaging perspective, the bilingual (or plurilingual) speaker is seen as having just one linguistic system, which has features of two or more socially defined languages integrated throughout it (García and Wei, 2014, p. 13-15). From this perspective, a speaker may use their linguistic system in ways that align with societal understandings of a language (e.g. by speaking in English), or they may use their resources in creative ways by mixing languages. This emphasizes the artificiality of boundaries between languages, and allows us to move away from a focus on bounded languages, and instead onto individual agency (Blackledge and Creese, 2017, p. 252).

Rather than seeing speakers first and foremost as using languages, we can see them as making use of their semiotic resources (Kusters et al, 2017, p. 221). Translanguaging is, then, "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy et al, 2015, p. 281). A speaker's repertoire is added to, expanded, and revised as he or she engages in translanguaging practices (Kusters et al, 2017, p. 220), and new language practices emerge in interrelationship with old language practices. This is important for language learning, as "language cannot be conceptualized (and thereby taught and learned) as a static, monolithic entity with solid boundaries" (Lin, 2013, p. 522).

1.6 The classroom as a social space

Learner behaviour is not only affected by cultural factors, but also by the social
environment in which it takes place (Young, 2009). In communicative and task-based classrooms, students spend a lot of time in interactions with one another, which makes their small group and pair interactions of great importance to language education. However, research into classroom interaction has tended to focus more often on teacher-fronted talk than peer talk (Koole, 2013), and our understandings of peer interactions "lag far behind our knowledge of teacher-student interaction" (Sato and Ballinger, 2016, p. 1). Classroom tasks have officially stated pedagogic purposes, but what actually happens in classroom activities is a local matter accomplished in the moment-to-moment actions of participants, and learners’ performance of activities may be quite different to what the teacher had planned (Breen, 1989; Hall, 2004). In this way, the social aspects of the classroom, including learners’ identities and relationships with one another, plays a large role in shaping practice (Dornyei and Murphy, 2003; Leki, 2001; Seedhouse, 2005). This is particularly the case in a classroom that requires learners to work together in small groups without input from the teacher. Given the importance of learner-learner interactions in communicative EFL classrooms, these interactions, and the identities and relationships that learners perform in them, suggest themselves as important topics for investigation.

1.7 The importance of interaction and negotiation

Communicative approaches proceed on the assumption that interaction in the target language helps to drive language learning. As Van Compernolle (2010) notes, there is ample evidence of the importance of interaction for language learning, and there is a general acceptance that learning happens through social interaction. In the language classroom this would mean, simply speaking, that by interacting with others learners can develop their language skills. If we accept this, then we must also accept that studies investigating classroom interaction are essential if we wish to better understand classroom language learning.

Research into language learning that focuses on investigating learners’ interactions has emphasised the role of negotiation (Gass, 2003, pp.234-6). Long’s interaction hypothesis (1981, 1996) posits that language learners’ acquisition of the target language is facilitated by negotiations for meaning that are done within interactions. In face-to-face interactions, learning can be
individualized as problems are negotiated at source through clarifications and feedback, and learners are able to notice and identify the new language that they need in the interlocuter's speech or their own. An important part of this process is the negative feedback given by interlocuters when there is a problem in a speaker's utterance. Negotiation of meaning has been an important concept in studies that investigate language-learning interactions, and the concept is discussed further in Section 3.9.

1.8 Interaction as complex and multimodal

In this thesis, I proceed on the assumption that interaction is ordered, but always complex, consisting of more than just the words that are spoken. There has been an understandable tendency for language learning research to focus on language, but interaction never consists of just language alone, and there has been increased interest in taking a multimodal approach to interaction analysis in the classroom. Holliday (1996) has argued that the cultural complexity of English language classrooms requires ethnographies that go beyond an analysis of the oral aspects of classroom behaviour, while Platt and Brooks (2008) suggest that research should look more carefully at the “totality of what learners engage in, verbally and bodily” (p. 84). So, while it has been argued that it is in the talk between teachers and students that education is done (Edwards and Mercer, 1987), it is not enough for researchers to examine verbal resources alone (Bourne and Jewitt, 2003) as interaction always consists of more than just talk (Streeck et al, 2011).

It has been claimed, for example, that for competent speakers non-language resources may be more important than linguistic appropriateness (Hosoda, 2005). People use gestures, head movements, gaze and posture, as well as non-language sounds when they communicate, and these are often just as important as (if not more important than) language to the meaning communicated. This has led researchers in EFL and beyond to begin to consider how they are used in learning interactions (e.g. Markee and Kunitz, 2015, pp. 431-433; McCafferty and Stam, 2008). For example, studies taking a more multimodal approach have investigated first language (L1) classroom literacy practices (e.g. Bourne and Jewitt, 2003; Jewitt, 2008a), English grammar teaching practices in Denmark (Nygaard, 2011), learning opportunities in
Swedish as a foreign language classrooms (Majlesi, 2014), the practices of young peers baking (Arend et al., 2014), and multimodal meaning-making in L1 science classrooms (Wells, 2000).

1.9 SLA, and alternative approaches to it

As small-group and pair work are used extensively in ELT classrooms, which means that learners in these classrooms will engage in frequent interactions with other learners, there has been increasing interest in analyzing peer interactions in order to better understand what language practice and learning opportunities they actually provide. Much of this research has been carried out in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which has been important for informing approaches to language teaching. However, despite this growing interest in peer interaction, Bowles and Adams (2015, p. 198) note that most SLA research into L2 interaction has focussed on learners' interactions with native speakers. SLA has traditionally been dominated by a cognitive approach (discussed in more detail in Section 2.2) that views learning as a form of information processing that takes place in individual minds (Atkinson, 2011, p.1-3). From this cognitive perspective, the language learner is seen as a deficient communicator who is attempting to achieve the ideal of native-speaker-like competence (Firth and Wagner, 1997). The individualistic and cognitive nature of this approach has meant that the social nature of language learning (and the mind) has often been neglected. SLA studies into tasks, for example, have tended to take a statistical approach that focusses on how task design relates to learning potentials, mostly in terms of inner cognitive processing and linguistic structures, and measures learning outcomes as a function of the task as the teacher defines it (Hellermann and Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p. 25-6). That is, they have often ignored the perspective of the actual learners engaged in the interaction, and there is a danger that the experiences of learners, which are the very essence of the educational experience in the classroom, may be lost.

Whilst these more statistical and cognitive approaches have provided valuable insights into the nature and efficacy of language-learning tasks, there have been calls (e.g. Firth and Wagner, 1997; Hellermann, 2008; Atkinson, 2011b) for more socially- and contextually-oriented studies that attempt to
understand language learning more from the perspective of learners by placing a greater emphasis on the interactional dimensions of language use (such as Seedhouse, 1999; Jenks, 2009). Subsequently, the SLA field has seen a comparatively recent explosion of interest in descriptive empirical studies of task performance, for example adopting a conversation analysis (CA) methodology (see Section 3.2 for a detailed discussion of CA), as well as other more socially-oriented perspectives, such as an identity approach (e.g. Norton, 2013).

1.9.1 CA-for-SLA

CA-for-SLA is a subfield of second language studies that applies conversation analytic techniques to investigate language learning (Markee and Kunitz, 2015, p. 425). While the mainstream cognitivist perspective of SLA has been argued to see learning as an internal individual process (Atkinson, 2011b), CA-SLA sees learning as a visible and empirically describable process that is accomplished in interaction (Jakonen and Morton, 2013, p. 74). Researchers advocating this approach have argued that SLA should be expanded to include a focus on “how language is used as it is being acquired through interaction, and used resourcefully, contingently, and contextually” (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 296, emphasis in original). So while some approaches to learning see conversation as a useful source of language input that contributes to language acquisition, CA researchers see it as actually driving learning, as the learning process is a social one (Larsen-Freeman, 2004) and participants co-construct learning and teaching spaces together in interactions (Eskildsen and Theodorsdottir, 2015, p. 143). As its theoretical approach differs so much from traditional SLA studies, the use of CA to study SLA was at first seen as controversial, but Wong (2013) argues that it is now an established approach in the field.

Studies inspired by CA share "a unique perspective on learning as an achievement in embodied talk-in-interaction" and investigate "how learning objects arise and are shaped in interaction, and how different aspects of the learning situation are used as resources in the process" (Kern and Ohlus, 2017, p. 95-6). Rather than focusing on second language speakers as deficient communicators, and examining what they cannot do in the language they are learning, the first CA-SLA studies focussed on how L2 speakers are normal speakers, while more recent studies have described how participants
accomplish learning together, and how they develop over time (Kasper and Wagner, 2014, p. 24-5). CA research has demonstrated how, for example, learners’ behaviour in the classroom changes over time (Hellermann, 2008), and how the classroom cannot be thought of as a single speech exchange system, as the organization of the interaction changes according to the pedagogical focus (Seedhouse, 2004). It has shown how language learning is fundamentally linked with interactive social practices, such as in word searches that participants in interaction perform together (Eskildsen and Theodorsdottir, 2015, p. 143-4). However, CA is not itself a theory of learning (Hauser, 2011), and it has also been criticized for ignoring learners’ psychological intentions with its focus on observable actions (He, 2004; Markee, 2004). CA-SLA's approach to learning will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.4.

1.9.2 Identity and SLA

As Canagarajah (2004) argues, language learning is motivated by the construction of identities, so our interest should be in learners’ identities and how these shape and are shaped by language learning practices. However, as well as neglecting social aspects of how learning happens between people in the classroom, traditional approaches to SLA have had the effect of oversimplifying identity issues (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 288). When looking through SLA studies, we often see the participants described only as teachers and learners, with learners often treated as disembodied minds whose collective progress towards language learning goals has been measured by quantitative methods. However, teachers and learners are never only teachers and learners. They are also at the same time men, women, husbands, Japanese, English, friends, strangers, and so on. These other identities bring with them expectations about ways of behaving and these ways of behaving will affect how participants interact in the classroom, and will therefore affect conditions for language learning (Willett, 1995).

As identities are argued to be significant for learning (Ellwood, 2008), L2 educators need to seriously consider identity issues (Norton, 1997). The identity approach to SLA, which is associated with Norton’s (2013) poststructural view of identity as fragmented and changing, seeks to integrate the language learner in the larger social world, highlighting the multiple positions from which
language learners can speak, and how opportunities to practice language are socially structured (Norton and McKinney, 2011, p. 73). From this perspective, learners are not seen simply as unmotivated or motivated (for example), as affective factors change over time and space. Identity studies have shown how the needs and desires of learners are not distractions, but are central to language learning (Norton and McKinney, 2011). However, much of this research takes an approach that avoids a close study of interaction practices, and some researchers have argued for interaction studies that investigate identity in SLA (Block, 2007b; Wagner, 2004). Identity will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.11.

1.10 My study

CA investigations into learner-learner classroom interactions are relatively new (Sert and Seedhouse, 2011, p. 4). Since Firth and Wagner (1997) wrote their seminal paper calling for more descriptive empirical studies of learners' interactions, more researchers have repeated these calls (e.g. Jenks, 2009), and the number of studies applying CA to analyze classroom talk has been growing. I see my study as contributing to this growing body of research that attempts to understand classroom interaction from a more social perspective. CA studies, by their very nature, are highly localised and detailed studies of particular contexts. So, while Seedhouse (2004) was able use CA to describe the “architecture” of the foreign language classroom, we do need to be cautious in generalising findings of CA studies done in one context to other contexts. This means that we need more studies done in a variety of contexts, that confirm and build on the findings of each other, in order to develop a more detailed and complete picture of how learners go about their work in the classroom.

My study is of lower-level EFL learners performing small-group interactions in a compulsory first-year English communication course in Japan, and there are relatively few CA studies of this type of interaction. One example of a CA study in a similar context to mine is Hauser (2009), who shows how turn-taking in small-group discussions in a Japanese university EFL class is organized differently to ordinary conversation, so that the interactions are fairly monologic. Gardner (2013, p. 597) describes Hauser's as "one of the few studies that closely examines turn-taking in small classroom groups". As his
study is of just four participants performing two interactions, Hauser is careful to not claim that his findings are generalisable to other classrooms, nor does he go beyond a CA analysis to consider learning, or the identities and understandings of the participants. My study will, I believe, build on Hauser’s findings (see pages 69-71 for a summary of these).

Generally, CA looks only at interaction data. This provides a solid empirical basis for analysis, but by only analyzing what appears in transcripts of interactions, CA potentially excludes orientations, identities, and beliefs that may be important to language learners (He, 2004, p. 578). Conversely, as discussed in Section 1.9.2, identity studies in SLA derive data more from interviews and diaries, but do not often ground their claims in the details of observable social practices (Kasper and Wagner, 2011, p. 122). This suggests a need for more studies of classroom interactions that bring together poststructuralist approaches to identity with a more grounded interaction analysis. The interaction analysis may ground the findings of the ethnographic data, while the ethnographic data may open up the interaction analysis to wider interpretations.

This was the aim of my study, which can provide evidence to support the generalisability of the findings of CA studies into classroom interactions, such as Hauser’s (2009), and is also able to further investigate and develop understanding of these findings through the use of more ethnographic data.

1.10.1 Aims and motivation

As discussed at the beginning of this introduction, my motivation in doing this study comes from my interest in trying to better understand the little details of classroom life. By providing a detailed analysis of classroom interaction in one setting, my aim in this study is to contribute to the growing body of knowledge about what happens between learners in classroom interactions. I will investigate how participants in a Japanese university EFL classroom produce identities in interactions moment-by-moment through the use of a range of communicative modes. In doing so, I describe the interaction structures and norms for classroom behaviour that they instantiate through their practices. I examine the ways in which identities may be related to the structure of the interaction, and so affect language practice and opportunities for learning. I also aim to connect this close interaction analysis with a greater understanding of
learners’ own interpretations and how these may affect their participation in class. The object of this thesis is to provide insights about how learners perform identities in communicative classroom interactions that may help us to better understand the language practice and learning opportunities that these interactions provide them with.

1.10.2 Analytical framework and method

To guide my project, based on my interest in interaction, identity, and classroom practice, I developed the following research questions:

1. How do participants negotiate and produce different identities and relationships in multimodal interactions as they attempt to teach and learn in the EFL classroom?

2. How do the identities and relationships that participants produce in the classroom affect one another and impact upon teaching and learning practices?

3. What does this tell us about interaction, and conditions for learning, in the EFL classroom?

The first question concerns the interaction structure, the second concerns identities and teaching/learning practices, while the third concerns what my study has to say about the language classroom. These questions were deliberately open, and were intended to guide and frame the project. The actual direction that the project took, however, would ultimately depend on the data and my initial analysis of it.

I have based my approach on Sigrid Norris’ (2004, 2011) development of mediated discourse analysis (Scollon, 2001) into the analytical framework of multimodal interaction analysis. Norris’ methodology is designed to analyse the ways in which identities are produced moment-by-moment in interactions, including a focus on the wider social context as well as the immediate sequential context of the interaction. As such, although it is not much used in language learning studies, Norris’ framework suggested itself to me as an approach suited
to addressing my research interests. Following Norris, I make use of methods from conversation analysis and multimodal discourse analysis, which allow me to describe interactional data, while also making use of more ethnographic data collection methods, such as interviews and video playback sessions. This allows me to bring together an analysis of the structure of classroom interactions with an analysis of wider social and identity issues, which I identified as a concern when engaged in my literature review. I also incorporate concepts from SLA to provide another layer of analysis, which allows me to make comparisons between my data and previous studies of language learning.

The data comprises video and audio recordings made weekly over one university semester in two different EFL classrooms in Japan (I was the teacher of both), field notes made in the classrooms, informal and semi-structured interviews with participants, video playback sessions, and email exchanges between the participants and myself.

The analysis was exploratory and data driven. This involved initially approaching the data without tightly-focussed research questions, so that patterns could emerge in the analysis. Once the data had initially been coded, and I had started to notice patterns, I revisited existing literature and also brought my findings to the participants themselves for discussion. Following these discussions, I went back to the data again. This iterative process allowed me to come to understandings about the data.

1.8.3 Importance of the study

In classrooms that encourage high levels of learner-learner interaction, individual groups of students may develop their own group dynamics and ways of behaving, often determined more by the interpersonal relationships and identities of the group members than by their roles as students (Widdowson, 1987). If we wish to examine educational practice in the communicative classroom, it is therefore important to investigate the nature of these relationships and identities and how they affect interaction and learning. We need a better understanding of not only what learners do together in classroom interactions, but also of their own understandings and identity issues that affect participation and the learning opportunities that may arise.

By making visible the way in which participants make use of the
interactional resources of the classroom (Hall, 2004, p. 608), the findings of this study will be useful in improving our understanding of how learners go about organizing classroom interactions and the kinds of learning opportunities and language practice that they get. This kind of knowledge is important for language teachers and curriculum designers when considering how to select activities to use in the classroom, and also how to manage activities once learners start performing them. The understandings of identity issues that I investigate will also be important in providing insights about learners’ beliefs and motivations that may be consequential for their participation in the classroom. Again, these insights should be of interest to teachers when considering learners in their own classrooms.

I have been unable to find any other studies that investigate the multimodal, moment-by-moment production of identities in interaction in a Japanese university EFL classroom in the way that I do. I therefore feel that my project has important and distinct contributions to make. We have a developing but incomplete understanding of what happens in classroom interactions that has been built up in numerous localized studies of micro-moments of classroom interaction, and I see this study as building on and contributing to that developing knowledge.

As the project was exploratory, it was difficult to determine in advance exactly what my contribution to knowledge would be. However, I am confident that, by adopting an approach that combines analysis of interaction data with ethnographic data, my contribution is found in the details of my analysis. That is, I believe my detailed approach brings to light certain aspects of classroom interaction that helps develop what we know about the classroom learning. For example, I will argue against previous studies for the potential importance of unstructured conversations in the classroom. Furthermore, the analytical approach that I take is not common in studies of language learning, and this approach may in itself be seen as a contribution to knowledge.

1.11 Outline of the thesis
In this thesis, I will first review the literature and discuss important theoretical concepts that inform the approach that I adopt. I will begin the literature review with a discussion of sociocultural approaches to the study of language learning,
and will contrast these with cognitive approaches. I will then go on to discuss the concept of dialogic talk and how I understand the concept of interactional meaning. Following this, I will discuss the key concepts of multimodality and identity. I will then discuss relevant previous literature on classroom interaction, focussing in particular on one particular study (Hauser, 2009) that took on importance in informing my study. Having done this, I will describe the methodology that I adopt, before outlining my research methods and the context of my study, focussing in particular on describing the 'communication’ course from which the data was collected.

Following this, I will move on to present my analysis. I start with a conversation analysis of classroom interactions, focussing first of all on turn-taking and introducing the important concept of the focal participant. I will show how interaction practices vary slightly according to the type of activity that participants are engaged in, and how the focal participant is important in all student interactions when the focus is on speaking in English. I will then present an analysis of how participants' identity performance began to change over the course of one semester to include personal identities performed in English, and how these personal interactions were performed differently from the focal participant interactions. Following this, I discuss how the different types of interaction in my data feature different kinds of repair practices, which affect the learning opportunities that participants encounter. I then go on to make use of concepts from more cognitive approaches to SLA in order to provide a different perspective on the data, which allows me to make claims about the kind of language practice that each type of talk provides. I conclude the analysis section by focussing on a more detailed discussion of two of the participants that draws on more ethnographic data, linking this analysis to the preceding analysis of classroom interaction.

I will then discuss the value of personal talk in the classroom, which is an under-researched area in EFL studies. I will describe how personal conversations provide important language practice that is not otherwise seen in my data, and argue that they may provide learning opportunities while also engaging learners. As such, I will suggest that off-task personal talk may be pedagogically useful. I will then discuss how the participants’ identities as students, and their performances for an imagined teacher-superaddressee who was watching and assessing them, constrained their participation in classroom
discussions. I will discuss what this means for classroom practice. I will discuss how learners need to value their interactions with one another, and how we need to carefully consider the dominance of standard English norms in EFL contexts, especially in relation to learners’ imagined future selves. I will conclude this section with a discussion of methodological issues that arose in my study.

In the final section, I will revisit my research questions before discussing practical implications of my findings. I will discuss how teachers might be able to encourage personal conversations in English in the classroom, the importance of teachers considering identity issues carefully, and how the video-playback sessions that formed a part of my research methods may be used as a pedagogic tool. I will finish the thesis with some personal reflections.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sociocultural perspective

The approach to language and learning that I take in this thesis is influenced by sociocultural perspectives, which focus on the social and cultural contexts in which learning occurs rather than on the individual mind of the learner (Zuengler and Miller, 2006, p. 37). Taking this approach, we need to look at the social and cultural environment if we wish to understand individuals, their behaviour, and their minds. Of particular prominence amongst these perspectives is the sociocultural theory that is associated with a Vygotskian framework (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). According to this framework, social interaction plays an important role in cognitive development, and participation in everyday social activities is fundamental to learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2007).

Vygotsky’s “fundamental theoretical insight" is that higher forms of human mental activity are mediated (Lantolf, 1994, p. 418). In other words, humans make use of tools to help them think. This insight is based on analogy with the ways in which humans use objects (or physical tools), such as keyboards, microphones, or a pole-vaulter’s vault, to help them perform actions in the physical world. These physical actions can be said to be mediated by the tools, as the action of leaping over a bar set six metres high (for example) would not be possible without the pole-vaulter’s pole (at least, it would not be possible in the particular way that it is performed with the pole).

Just as physical tools help humans to perform physical actions and organize the physical world, psychological tools (or symbolic tools), such as language, algebra, and maps, etc., help humans to organize and control mental processes (Jones and Norris, 2005, p. 49-50). For example, Wertsch (1998, p. 28-9) describes how we use the syntax of mathematics to solve multiplication problems that we would probably not be able to solve otherwise. In solving the problem 343 x 822 most people would probably need to write out, or at least imagine, the numbers in a vertical array, and would need to follow multiplication procedures taught at school. These procedures can be thought of as tools that help us to think, and they can be seen as mediating mental activity in much the same way as physical tools mediate physical activity. As these tools mediate social actions, and at risk of complicating things by introducing yet another term,
it is worth noting that they are sometimes called mediational means (Jones and Norris, 2005; Scollon, 2001). In Section 3.4, I will introduce mediated discourse analysis, in which the concept of mediational means is important (and it is from this concept of mediated action that the theory takes its name).

Mediational means are created by societies and cultures over time (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1) and people interact with them in social situations. As the tools we think with are formed by cultures, and as we encounter them in social interactions, sociocultural theory holds that mental development does not just have a biological foundation, but also a sociocultural one (Lantolf, 1994, p. 418). On this view, our mental development is not the unfolding of capacities that we are born with. Rather, the capacities that we are born with develop as they interact with the mediational means that societies and cultures have made (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 1995, p. 109). So, while Vygotskian theory shares with cognitive approaches (see Section 2.2 below) a concern with the development of mental processes in the brain, the focus is more on the social dimension of consciousness (Vygotsky, 1979, p. 30).

Vygotsky held that learning happens on two levels. It first happens in interactions with others, and is then integrated into the individual’s mind, so that “there is nothing in mind that is not first of all in society” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 142). Children first carry out social activities under the guidance of others (e.g. parents, teachers, etc.), who initially take a leading role in carrying out the activity. Over time, the children will become more able to perform the activity independently, as they learn to use by themselves the patterns of thinking and doing that others have used with them (Lantolf, 1994, p. 419). From this perspective, development is the appropriation of mediational means in sociocultural interactions, as learners gain control of their own activity and start to function independently (Zuengler and Miller, 2006, p. 39). In this way, learning can be seen as the internalization of the social.

Vygotsky argued that development occurs in what he calls the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This zone describes an area that includes abilities that are just beyond the individual’s current level of development (abilities that may be developing, but are not yet fully developed), but are achievable with the help of others. According to this notion, an individual can accomplish more when working with more proficient others than he or she can accomplish by his or herself. By interacting with a learner to complete a task, a more competent other
is providing *scaffolding* (Bruner, 1978) that helps the learner to do something that they could not have done alone. This scaffolding supports the development of mental abilities in the learner, and can be removed once the learner is able to complete the task alone. The ZPD therefore highlights how social interaction plays an important role in learning.

### 2.1.1 A broader conception of sociocultural theory

Vygotskian theory, which is sometimes seen as being equivalent to sociocultural theory (Norton, 2006, p. 22), can in fact be seen as just one of a variety of sociocultural approaches to language learning (Zuengler and Cole, 2004 cited in Zuengler and Miller, 2006; Norton, 2006). In arguing for a broader understanding of sociocultural theory, Norton (2006, p. 22) suggests that “[it] represents a growing interest in interdisciplinarity in second language research, and this research includes but goes beyond the sociocultural research associated exclusively with Vygotsky”. Vygotskian theory shifts the focus away from the individual and towards the social, and Norton argues that a more expansive view of sociocultural theory includes a larger range of approaches that investigate language learning with respect to the wider practices of social institutions and cultural groups.

*Language socialization* research is one such example. Language socialization researchers borrow much from Vygotskian theory, in that they see language development as happening in interactions with more proficient others (Duff and Talmy, 2011, p. 95). However, rather than taking a psychological approach that focusses on cognitive development, they are more concerned with an anthropological approach that investigates the development of learners as members of a society (Zuengler and Miller, 2006, p. 39). From this perspective, learning is understood not so much in cognitive terms, but in more general terms, and not just linguistic knowledge but also other forms of knowledge, such as social and cultural knowledge, are also examined (Duff and Talmy, 2011, p. 95). The main focus of the approach is on the ways in which individuals are socialized into certain communities, and as such there is a link with the notion of *communities of practice*.

A community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) is a group of individuals who come together to carry out activities in everyday life (e.g. people working together in an office). In doing so, they use a shared repertoire of
language or routines to interact with each other in some common endeavor (Barton and Tusting, 2005, p. 1-2). From a communities of practice perspective, learning occurs as these individuals engage in social practices with one another (Barton and Tusting, 2005, p. 4; Hellermann, 2008, p. 6-7). As with language socialization research, learning is investigated as part of socialization into society (Lave and Wenger, 1991). From this perspective, language use is as much a social as a linguistic practice, and the conditions under which people speak and learn are taken as a central concern (Norton, 2006, p. 26). It is argued that educational research should therefore focus less on individual uptake of knowledge or skills, and more on the social structures of communities and the roles of learners in them (Norton, 2006, p. 26).

Another approach to language that may be seen as sociocultural is Bakhtin’s (1981). He took a social view of language, arguing that we should not investigate it as a neutral system independent of speakers. Central to Bakhtin’s thinking was the idea that language “lies on the border between oneself and the other” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293), as the words we use have already been used by others. We can make words our own, and try to express the meanings that we want to with them, but they come to us full of the meanings that others have given them, and so are “populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294). We can, therefore, only understand an utterance by considering its history of use by other people (Hall, 2002). For Norton (2006, p. 26) and Toohey (2000), this highlights that language learning should not be seen as the internalization of neutral rules and vocabulary. Rather, speakers struggle to appropriate the voices of others so that they can gradually use these for their own purposes. I will revisit Bakhtin a little later in Section 2.6.

As well as Bakhtin, Bourdieu’s (1977) theories have been influential in sociocultural research. As with other sociocultural thinkers, he argued that we should not just see language as an isolated and neutral system, as the value of an utterance cannot be understood apart from the person who utters it (1977, p. 652). A particular utterance said by a teacher, for example, may carry a different force than if a student had said the same words. Furthermore, a person cannot be understood without understanding the larger social networks in which he or she exists (Norton, 2006, p. 4). Therefore, the conditions under which we speak are of central concern to the meaning of what is said.

Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of habitus is also important. The habitus is
“simply the cover term to summarize the person’s entire life history up to the present point” and is the reason that “most of what we know and do, we know and do without knowing how” (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 269). It is a link between social structures and the individual, describing the predispositions and tendencies that an individual acquires through being in the social world, including ways of talking, sitting, moving, eating, and so on. In other words, through our interactions with the social environment we develop particular ways of being. For example, a child brought up in a family that stresses the importance of education may have a habitus that is more compatible with a formal education than a child brought up in a family that places less value on education. To give another example, a person growing up in Japan may become accustomed to certain sociocultural eating practices, such as sitting on the floor and particular ways of using chopsticks, and will perform these practices largely without thinking. A visitor to Japan, who has not had social experiences that allow them to develop these practices in their habitus, may at first find it difficult to smoothly take part in a social dinner. A person’s habitus reflects their particular life-history, and corresponds to their social and cultural identity.

Bourdieu (1990) suggests that when more than one person engages in the same social practice, without thought or comment, they are doing so through a homologous habitus. This concept of the homologous habitus explains how it is possible that two or more people can smoothly engage in a social activity together. Although each individual has a unique history that develops that individual’s habitus, different individuals in the same social group will nevertheless develop a homologous habitus that allows them to take part in social practices together due to shared expectations about what should happen (Scollon, 2001). To take Scollon’s example, when one person hands an object to another “and neither gives any thought to the practice of handing, then we can say that this practice of handing is constituted in homologous habitus” (p. 153, emphasis is Scollon’s). Conversely, if two individuals do not share a homologous habitus (i.e. they have different understandings and expectations about what should happen in a particular situation) they may find it difficult to engage in a practice together. It took me a while to realise that when my Japanese supervisor makes a comment about the weather during a discussion of work-related matters, it is not his attempt to begin a polite conversation, but rather a sign that he wants to take his leave of me. This practice for ending an
interaction was not in my habitus, and as such the smooth ending of interactions was not achieved. Instead, a rather awkward and slightly boring conversation about the colour of the sky and the possibility of rain might ensue. However, over time I began to understand this practice, and we no longer have this problem. In an educational context, especially in a multi-cultural environment, problems may arise when the people in the classroom do not share a homologous habitus, and so have different expectations concerning good or normal educational practice.

Norton (2006, p. 26) argues that the broad range of theories presented by researchers such as those discussed in the preceding paragraphs, which have become increasingly influential in second language research, can be described as “sociocultural theory”. It is this broad understanding, which focuses more on learners as members of social and cultural groups engaged in social and cultural practices, rather than the learning of knowledge by individuals, that I adopt when I say that my approach is sociocultural.

2.2 Cognitive perspectives

As discussed in Section 1.9, research into language learning has been dominated not by sociocultural approaches, but by a cognitive approach that is somewhat in tension with them. Instead of looking beyond the individual, cognitive approaches focus on what occurs inside the mind. Rather than looking at behaviour, cognitivists have argued that we should instead be looking at the cognitive maps of the mind (Bruner et al., 1956, p. vii), and research should seek to describe the language system that exists in the brain rather than how people use language to do things (Achard and Niemeier, 2004, p. 1).

Cognitivism arose around the advent of the digital computer, and central to a cognitive perspective is the concept that the brain functions something like a machine or computer (Boden, 2006). This has been described as “the information processing view of human cognition” (Wallace, 2007, p. 18), and it is principally concerned with how the mind represents and computes information and the ways in which capacities are structured in the brain (Sloan Foundation, 1978, p. 75-6). On this view, knowledge is stored as internal representations of the external world and learning is viewed as the acquisition of abstract knowledge (Atkinson, 2011b, p. 4). In other words, learning involves taking information in from the environment and processing it so that it becomes an internal representation.
Knowledge may therefore be seem as decontextualized and found in the brain, with behaviour being only a weak indicator of that knowledge. Chomsky (1965) separated cognition from behaviour when he made the distinction between competence and performance, with competence being the knowledge that an idealized community of speakers has about a language, and performance being the actual use of that language in interactions. Competence allows speakers to both produce and understand utterances, while performance itself is the often faulty use of this language in real life. This means that the study of language needs to focus on the abstract system in the brain (Gass, 1998, p. 88), as we cannot study the language system by investigating a corrupt performance that does not represent it accurately. This led some cognitivists to a concern with an idealized native speaker, in a homogeneous speech-community, who has perfect knowledge of the language and who does not make mistakes because of problems with memory or other distractions (Chomsky, 1965, p. 3).

While it is certainly the case that SLA has been dominated by this cognitive perspective, Firth and Wagner (1997, p. 286-8) note that there has been an influential "socio-anthorlopolical" strand to SLA research. Hymes (1961), for example, challenged Chomsky’s notion of grammatical competence by proposing the concept of communicative competence, which launched a more social view of language, and turned researchers' attention to analyzing interaction data. Firth and Wagner (1997, p. 288) see this as a positive development, and argue that the tension between cognitive and social approaches has brought about other benefits. They cite examples such as researchers’ attempts to investigate the influence of contextual factors on language acquisition, and the embellishment of research with ethnographic data.

However, they maintain that the balance is weighted heavily against social approaches and in favour of an individualistic, cognitive approach. This can be seen clearly in Doughty and Long’s (2003a) Handbook of Second Language Acquisition, in which almost all of the chapters take a cognitive approach, and in which the editors declare that “much current SLA research and theorizing shares a strongly cognitivist orientation” (Doughty and Long, 2003b, p. 4). Therefore, while the influence of a social approach led SLA researchers to study performance data, there has remained a strong cognitivist perspective. In investigating performance data, “the focus is firmly on identifying the nature and sources of the underlying L2 knowledge system, and on explaining
developmental success and failure. Performance data are inevitably the researchers’ mainstay, but understanding underlying competence, not the external verbal behaviour that depends on that competence, is the ultimate goal” (Doughty and Long, 2003b, p. 4).

A Chomskyan approach maintains a focus on learning as an individual process that is at least partly innately specified (i.e. humans are programmed to learn in a certain way). Language acquisition is seen as a form of rule-learning, or the mastery of a system, and research should seek to characterize the steps by which learners move from being deficient communicators to being competent communicators (Achard and Niemeier, 2004, p. 5). All of this is in tension with sociocultural perspectives that see meaning as a social and negotiable product of interaction that transcends individuals (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 290).

However, alternative cognitively-oriented approaches have arisen over the last 30 years or so, including Cognitive Linguistics (CL), which is one of the most prominent alternatives to the Chomskyan paradigm (Gries, 2008, p. 408). CL is a group of related approaches that see language, communication, and cognition as "mutually inextricable" (Ellis and Robinson, 2008, p. 3), so that language should be viewed in its "communicative entirety" (Newman, 2017, p. 209). The approaches are "meaning-driven" (Tyler, 2017, p. 73), so while CL researchers have an interest in linguistic structure, the focus is on meaning "in all its aspects" (Dancygier, 2017, p. 3). CL holds that meaning in language is dependent on our understanding of the world we live in (Ellis et al., 2016, p. 24-5). For example, "the use of up in the sentence The price of gas is up is a result of humans regularly observing real world situations in which an increase in amount is correlated with an increase in vertical elevation, such as the level of liquid in a glass rising (the vertical elevation) as the amount of liquid increases" (Taylor, 2008, p. 459).

According to CL, and in contrast to a Chomskyan approach, there are no deep structures and language is not about slotting words into sentences that follow formal rules (Robinson and Ellis, 2008, p. 494). Rather, language is seen as a network of units and instead of rules there are generalizations (Hudson, 2008, p. 92). Cognitive Grammar is not a formal theory, but a "collection of cognitively inspired notional tools for the analysis of language" (Newman, 2017, p. 211-2), which rather than seeing language as an isolated, rule-based system, see it as "a reflection of general cognitive processes" (Tyler, 2008, p. 459).

Construction Grammar describes language as consisting of vast numbers of these constructions, which are pairings of form and meaning or function (Ellis et al., 2016, p. 26) that are conventionalized in the speech community, and entrenched as language knowledge in the learner’s mind (Ellis, et al., 2015, p. 166). Constructions are conventionalized linguistic ways of sharing our experience (Ellis et al., 2016, p. 42), and from a Construction Grammar perspective, all grammar can be understood as these pairings of forms with functions, which range from morphemes like -ing to syntactic frames like Subject-Verb-Object-Object (Ellis and Wulff, 2015). Language learning involves the learning of these constructions.

Another important aspect of CL is that it sees language learning as being usage based, as "language emerges in use, to satisfy communicative needs, rather than being driven by innate grammatical mechanisms" (Dancygier, 2017, p. 2). According to this perspective, learning is based on learners' exposure to the language they encounter (Ellis and Wulff, 2015). This means that language learning is not about learning rules, but is exemplar-based, and from this it follows that learners will benefit most from actual exposure to language use (Achard, 2008, p. 440-1). Therefore, learning emerges gradually as the learner encounters and gains understanding of language used in meaningful contexts (Tyler, 2017, p. 73). Combining this usage-based approach with Construction Grammar, CL researchers argue that "grammatical structures are built up through experience with specific examples of constructions which are categorized in memory by a mapping process that matches strings for similarity and difference" (Bybee, 2008, p. 217-8).

The concept of embodiment, or "the understanding that linguistic meaning, including abstract meaning, is rooted in the role of the human body in shaping human cognition" (Dancygier, 2017, p. 4-5), has been central to CL since its beginnings. And recently CL researchers have begun to take an even greater interest in multimodality – investigating communication in all its embodied and linguistic complexity. At the same time, there has been an increased interest in the interactive nature of language. Feyaerts et al. (2017, p. 136-7) write that there has been a recent shift from a focus on speaker-centred...
conceptualizations to more sociocognitive accounts of meaning. This new interest reflects a growing consensus "that the prototypically dialogic nature of language-use, as a coordination process between two or more interlocutors, ought to be the focus of a usage-based cognitive language theory" (Feyaerts et al., 2017, p. 141).

This focus on usage, embodiment, and interaction, means that cognitive linguistics is compatible with other approaches, including certain non-cognitivist fields. CL engages with and brings together researchers from other areas of study (Dancygier, 2017, p. 3; Ellis et al., 2016, p. 23), and there have, for example, been specific calls for and attempts at cross-paradigmatic collaboration between cognitive usage-based linguistics (UBL) and conversation analysis-based approaches (e.g. Cadierno and Eskildsen, 2015). Both CA and UBL see language use and development as being inseparable, and "UBL has a good fit with CA's praxeological stance on interaction, learning, and development" (Kasper and Wagner, 2014, p. 28). CA's conception of language is argued to be complementary with UBL's, as grammar is not seen as a self-contained system, but is variable, adaptive, flexible and emergent through contextualised language use" (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p. 116). So, while the sociocultural approach that I take may contrast with more traditional cognitive approaches to SLA, it is potentially compatible with usage-based approaches to CL. However, the core interests of CL remain linguistic structure, constructions, and mappings (Dancygier, 2017, p. 5), while in this project I will be more focussed on social actions, the structure of interactions, and identity.

2.3 Learning: participation and acquisition

Having sketched an outline of what I mean here by sociocultural, and also how it contrasts with (and may be complemented by) more cognitive perspectives, I would now like to develop the discussion about the study of language learning by introducing two metaphors for the process of learning that have dominated debate in education (Young, 2009). Sfard (1998) describes these as the acquisition metaphor and the participation metaphor, while Larsen-Freeman (2008, cited in Young, 2009, p. 164) calls them learning as having and learning as doing. The acquisition metaphor is essentially a cognitive perspective on learning, while the participation metaphor is essentially sociocultural.
The acquisition metaphor, in which learning is viewed as the incremental accumulation of concepts in the mind-brain of the learner (Young 2009), has been the dominant metaphor for learning in the field of SLA. This view sees the mind as a container being filled with materials and the learner becoming the owner of these materials (Sfard, 1998, p. 5). The learner is seen as a recipient of knowledge, which is often provided by a teacher who evaluates the learner’s acquisition of that knowledge (Young, 2009, p. 166-7).

The participation metaphor, or learning as doing, is a social rather than psychological theory of learning (Lave, 1996). On this view, language competence is synonymous with language use (Firth and Wagner, 2007; Goodwin, 1995; Hellermann, 2008) and learning is seen as “changes in doing, rather than doing itself” (Sahlstrom, 2011, p. 45). Lave (1993, p. 5-6) goes as far as to argue that there is no such thing as “learning”, but only “changing participation in the culturally designed settings of everyday life”. Learning a second language “can therefore be understood as part of learning to act jointly with others within the social world” (Pekerek-Doehler and Pochon-Berger, 2011, p. 206), and learning is a social process (Brouwer and Wagner, 2004) that is distributed amongst participants (Young, 2009). The focus is not on the individual mind of the learner, but on the interaction between the learner and a complex social environment. Therefore, rather than investigating the accumulation of concepts in the mind of the learner, researchers adopting this perspective develop detailed analyses of patterns of interaction, as well as the contexts of these interactions (Young, 2009, p. 164-66).

Despite gaining much enthusiasm for its focus on learner agency, the participation metaphor has been criticized for not addressing how what is learned is carried to different contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2004), as well as for focusing too much on language use and not on acquisition (Gass, 1998). However, researchers adopting the participation metaphor argue that some types of learning cannot be achieved by an individual alone, and so cannot be understood as an isolated phenomenon (Lave, 1993). They argue that this type of learning must instead be seen in the ways that people act together. As the social context in which an action is performed is crucial to the meaning of that action (Cole, 1995), what students are often actually learning in a classroom are the classroom practices (Young, 2009, p. 5) of a classroom community of practice (Hellermann, 2008), rather than a neutral set of language skills.
This is not to say that all knowledge and learning is specific to the context (i.e. non-transferable), or external to the individual, but that knowledge and learning cannot be fully understood independently of the specific situation in which they occur. Participating in classwork allows learners to construct social relations, identities, and practices appropriate to the specific situation, and these social relations, identities and practices affect language development (Willett, 1995) and must therefore be considered part of learning.

2.4 CA and learning

In this thesis I am making use of tools from CA to analyze classroom talk, but CA has previously been criticized as an approach that is not equipped to study learning (Gardner, 2008, p. 229). Markee and Kunitz (2015, p. 429-300) write that some criticisms of CA's take on SLA have argued that acquisition and use are fundamentally different, and that social approaches to language use cannot be used to explain cognitive processes. However, it is argued that CA has responded to these criticisms effectively and that it is now accepted within usage-based approaches to SLA (see Section 2.2).

The CA-SLA approach sees learning as "a sociocognitive process that is embedded in the context of locally accomplished social practices" (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p. 106). From this perspective, research is interested in cognition and learning as socially distributed practices, and language learning is not seen as the internalization of linguistic knowledge, but instead as the continuous adaptation of language and other resources in local interactions. This is argued to be a position that is consistent with recent cognitive science, which sees the boundaries of cognitive systems as being outside and not inside the individual mind (Markee and Kunitz, 2013, p. 635). From a CA perspective, then, learning and cognition are activities that are achieved and can be observed in embodied interactions (Goodwin, 2013), and learning cannot be seen as independent of the social-interactional dimensions of language use (Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p. 114).

Markee and Kunitz (2015, p. 430-1) describe two different perspectives on learning in CA-SLA, which they label the purist and developmental perspectives. Developmental researchers have accepted that CA by itself cannot address issues of learning, and have instead sought to use CA methods
with compatible theories of learning, such as sociocultural theory. Purist researchers, on the other hand, have attempted to address learning issues without recourse to an exogenous theory, in order to adhere to CA’s rejection of etic theories. Through detailed analysis, these researchers have attempted, for example, to track changes in language learning behaviour both in the moment and over time.

CA-SLA studies have taken both microgenetic and longitudinal approaches to documenting change across time. Microgenetic studies analyze changes that occur across very short time spans, and aim to describe moments of local learning in specific interactions (Kurhila and Kotilainen, 2017, p. 159). Through a CA analysis of instances of talk, practices that offer learning opportunities are uncovered, and analysis explicates how the participants orient to language learning. "Thus, from our perspective, learning manifests itself in the interaction when the learner discovers the object of learning, and acts on it" (Kurhila and Kotilainen, 2017, p. 159). Learning objects (or potentials, or learnables), can be related to any social practice (Majlesi and Broth, 2012), and include "grammatical structures, lexical items, as well as methods for turn construction, the sequential order of turns, and recipient design work" (Hellermann and Pekarek Doehler, 2010, p. 27). When analyzing an interaction, CA-SLA researchers look for evidence of learning potentials, such as these, being oriented to by the participants, as they emerge from the turn-by-turn collaborative accomplishment of the interaction (Hellermann, 2010, p. 42). Kasper and Wagner (2014, p. 26) describe, for example, how a focus on a learning object can be organized as an insertion sequence in an interaction where the main aim is buying bread. In this way, the service transaction is temporarily put on hold as the participant orients to learning. From a developmental perspective, researchers have used CA to investigate the sociocultural construct of scaffolding (Pekarek Doehler and Fasel Lauzon, 2015, p. 141-2). CA-SLA researchers highlight how we need to look not at individual performance to find learning, but rather need to look at joint action (Hellermann, 2010, p. 42). The focus is on "how students themselves discover knowledge gaps and manage epistemic issues in peer interaction" (Jakonen and Morton, 2013, p. 77).

However, microgenetic studies of local instances of learners orienting to learning objects do not provide evidence that long-term learning has occurred,
and deal "only' with the situated, local interactional resources that are mobilized for improving situated understanding and that potentially lead to retained learning effects" (Majlesi and Broth, 2012, p. 194). Using this approach, "L2 learning may be investigated as a socially displayed undertaking in the here and now without essential consideration being given to permanent outcomes" (Eskildsen and Theodorsdottir, 2015, p. 144). There is still the question of whether this local learning is carried over into new contexts (Eskildsen and Theodorsdottir, 2015, p. 160).

Longitudinal studies can be seen as a way of addressing this, as they attempt to track changes over longer periods of time, and thus make stronger claims that learning has occurred. These studies, which use data involving the same students over several days, weeks, months, or years, and attempt to track their learning trajectories over this time, are argued to be rare in the classroom (Pekarek Doehler and Fasel Lauzon, 2015, p. 414). In one such study, Pekarek Doehler (2010, p. 114) has shown how a moment of learning in one local interaction can lead to the learned object being used again by the same participant at a later date. Longitudinal studies can focus on practices, such as how novices in a professional context change how they perform certain practices over time, or may take a linguistic focus in tracing changes in the use of lexis or grammar (Kasper and Wagner, 2014, p. 28).

Studies into the development of Interactional Competence (IC, see pages 14-5) often take a longitudinal approach (Kasper and Wagner, 2014, p. 27). These studies see the development of IC in terms of the diversification over time of a learner's methods for interaction, including efficiency in recipient-designing talk (Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 3). But while "longitudinal studies provide a rich and diversified picture of what learning and development looks like when it comes to focussing on human interaction" (Pekarek Doehler and Fasel Lauzon, 2015, p. 416), there are problems in tracking an individual participant's practice over time, as IC "cannot be reduced to an individual participant's competence" (Kasper and Wagner, 2014, p. 28) (see p.14-5 for a discussion of this). Furthermore, if we see each interaction as a unique moment in time, co-constructed by the participants in specific and contingent ways, are we able to make legitimate comparisons between different interactions over time to argue that an individual has learned something?
2.5 The position on learning that guides this thesis

From the perspective of the participation metaphor, and adopting a sociocultural view, it becomes important to understand how learners use language together in the classroom, and we need to investigate what learners are attending to during language learning tasks (Aline and Hosoda, 2009). This means that we need to analyze how participants perform actions together in the classroom, because “if learning is understood as situated and constituted in interaction, research on interaction will provide for better understanding of learning” (Sahlstrom, 2011, p. 45). Following this, I see learning less as a process of transmission from teacher to students, or as the accumulation of knowledge in the mind of individuals, and more as (changing) participation in social practice (Hellermann, 2008), over short or longer periods of time. As such, my basic approach to data collection and analysis is motivated by a view of learning that can be typified by a participation metaphor.

If we do see learning as local, contingent and accomplished in interaction, then studies that illuminate what happens in contingent interactions between learners will have something to say that is relevant to learning. If learners play such a vital role in their own learning, then we need studies that detail exactly what it is that they do in language classrooms. If we want to understand the development of language skills, then we need to understand the discursive structures and practices of the foreign language classroom (Hall, 1995). So while I do not intend to specifically investigate language acquisition as such, by analyzing in detail classroom interaction it is my aim to shed light on practices that will have important implications for learning. I hope to show how practices change not only across time, but also across different situations in the classroom.

However, this does not mean that I completely disregard the acquisition metaphor. As noted in Section 2.2 above, a tension between cognitive and social approaches may bring benefits, and Sfard (1998) has argued that both the acquisition metaphor and the participation metaphor are needed, as “both metaphors provide complementary insights into a single learning process” (Young, 2009, p 166). As well as looking at sequential actions in interactions, I look also at the general qualities of those interactions (e.g. how much repair they contain). I will introduce my use of methods associated with a cognitive

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perspective in Sections 3.9 and 3.10.

2.5 Dialogic

In Section 2.1.1, I discussed Bakhtin’s (1981) view of language, which is known as a dialogic view. The concept of dialogic will be important in this thesis, as promoting “dialogic” talk was a central aim of the course from which the data was collected (see the Research Context chapter for more detail on the course), and so the concept needs some attention here. Dialogic and dialogue are terms that can and do have different meanings for different people, and they have been approached in different ways over the years. From Bakhtin’s (1981) dialogic view, language can be seen as an interplay of voices, as everything we say and think responds to the voices and thoughts of others. As well as this, as discussed above, words come to us filled with the meanings that others have given them, so that our speech is full of the voices of others. Not just language, but also human consciousness is dialogic. Bakhtin differentiates between authoritative discourses that are imposed on us (e.g. by the state or by teachers) and internally persuasive discourses that we accept and adapt to our own intentions. Human consciousness can be seen as a struggle between different voices (our own and others’) making the process of developing an individual voice difficult. I also discussed Vygotsky above, and his thinking may be thought of as being dialogic. Lefstein and Snell (2014, p. 17) write that from a Vygotskian perspective dialogue can be seen as “thinking together”. On this view, education involves the internalization of the discourse that occurs when participants in classroom dialogues engage with each other’s perspectives.

Dialogue can also be thought of as a type of relation. Taking this view, Buber (1937) thought that people held two orientations to the world: instrumental or dialogic. If we treat others instrumentally we treat them as objects, whereas if we approach others dialogically we enter into a relationship of respect. This view of dialogic relates our whole being with the other’s whole being, whereas an instrumental relationship is only partial, as we are only concerned with that part of the other relevant to the situation (e.g. we might only be interested in whether the person operating the check-out in the supermarket correctly scans our shopping items, rather than their home life and relationship problems). Buber argues that while we need instrumental relations, it is by entering into dialogic
relations that we become fully human.

Another view sees dialogue as empowering, focussing on how we live in an unequal society that places constraints on our participation in it. In contrast to a view of education that emphasizes the depositing of knowledge into students’ heads, which oppresses them by essentially telling them what to think, Freire (1986) argued that education should involve a dialogue between teacher and students, who jointly inquire into an object of study. Dialogic education can empower students by allowing them to bring their own knowledge and experience into the dialogue. This allows the students to speak for themselves, rather than have the teacher speaking for them. As with other dialogic approaches, this view highlights an interplay of voices and respect for others.

In the UK, Alexander (2006), who is concerned with primary education, has developed a model of classroom dialogue known as *dialogic teaching*. This model is designed to use talk to extend students’ thinking by requiring them to engage in extended dialogues that lead to new understandings. Tasks are collective, involving teachers and students working together and listening to one another, and students are encouraged to voice their ideas without worrying about giving incorrect answers. The focus is not on knowledge as something that is fixed, but rather something that means different things to different people. As with Freire, meanings are not imposed on students, but are made by them in dialogues with each other.

In discussing the meaning of dialogic, Wegerif (2013, p. 28) writes that it is not so much about actual dialogues, so much as about how humans make meaning in general. He argues that dialogues may be viewed from the outside as events situated in time and space, which is the traditional understanding of a dialogue, or from the inside. Viewed from the inside, dialogues have their own time and space, including people and places that are not physically present. Viewed from the outside, a dialogue may be seen as two friends in a restaurant at a particular moment having a conversation. Viewed from the inside, a dialogic space opens up, which may include the voices of friends or relatives, for example, as humans may speak with many voices.

Meaning, when viewed from inside dialogues, assumes multiple perspectives that exist in tension with one another. When multiple voices interact with one another, the differences between them create a space that Wegerif calls the *dialogic gap*, which is the “gap between perspectives in a dialogue”
It is in this space in which meaning is made, as new meanings cannot arise in an interaction between two voices that say the same thing (2013, p. 29). On this view, dialogues occur between different voices, rather than people per se, and these may be the voices of the people talking, or the voices of others who are not physically present but whose voices are invoked in the dialogic space, or even the voices of abstract entities, such as nations.

In his work, Scollon (2001, p. 8) discusses the concept of *dialogicality*. He highlights how all communications respond to prior communications and anticipate following communications, so that any action that a person performs exists in a chain of actions that stretch out dialogically both into the past and into the future. This means that the meaning of any isolated action (for example, a particular utterance or gesture) is embedded in the chain of actions that came before it and that will follow it. In other words, the meaning of what is said in a particular moment can be understood as a response to what has preceded it. It can also be understood as being directed at what will follow (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 274). This means that people’s interpretations of what has happened before, as well as their expectations about what will follow, are important for meaning-making. I will take this up further in Section 2.7, which discusses *interactional meaning*.

As discussed above, a dialogue when viewed from the outside (Wegerif, 2013, p. 4) can be seen as a type of interactional form (Lefstein and Snell, 2014, p. 14), and SLA studies sometimes use the terms *dialogic* and *interactive* interchangeably to describe a certain type of interactional form that language learners perform (e.g. Tavakoli 2016; Ellis, 2009). Dialogic talk is held in contrast to monologic talk, which is performed by one person alone. Tavakoli (2016, p. 137), citing Cameron (2001, p. 87), describes a dialogue as essentially involving more than one person in a joint endeavor, and highlights the importance of turn-taking, as speakers must take turns to talk in a dialogue. Similarly, throughout this thesis, I will use the term dialogic as an adjective to refer to a type of interactional form that involves more than one learner in interaction with others, taking it in turns to speak. However, I do not assume that two (or more) people in interaction together are necessarily engaged in *dialogic* interaction. As Lefstein and Snell (2014, p. 14-15) note, dialogic talk involves participants listening to one another, addressing one another’s ideas, and building upon the meaning of one another’s talk. Dialogic talk is unplanned and open, with the
current speaker responding to the meanings expressed by the previous speaker. A scripted, planned, and rehearsed presentation may be seen as the antithesis of this. If multiple participants do not engage with one another, and instead take it in turns to perform utterances that do not respond to the meanings of previous speaker’s turns or anticipate the meanings of upcoming speaker's turns, then I would argue that the interaction is quite monologic. In the sense that I use the term in this thesis, a dialogic interaction is one in which participants respond to and engage with the meanings of each other's turns, and a dialogue is a chain of connected utterances that participants build in collaboration with one another. While I will use dialogic in this sense to describe interactions, the concept of dialogicality as described by Scollon (2001) will be important to the theoretical perspective underlying my methodology.

2.7 Interactional meaning

Scollon’s concept of dialogicality is closely related to Gumperz’s (1977) notion of conversational inference. This notion holds that language is essentially ambiguous in nature, and we therefore cannot control the meanings of what we say, as these meanings are partly constructed by the people we are speaking to (Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 7). According to Gumperz, as the meaning of a particular action in an interaction is ambiguous in itself, it is only resolved in subsequent actions, and we need to make inferences about what our conversational partners mean when they say or do something. We do this by not only making sense of the language they use, but also by drawing upon our knowledge of the world and our expectations about and what people normally do. Meaning is, therefore, a joint construction between people in an interaction.

This means that, when one person says something, we can only really understand the interactional meaning of what was said by looking at what happens next. For example, the interactional meaning of the utterance “what time is it?” may be a request for the time, or it may be a test to see if a child can correctly read the time. It is only by looking at what happens after “what time is it?” is uttered, that we can understand this - does the asker of the question say “thank you” in response to hearing the time, or does the asker take a more evaluative stance by saying “very good” or “correct” (McDermott, 1979, cited in Scollon and Scollon, 2001, p. 8)?
As interactional meaning lies within the interaction, in the actions that people take rather than in the intentions of individuals, we should not look for interactional meaning in the understandings of individual participants, but in the actions taken and what they tell us. Norris (2004, p. 4) gives the example of one person in an interaction with another who suddenly gazes out of a window. This gaze may be interpreted as a sign of boredom, or perhaps deep concentration by the other person. It is only by analyzing both participants’ actions that we can understand the meaning that this gaze has in the interaction. This is also the view taken up by Conversation Analysis (CA) researchers, who claim that each time an action is performed it gets its meaning locally through the understandings that participants display (Kasper, 2009). In other words, it is in participants’ observable behaviour that we can see the meanings given to actions. This means that the analyst should not ascribe meaning to the actions performed, but should look instead to how the participants themselves respond to an action to understand the meaning that action has in the interaction. This view of an interaction as consisting of chains of actions that exist in a dialogical relationship with one another, and of interactional meaning as lying in the observable actions of participants, is central to my methodology.

2.7 Context

This view of interactional meaning leads CA researchers to an analytical focus on the immediate sequential context of an interaction. Garfinkel (1967), who established ethnomethodology (from which CA developed), rejected the bucket theory of context that sees the context in which actions take place as existing outside of the actions, containing and determining them in a one-way direction. In CA research, language use is not understood with reference to a context that lies beyond the interaction (and that might only be revealed by, for example, interviewing participants), but rather by analyzing only those aspects of the interaction that are actually observable (i.e. the chains of actions that participants perform). Any aspect of context that is not invoked by a participant through the observable actions that they take must be disregarded as irrelevant to the analysis. This means that CA rejects attempts to link the micro-context of talk with wider social structures, as these links must be empirically grounded and demonstrated (not speculated), which is argued to be difficult to do in practice.
As with conversational inference, the CA theory of context sees actions linked to meanings in a reflexive, time-bound process, so that “meaning lies not with the speaker nor the addressee nor the utterance alone … but rather with the interactional past, current and projected next moment” (Schegloff et al. 1996, p. 40). Each action in an interaction is a response to a preceding action, which it resolves the meaning of. At the same time, the meaning of that action is only resolved in subsequent actions. Meaning-making goes on, turn-by-turn, in this way.

In a conversation, every utterance that you say is responding to something said by someone else, and so is shaped by the context created by the previous speaker. If someone asks you a question, they have created a context in which an answer to that question is expected. Subsequently, what you say creates, or renews, the context for the next speaker. Your answer to the question creates a new context in which the other speaker can talk (e.g. to evaluate your response, ask another question, or otherwise comment).

This means that contexts are seen as determining actions, and actions are also seen as determining contexts. That is, actions remake, update, or transform the sense of context, and each current action is a definition of the situation to which subsequent talk (or actions) are oriented (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990). In this way, utterances, or actions, are both context-shaped (they depend on the environment in which they are produced to give them meaning) and context-renewing (they form a part of the environment in which subsequent actions will occur).

While CA takes a narrow view of context, researchers who have taken a broader approach include Malinowski (1936), who argued that language is rooted in the culture and customs of people and can therefore not be explained without reference to the broader context in which it is used. He realized this when stepping outside Europe to study languages and discovering that, when dealing with spoken language activities as the ethnographer does, the broader cultural context and situation of use cannot be considered irrelevant to linguistic expression. On this broad view of context, talk and the physical, spatial, temporal, social, interactional, institutional, political and historical circumstances in which it occurs are inseparable (Goodwin, 2000).

Bakhtin (1981) shared with CA an insistence of the context-bound
nature of the utterance as a unique moment. However, this is not necessarily a unique moment in time in the sense of the interactional-internal context, as it also includes the broader social and cultural context. Unlike CA, Bakhtin looked beyond the sequential context of language use, and his concept of the time-space context (or chronotope) of an utterance includes the physical aspects of the environment and also the meanings that configurations of time and place take on for participants. When making and interpreting meaning in an interaction a participant must make use of particular social and cultural categories relevant to the specific time-space context. This means that the meaning of an utterance cannot be understood with reference to the proximal (sequential) context alone, and that the wider social and cultural context (including the beliefs of the participants and wider social beliefs) must be taken into account.

Norris (2011, p. 30-34) similarly argues that the social-time-place in which interaction occurs is central to meaning-making as it brings affordances and constraints to the interaction that make particular actions possible. Social actors interact together within particular social structures, at a particular historical moment, and in a particular place, and all social actions are understood as practices of the particular social-time-place in which they occur. So, social actions are only possible in the precise way that they are performed due to physical and social space in which they occur.

Membership categorization analysis (MCA), a field closely related to CA, is argued to afford links between the interaction-internal and interaction-external contexts. It does this by examining how participants in interaction make use of their knowledge of social context by invoking certain social categories (such as nationality categories, gender categories, and so on) in interactions. The distinction between micro- and macro-levels of social organization is argued to be resolved in a focus on concrete social action (Kasper, 2009). However, as with CA, if participants do not observably invoke social categories, then they are not considered as being relevant to the interaction.

2.9 My approach to interaction and meaning

The view adopted in this thesis is that if we wish to understand human
communication we must focus not just on language itself, but on the ways in which it is used by particular people, in particular places and at particular times (Young, 2009). We should not see language use as an isolated phenomenon, but as something that is used by social actors to achieve social goals. As such, each instance of language use should be considered as a unique moment in time and space.

Following CA and the work of Norris (2004, 2011), I assume that it is not possible to observe what a person is actually thinking or feeling in an interaction. When analyzing an interaction, what we have access to are the expressions and reactions of individuals, and it is in these that we must look for the meaning of an interaction. From an ethnomethodological perspective, both the analyst and the individual in interaction should achieve understanding in the same way. That is, both analysts and participants in interactions achieve understanding by observing what is actually happening. Understanding, or interpretation, is an empirical, interactional phenomenon, and “doing interpreting is doing a specific job within the interactional situation” (Nishizaka, 1999, p. 240). We achieve understanding by grasping the objective aspects of a series of actions and placing them into a context of meaning through our interpretation of them (Schutz, 1932/1972).

However, following Scollon (2001) and Norris’ (2004, 2011) mediated discourse approach, which I discuss in more detail in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, I also look beyond the immediate sequential context of the interaction. CA’s approach allows us to understand how participants perform identities in interaction, but it does not allow us to look up from the interaction to consider the broader social time and space. This limits what the analysis can tell us, and potentially important insights may be missed. In this thesis, I will analyse the sequential unfolding of interactions, while also considering aspects of the wider social and cultural situation that may be important for understanding the interaction. I aim to look at how the interaction may help us understand the wider issues, and how the wider issues may help us to understand the interaction.

2.10 Multimodality

In this thesis, I aim to study interaction as a multimodal phenomenon, and as such it is important to consider what I mean by multimodal. We are in the midst
of an embodied (or spatial) turn in the social sciences (Nevile, 2015; Streeck et al., 2011), and the multimodal study of communication has recently received considerable attention. From this perspective, interactions are always multimodal (Norris, 2004; Moerman, 1990) and multimodality is the “normal state of human communication” (Kress, 2010, p. 1). Blackledge and Creese (2017, p. 252) go as far as to argue that embodied communicative practice and linguistic communicative practice are “integral to each other to the extent that they are one and the same” (Blackledge and Creese, 2017, p. 252). So, while language is of obvious importance, it is only ever one part of a multimodal ensemble (Jewitt, 2011), and all of the modes in a multimodal ensemble are assumed to have equal potential to contribute meaning. Goodwin (2000, p. 1490) has suggested that domains of phenomena that have been traditionally considered so distinct as to be treated by different academic disciplines should be integrated and analysed together as part of a common process of the social production of meaning and action.

It is not necessarily that researchers had not thought to study the non-linguistic aspects of communication before. In fact, there are studies dating back centuries that do just that. However, the technological means to perform such an analysis, and the resultant shift in perspective that that technology brings with it, were lacking. Marshall McLuhan (McLuhan and Fiore, 1967, p. 8) claimed that, “societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of communication.” The invention of the printing press in the 15th century led to changes in the ways that European societies viewed mathematics and science (Eisenstein, 1979) and more recently satellite images of the Earth changed human ideas about the nature of the planet, bringing into sharp focus its boundedness, and leading to some people becoming more environmentally aware (Kress, 2010, p. 15). Innovations in communication technology can and do lead to us reconceptualising the world around us.

One major reason for the shift to a multimodal perspective, then, has been the technological innovations that have not only made multimodal analyses much easier to perform, but have also completely re-worked the communicational landscape. The nonverbal aspects of communication that would be considered context when analyzing an audio recording are redefined
when working with video (Norris, 2011, p. 3). So just as then-new audio recording technology was integral to the initial development of conversation analysis (CA) by Harvey Sacks (e.g. 1992), advances in video recording and media technology have facilitated the development of multimodal analyses of communication.

While my use of the term multimodality largely derives from the influence of Sigrid Norris' Multimodal Interaction Analysis (2004; 2011 - see page 75), I also make use of tools from CA in this study, and more recent CA-informed studies have incorporated a fuller range of communicative modes in their analysis (Marke and Kunitz, 2015, pp. 431-3). While CA research that deals with aspects of embodied conduct has been on the rise comparatively recently, there have been CA studies dating back decades that have used video to investigate multimodal aspects of interaction, so this is not necessarily a new phenomenon (Deppermann, 2013a, p. 1). CA has always been interested in social action, rather than language per se, and the increase in studies taking a more multimodal approach can be seen as "a consequential move for a discipline which aims at a comprehensive understanding of human interaction and which sets as its goal to uncover the practices by which social interaction is produced" (Deppermann, 2013a, p. 2).

Different fields have different ways of using the term multimodality, but in CA it is used to refer to a more holistic approach to interaction that, as well as language, focusses on the variety of resources participants make use of for organizing actions – such as gesture, gaze, head movements, facial expressions, manipulation of objects, body postures, body movements, and also prosody, lexis and grammar" (Mondada, 2016, p. 338-9). From this perspective, language and talk can be seen as fundamentally embodied (Mondada, 2016, p. 340), and CA studies should focus on the subtle coordination and alignment of participants in interactions (Mondada, 2017, p. 249-250). Video data has afforded more complex understandings of how human action is organized (Mondada, 2014, p. 154), and CA studies have demonstrated "an extraordinary breadth of interactional resources that people bring to bear on how they go about their social lives" (Hazel at al, 2014, p. 3). A multimodal approach to CA, then, sees turns-at-talk as made up of not only verbal behaviour, but as consisting of a diversity of resources, which are "mobilized and packaged in an emergent, incremental, dynamic way, in response to the contingencies of the
setting and of the interaction" (Mondada, 2014, p. 140).

It is not only embodied behaviour, such as gestures, facial expressions, head nods, and so on, that are important in a multimodal analysis, and Mondada (2009) has also highlighted the importance of interactional space, as face-to-face interaction is characterized by body activity in space (Mondada, 2009, p. 1977-8). According to this view, space does not pre-exist to interaction, and interactions are not simply shaped by space, but rather space is produced through interaction (Mondada, 2011, p. 290). This multimodal view of interaction introduces new challenges for CA (Mondada, 2016, p. 337), some of which will be discussed on pages 93-5.

2.11 Identity

Cognitive SLA research has been criticised for its approach to identity. Firth and Wagner (1997, p. 291-2) argue that cognitivist SLA researchers have focussed primarily on the identity categories native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS), applying these as blanket terms that imply homogeneity throughout both groups. These categorizations are, they claim, applied without consideration of their relevance to the interaction being analyzed, and without recognition that they are only one of many social identities that may be simultaneously relevant. In these studies, the participants are learners (either NS or NNS), whose disembodied cognition is the real object of enquiry. This has led to calls for a more comprehensive theory of identity in SLA, which integrates the language learner in the social world (Norton and McKinney, 2011, p. 74).

Identity is a complex term that has been used in many ways by researchers (Tracy, 2002). One perspective sees identity as something that is stable and fixed and belonging to the person. Identity can also be seen as the sociocultural categories that society uses to label and understand people. However, the approach that I take to identity is influenced more by poststructural views that see identity as being unstable and fragmented.

2.11.1 Identity as multiple, changing, and negotiated

The position I adopt here sees identity as complex, fluid and co-constructed locally in interaction, rather than something that is fixed and simply expressed by individuals (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001). From this perspective, identities
are multiple, conflictual, negotiated and evolving (Canagarajah, 2004), rather than static social categories, and it is better to see the social actor as an ensemble of situated subject positions (or identities), rather than a homogeneous entity with a true identity (Mouffe, 1992). As Scollon (2001, p. 145) points out, “in any one act of speaking I might make claims of identity as a man, a university professor, a father, and an American”.

This is the position that has been adopted by many poststructuralist and sociocultural researchers. For example Norton (1997), who has done much research into identity and language learning, is influenced by Weedon’s (1987) poststructuralist theory of subjectivity, which holds that: (a) the subject is multiple and nonunitary; (b) subjectivity is a site of struggle; and (c) subjectivity changes over time. Subjectivity is produced in various social sites with the social actor taking up different subject positions, such as teacher, student, adult, and so on. Norris (2011) highlights how identity is nonunitary with her notion of multiple identity elements, which is used to analyse the ways in which social actors have simultaneous, multiple identities in interactions. The notion of identity elements is developed from the concept of chemical elements, which may be more or less permanent or volatile, and combine more or less easily with certain other elements. Identity can be seen as containing some fundamental essence (e.g. gender) and more relational, changing elements (e.g. student). These identity elements are heuristic, rather than distinct categories. The term identity elements, as described by Norris, includes widely accepted identity categories, such as national identities, and also includes elements such as the mother identity or the friend identity, which she notes would normally be considered roles (Norris, 2011, p. xv).

Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical metaphor for social action sees the activity of an individual in the presence of others (upon whom the individual’s activity has some influence) as a performance, which is a concept central to this thesis. On Goffman’s view, participants in interaction co-construct both the event they are performing and their own identities, so that identities are relational to other participants and the event that is being co-constructed (Norris, 2011, p. 29). Similarly, Bourdieu (1977) argues that the social actor cannot be understood apart from the network of social relationships in which he or she is acting, and Rutherford (1990) argues that the other plays a role in defining one’s own sense of identity. The ways in which a person acts towards another puts the other into
certain roles or positions, a process that has been termed *altercasting* (Tracy, 2002).

### 2.11.2 Conversation analysis and identity

As Antaki et al. (1996) note, to speak of social identity is to speak of membership of a category. Social psychological research practices have tended to privilege analytically given social categories (such as gender, nationality, and so on) when discussing identity, often seeing identity as part of an individual’s self-concept. These categories are brought to the analysis by the researcher. However, ethnomethodological research perspectives, such as conversation analysis (CA), view identity as a flexible resource employed by participants in interaction, and do not distinguish between an internal identity and an external identity that is visible to others. CA and the related field of membership categorization analysis (MCA) see abstract social categories such as race, class, and gender as accomplishments rather than pre-given categories (Kitzinger, 2000), so that what they term *membership categories*, such as *teacher* or *Japanese*, are actually “identities-for-interaction” (Stokoe, 2012, p. 278) that are invoked by participants in interaction. Using membership categories (such as *Japanese* or *foreigner*) as both the start and end point of analysis is argued to limit our understanding of what is going on (Nishizaka, 1999), and in a CA analysis the interest is in how participants co-construct and make relevant categories and what they achieve by using them. So it is not assumed prior to analysis that a participant belongs to a particular category, but rather the actions that a participant performs in an interaction make identities relevant and available for analysis.

### 2.11.3 Identity and group membership

*Communities of practice* theory suggests that individuals who come together to carry out activities express their identities as members of a group through a *shared repertoire* of common resources of language, styles, and routines (or practices) (Barton and Tusting, 2005). That is, particular groups have particular ways of being in the world, and it is through the competent production of socially recognized and accepted behaviour that an individual can claim identity as a group member.
Following Bourdieu (1977), Scollon (2001) argues that it is through the habitus developing a *genesis amnesia* that we can recognize a person as a member of a group. That is, it is in the practices that we perform unconsciously, the taken-for-granted world of the habitus, which shows most clearly who we are (Scollon, 2001, p. 152-3). It is by successfully co-constructing the routine actions and practices of daily life together that social actors demonstrate that they share a homologous habitus – that *they* are a *we*.

As identity and the beliefs of communities are linked to language use and sense-making practices (Jewitt, 2008), any change in the discourse system or discourse practices will potentially feel as a change in personality and culture (Gee, 2003; Scollon and Scollon, 1981). As participants move through different sites of engagement in the classroom, engaging in different practices (e.g. speaking English, speaking Japanese, remaining silent, making jokes, correcting mistakes, etc.) new spaces for identity production are opened and participants may produce different kinds of identity.

We should be careful, however, not to assume a straightforward link between a particular action and a particular identity, but must see actions and identities as produced as part of a specific context (Scollon, 2001). For example, by saying an English word a social actor is not necessarily constructing an identity as an English speaker, as the English word may be a loan word. Identity is always relational to the event that is being co-constructed (Norris, 2011).

Identities are embedded within larger social structures (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2001) and individual voices are “penetrated” by the cultures of institutions, groups, communities, etc. in which they are participating (Hermans, 2008, p. 192). Ellwood (2008) argues that society makes certain identities available to individuals, and that individuals seek to align or disalign themselves with these identity categories (e.g. *student*, *good wife*, *foreigner*). Institutions favour certain identities and require a social actor to comply with these preferred identities (Norris, 2011). Students, for example, are under institutional pressure (and peer pressure) to conform to norms for the identities preferred in the classroom (Canagarajah, 2004).

### 2.11.4 Different types of identity

Tracy (2002, pp. 18-20) proposes four different types of identity. *Master*
identities, which include ethnicity and gender, are relatively stable and unchanging. Interactional identities are the roles that people take up in specific communicative contexts in relation to other people. These types of identities include roles such as son or employee and are contingent on the interaction taking place. Certain interactional identities are more closely associated with certain master identities than others. Personal identities are what we might in everyday talk call personality. These include attitudes and the ways in which people conduct themselves. Finally, relational identities refer to the particular relationships that a person enacts with others in specific situations. These identities reference the interactional qualities of the people in the interaction, such as whether they are friendly or not.

Norris (2011) recognizes three levels of identity that relate to three layers of discourse. The outer layers of discourse, which are formed by the larger society, produce general identity elements that are imposed on people through repeated treatments in interactions. Norris gives the example of a woman going through the divorce courts who was given the general identity element of good mother by her own lawyers, but of bad mother by her ex-partner’s lawyers. Intermediary layers of discourse, which are formed by the social actor in their social networks, produce continuous identity elements. Norris here again gives the example of the woman who is going through the divorce and is engaged in the practice of moving home. Within her social networks she is positioned as a needy, helpless woman. Finally, the central layers of discourse, which are formed by immediate social actions, produce immediate identity elements. Here the woman produces her divorcee identity through the actions that she takes, such as wiring a telephone in her new home (a job her husband would previously have done).

2.11.5 Language learner identity

At the beginning of Section 2.11, I introduced the identity categories native speaker (NS) and nonnative speaker (NNS) that have been extensively used in SLA research. Carroll (2000) argues that these labels are not merely linguistic states-of-knowledge, but are interactionally occasioned and negotiated identities that may or may not be salient at any given moment in an interaction. They are omni-relevant in the sense that participants will always be aware of them on
some level of attention, but they will not always overtly orient to them. Similarly, Firth and Wagner (2007, p. 801), seeing identity as a liminal and achieved feature of interaction, describe how the participants in their study were not defensibly identifiable as *learners or nonnative speakers*. Instead, the identities that were made relevant in interactions were those of *friends, business acquaintances, customers*, and so on. This highlights how we should not assume that participants in classroom interactions are focussed on their identities as *learners*.

As identity is fluid and idiosyncratic, and as the classroom is not just a place for learning but also a social place (Markee, 2004), students’ classroom identities consist of more than the normative role of *student* as they seek to align or disalign to certain identities (Ellwood, 2008, p. 554). The contingencies of classroom interaction facilitate not just teaching and learning but a whole range of social actions that produce a variety of identities. Morita (2004), studying Japanese female postgraduate students’ academic socialization experiences in a Canadian university, shows how identity is situated and how the classroom context is inseparable from learners’ participation. The same learner can negotiate different identities in different contexts, and therefore participate variously in different classroom contexts. She argues that this has significant implications for research, the most important being that research into learner participation needs to seriously consider classroom context (I would further argue that we need to investigate not only classroom contexts, but also the micro-contexts of particular interactions).

Research into language learning motivation has also taken an identity approach that attempts to understand learners as real people located in particular contexts, rather than “bundles of variables behaving and responding in theoretically predictable ways” (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 76). In this line of research, Dornyei developed the *L2 motivational self system* (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 86), combining psychological theories of the self with L2 research, in an attempt to better theorize learners’ motivation to learn a foreign language. An important part of this system is the notion of the *ideal L2 self*. The *ideal L2 self* concerns the attributes that one would ideally like to have, as an L2 speaker, in the future. That is, the *ideal L2 self* is an image of the self in the future as one would like to be, and this can be a powerful motivator to learn a language. The motivation comes from attempts to reduce the discrepancy
between the actual self and the *ideal* self. This research has tended to focus on questionnaires and statistical analysis, rather than analysis of interactions.

### 2.11.6 My understanding of identity

Following the ethnomethodological view, as well as Norris (2011) and Scollon (2001), I see identities as produced in the actions that individuals take in interactions, rather than only being pre-given social categories. This means that I see identity as being observably co-produced (or performed) in interactions. I look to see how participants produce identities as members of the same group by performing expected actions together. However, only looking for identities as they are performed in interactions limits what we can see. As such, I look beyond what is concretely observable in interactions to consider how identities might be embedded in wider social structures, and also how identities that may not be immediately observable in interactions still affect what happens in them, adopting a poststructural view of identity.

Social actors have different types of identity, including *general* or *master* identities and *interactional* or *immediate* identities. Looking at Tracy's (2002) four identity categories (introduced on p. 49-50 above), *interactional* identities are of particular importance to this study. Whereas *master* identities (such as gender, ethnicity, and age) and *personal* identities (as Tracy uses the term) are relatively stable, *interactional* identities relate to those roles that social actors take on in specific social situations with certain other social actors. They are, therefore, quite variable. For example, one social actor may be an *employee*, a *friend*, a *daughter*, and so on, depending on the interaction in which they are participating. For the purposes of this study, I make a broad distinction between two types of *interactional* identity. The first of these is the *student* identity, which I will use to reference the roles that participants perform both in the classroom and outside of it when engaged in academic and institutional work. That is, I will use it to indicate the institutional roles and actions that the participants are expected to perform as they go about the university business of attending lectures and classes, taking exams, and so on. I will use the term *personal* identities to collectively reference those *interactional* identities that might normally be performed outside of the classroom, including participants' identities as *friends* or *club members*, for example. It is important to note that,
following CA, the use of identity categories should arise during analysis and not be brought by the researcher to the project.

2.12 Classroom interaction

My study investigates classroom interaction, and as such it is important to consider what this actually is. Classroom interaction is not mundane conversation, but is a form of institutional talk, the organization of which differs from that of ordinary conversation, as it is related to institutional aims, goals and identities (Drew and Heritage, 1992). Seedhouse (2004) argues that the core institutional goal in the ELT classroom is that the teacher will teach the learners the L2, and that interaction in the classroom should be related to this goal if it is to be considered the institutional discourse of the classroom. According to Seedhouse, interaction that occurs in the classroom is not institutional by virtue of where it takes place, as it is possible to have a conversation in a classroom, but must relate to the aims, goals and identities of classroom discourse. For example, he holds that only interaction conducted in the L2 can be called L2 classroom interaction.

In institutional interaction participants are not only analyzing and evaluating each other's turns, but are also monitoring the relationship between the interaction and specific features of the institution (Saft, 2009). Institutional contexts, due to their regularized functions and settings, order talk into somewhat ritual patterns and often involve hierarchical participant frameworks that apportion responsibility for particular parts of discourse (Drew and Sorjonen, 1997). Institutions favour certain identities and enforce categories that social actors must fit into (Norris, 2011), and the goal-orientations of social actors are tied to institution-relevant identities (Heritage, 2004). However, while institutions order talk, it is important to remember that (from a CA perspective) institutions are not pre-existing realities that confront social actors, but are brought into being through the actors' coordinated actions (Kasper, 2009), and it is in the “mundane contexts of interaction that institutional power is exercised, social inequalities are experienced, and resistance accomplished” (Widdicombe, 1995, p. 111). Conventions for classroom interactions are negotiated and classroom discourse can be seen as spontaneous improvisations on basic patterns of interaction (Griffin and Mehan, 1981).
2.12.1 Teacher power

Unlike conversation, which is essentially egalitarian in nature (with all participants assumed to have equal speaking rights), classroom interaction is a form of institutional discourse that enforces particular identities, including the power difference between teacher and student identities. McHoul's (1978) CA study into classroom turn-taking practices revealed that, “the social identity contrast ‘teacher/student’ is expressed in terms of differential participation rights and obligations” (p. 211). More specifically, he noted that teacher identity was partly produced through the teacher’s exclusive access in formal talk to the current speaker selects next speaker technique (Sacks et al., 1974). Teachers control classroom talk (Cazden, 2001) and the teacher classroom identity is characterized by the right to ask questions, initiate topics, and control the content of classwork through discourse strategies such as elicits, feedback, repetition and so on (Fisher, 1994b). Seedhouse (2004) has also noted that a major interactional property of the language classroom is that any utterances or patterns of interaction produced by learners are potentially subject to evaluation by the teacher. Conversely, the student identity is more passive, characterized by a tendency to be the respondent and to privilege the teacher’s ideas. Good students follow teacher instructions and do teacher-assigned work (Talmy, 2009). Seedhouse (2004) has found that the teacher does not always personally control classroom interaction. The teacher’s instructions become resources with which students accomplish actions (Hellermann, 2008) and the teacher can be entirely absent from the classroom and the interaction will still orient to his or her pedagogic focus.

2.12.2 The interactional architecture of the language classroom

It is not possible to describe in any shorthand way what a system of classroom dynamics will look like overall as each class develops its own dynamics which focus in different ways in different sessions (Kiefer, 2006). However, research into classroom interaction that has described common interaction patterns and practices in the classroom. Rather than envisaging the classroom as a unified speech exchange system characterized by a single set of practices, much recent work has seen L2 classroom interaction as a nexus of interrelated speech exchange systems (Markee, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004). These different systems
include different types teacher-cohort interaction (such as giving instructions) and different types of student-student interaction (such as completing a meaning-focused task).

Seedhouse (2004, 2010) shows that there is a reflexive relationship between pedagogy and interaction that is the foundation of the “context-free architecture” of the L2 classroom (2010, p. 10). As the pedagogical focus varies (e.g. from a focus on form-and-accuracy to a focus on meaning-and-fluency) the organization of the interaction varies and participants in classroom interaction display their understanding of the relationship between pedagogy and interaction in their talk. For example, in activities where the pedagogical focus is on linguistic form and accuracy the teacher usually has tight control over interaction, modeling sentences which students are expected to repeat. When the pedagogical focus is on meaning and fluency the organization of the interaction is less rigid, with learners organizing turn-taking locally. It is not only the system for organizing turns that changes, and Seedhouse (2004) also notes that when L2 learners are engaged in meaning and fluency-focused tasks they often use discourse markers such as oh, ah and uhu (Seedhouse, 2004) in order to index a change of information state as new information is received (Heritage, 1984b).

Hall (1993, 2004) similarly argues that classroom interaction is a constellation of socioculturally conventionalized configurations of face-to-face interaction and complex interactional practices. Changes in classroom interactional configurations (sometimes linked to a change in pedagogic focus) will affect the organization of the interaction. The boundaries between these configurations may also have their own interactional practices (Hellermann, 2008), and participants do not always move unproblematically between different speech exchange systems in the classroom. Markee (2004) finds that misunderstandings and off-task talk can occur in these transitions. It is not only talk that changes according to the activity, and Wells (2000) has noted a similar phenomenon in the gesturing practices of students in first language classrooms, describing how students produce different types of gesture according to the nature of the task they are involved in.
2.12.3 Interaction in classrooms in Japan

Researchers and writers on Japanese culture have painted an image of the Japanese as being dependent on others (Doi, 1981), exercising restraint in social interactions due to the pressure for conformity (Lebra, 1976), valuing harmony within the group (Reischauer, 1988), and placing greater value on social obligations than individual rights (Lebra, 1974). According to this view of Japanese culture, interaction in Japanese is seen as being based on the maintenance of group harmony over conflict, resulting in an indirect style of communication that inhibits individual expression.

This view of Japanese interaction is often taken from a broader sociological perspective and is often not based on detailed analysis of actual social interactions. Some of the theories are developed from remembered and incidental data and we must be cautious in assuming that these cultural values influence any interaction that we are analyzing. However, more recent studies, some influenced by CA, have investigated Japanese face-to-face interactions and Japanese speakers interacting in English.

Fujii (2012) has attempted to explicate how Japanese interactional behaviour is focused on principles that emphasize group harmony and mutual consent through an analysis of face-to-face interactions that focuses on the use of linguistic devices such as repetition and overlap. Fujii’s quantitative analysis of interactional data shows that Japanese speakers tend to use more question forms, repetition, and co-construction of turns than American speakers, which she suggests demonstrates that they place a greater focus on group harmony over individual expression.

While Fujii’s paper makes strong claims for identifying principles for establishing mutual consent in Japanese interactions, I feel that we should also be careful of being culturally deterministic and overgeneralizing when making claims about large groups of people. For example, although Fujii found that on average the Japanese speakers in her study used more question forms than American speakers, the data also reveal that of the six pairs that used the least amount of question forms in their interaction, five of these were Japanese. So it is important to remember that while cultural principles for interaction will affect behaviour they do not determine it, and there will be individual differences between members of the same cultural group that may at times be more
significant than differences between members of different cultural groups. Saft (2004), for example, has argued that arguments in Japanese university faculty meetings are “not necessarily determined or constrained by social and cultural factors, such as harmony and hierarchy, that supposedly underlie Japanese social interaction” (p. 577).

One element of the indirect communication style outlined above that has been frequently described in the literature on Japan is the abundant use of silence in Japanese (e.g. Doi, 1974; Clancy, 1986; Lebra, 1987; Nakane, 2003). However, some researchers have criticized the view of the Japanese as silent as being far from accurate, as the Japanese do talk a lot, but the situations in which talk is culturally sanctioned in Japan are not necessarily the same as those in the West (Anderson, 1993; see also Miller, 1994 and Mizutani, 1997). In her study into the identities of Japanese female graduates, Morita (2004) argues that Japanese women can be creative, active and critical, rather than passive and timid as they are often stereotyped as being.

More specific accounts of how silence is actually used by Japanese show that there is comparatively more silence in interactions with strangers than in interactions with family members and close friends, where more direct, self-expression is more common (e.g. Miller, 1994). Miller (1994) and Ueda (1974) also report that more direct speech and confrontation do take place in Japan, but more often in private than public situations.

Many researchers and teachers in Japan have claimed that Japanese learners are passive and silent in the classroom (e.g. Nakane, 2003; Mayer, 1999; Nimmannit, 1998) and that this can, at least in part, be attributed to the Japanese education system, in which information is argued to pass in a top-down fashion from teachers to students (Williams, 1994) according to principles of hierarchy that are argued to underlie Japanese society and interaction.

In a comparison of the negotiation of talk and silence by Japanese and Australian university students, Nakane (2003) notes that expectations about turn-taking rights in the classroom may be a major contribution to Japanese students’ silence, as most Japanese learners will have a “lack of familiarity with voluntary participation in the classroom” (p. 302), as group and pair work is not common in Japan and turn-taking in whole class teaching is controlled by the teacher (Ikto, 1994; Sato, 1993). This passive approach to communication is
argued to cause problems for interaction with people from other cultural contexts. For example, Japanese students’ reluctance to ask questions, initiate discussions, challenge the instructor, volunteer answers, and so on, is reported to frustrate Western EFL teachers in Japan (Anderson, 1993).

But here (as always) we must beware cultural stereotyping and oversimplistic descriptions of complex realities. Individual differences can play a larger role in determining behavior than notions of sociocultural patterns that characterize large groups of people based on nationality (Stapleton, 2002), and certainly not every Japanese learner will be silent and inactive in the classroom (e.g. see Littlewood, 2000; Morita, 2004). Littlewood (2000) challenges the preconception that Asian students at the senior secondary and tertiary level wish to be passive in the classroom and see the teacher as an authority figure. Based on responses to a questionnaire administered to 2,307 students in eight East Asian countries and 349 students in three European countries, Littlewood concludes that there is less difference in attitudes between students in Asian and European countries than there is between individuals within each country. However, while the results of this questionnaire suggest that students in Asian countries (including Japan) may not necessarily wish to adopt a passive role in the classroom, it is claimed that in practice they often do just this and this article does little to challenge the picture that has been developed in the literature of Japanese learners as passive participants in classroom practice. Littlewood suggests that, if Asian students do indeed adopt a passive classroom attitude, this is most likely a consequence of the educational context rather than an inherent disposition of the students themselves. That is, Asian students are passive because they are socialized into passive practices. On this view, Asian learners will be more active if classroom practices are developed that promote more active learner roles.

Scholars have argued that interaction in Japanese high schools is teacher-centred (Taguchi, 2005), which may create expectations for Japanese students to be quiet and passive in the classroom. In her study of Japanese student’s silence in Australian university classrooms, Nakane (2003) found that Japanese students displayed a strong orientation to the classroom as a teacher-centred space. She found that there was a tendency for Japanese students (more so than Australian students) to react exclusively to nomination by the teacher and to direct their talk towards the teacher (rather than classmates).
Williams (1994) notes that classrooms in Japan typically involve a lecture-style approach to instruction with teachers presenting information to students from the front of the classroom, so that the “classroom is a place where one listens and learns but does not speak” (p. 10). And King’s (2013) extensive, multi-site study into silence in Japanese university L2 classrooms found that in 48 hours of data students were responsible for less than one per cent of initiated talk (while over a fifth of class time was characterized by no oral participation from anyone in the classroom).

So, research has found that, while Japanese participants are relatively silent in classrooms and in interactions with strangers, they may be more direct and less silent in private interactions and interactions with friends. Silence in the classroom is not necessarily due to an unwillingness to be active, but may have more to do with the established classroom turn-taking practices that students are familiar with and socialized into.

2.12.4 Turn-taking in small-group discussions in a Japanese university EFL class

In what Gardner (2013, p. 597) claims to be "one of the few studies that closely examines turn-taking in small classroom groups", Hauser (2009) shows how turn-taking in a four-person discussion in a Japanese university EFL class is organized differently to ordinary conversation. Central to Hauser’s chapter is an explication of the way in which one student at-a-time takes an extended turn as the primary speaker, with other students taking a more passive role. The findings of this study are of great relevance here, as this is one of the few CA studies of turn-taking in small-group work in a Japanese university EFL class, and I will draw extensively on Hauser’s findings in my analysis. It is therefore important to outline Hauser’s main findings here.

While assuming the role of primary speaker, a participant typically expresses their opinion on the discussion topic with other participants providing backchannels.

Backchannels, which consist of nods and minimal nonlexical tokens such as un, serve as general continuers that demonstrate that these participants are paying attention, but are unwilling to take opportunities to take more substantial
turns-at-talk. So, rather than having a discussion, the participants in Hauser's study simply take it in turns to state their opinions unchallenged by the other participants, and the interactions have “a fairly monologic character” (p. 239).

On a few occasions a participant who is not the 'primary speaker' does take a more substantial turn. This occurs at a point where the primary speaker has made a claim to have finished his or her turn and follows a request for permission to speak. These turns by non-primary speakers are requests for the primary speaker to elaborate on something that they have said and so challenge the adequacy of the primary speaker's turn and his or her claim to have said enough.

**Once a primary speaker’s turn is concluded there is significant interactional work undertaken to negotiate who the subsequent primary speaker will be.**

There are three stages to this, which are often performed without much use of language, consisting mostly of gestures, head nods, gazes, and so on. First, when a primary speaker reaches the end of their turn, they may make a claim to have finished. This claim often takes the form of a nod, but can also be verbal (e.g. by saying "that's all"). If there is no claim to have finished then there is no subsequent change of primary speaker, which means that, although the participants demonstrate that they are capable of smooth transitions between speakers, there is a prevalence of silence between turns. Following a current primary speaker's claim to have finished, the next primary speaker is specified through the use of gaze, pointing gestures, and so on. Finally, the participant who has been nominated to be the next primary speaker will then accept the role. There is a particular need for a lot of interactional work to negotiate the change between the first two primary speakers.

**Once the transfer between the first and second primary speakers has been achieved, primary speakership is then passed (almost literally) around the table in the direction established by that transfer (i.e. clockwise or anti-clockwise).**

This means that turn-taking follows a somewhat predictable pattern. However, despite the predictability of the turn-taking, there is still some necessity for interaction (as outlined above) devoted to confirming who the next primary
speaker will be during each subsequent change.

Each participant in the group must be primary speaker at least once.

Hauser argues that the students’ understanding of how often they should be primary speaker is related to the structure of the task. For example, if there are two discussion questions then each participant must be primary speaker at least two times (once for each question). A participant who has assumed the role of primary speaker for a particular discussion question does not need to assume the role again for that question.

2.13 Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed sociocultural approaches to language and learning, contrasting them with more cognitive approaches. I have discussed what I mean by dialogic and interactional meaning, and discussed CA’s understanding of the sequential context of talk, as well as broader approaches to context that include the wider social context. I have also discussed interaction as a multimodal phenomenon, and identity as multiple, changing, and negotiated. Finally, I discussed classroom interaction, looking in particular at studies of classroom interaction in Japan, focussing especially on Hauser’s (2009) study of small-group discussions in a Japanese university EFL class. In doing so, I hope to have introduced important concepts that underpin the methodological and theoretical approach that I take, in an attempt to begin to situate my study.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
In this chapter, I introduce important approaches, concepts, and tools that I make use of in my research methodology, and also briefly explaining why I rejected other approaches. I will explain how I aim to combine a focus on analyzing the moment-by-moment unfolding of interactions while making use of more ethnographic methods. I will also discuss how I complement my sociocultural approach with methods associated with a more cognitive approach. I start the chapter by discussing Conversation Analysis (CA), which I use to analyze spoken language in this project.

3.2 Conversation Analysis
My aim in this study is to investigate how learners perform identities in classroom interactions, and CA’s tight focus on analyzing interactions is highly suited to meet this aim. The name CA suggests that the focus is on analyzing conversations, and this is indeed what CA was originally developed to do. CA researchers see conversation as “clearly the prototypical kind of language use” (Levinson, 1983, p. 284) and “the primordial site of sociality” (Schegloff, 2000, p. 1) through which identities are enacted and cultures are transmitted, renewed, and modified (Goodwin and Heritage, 1990). Proceeding from this assumption, CA aims to understand the minute details of the social organization of human interaction (Sahlstrom, 2011). Fundamental to CA research is the idea that everyday talk displays “order at all points” (Sacks, 1992), and CA studies have shown that conversation is indeed deeply ordered and methodic. This means that in an analysis of an interaction no detail can be dismissed a priori as disorderly or accidental (Seedhouse, 2004).

Although the object of CA research is “talk-in-interaction” (Drew and Heritage, 1992, my emphasis), CA is principally interested in social action rather than language per se, and CA’s seminal texts have been written by sociologists, not linguists (Young, 2009, p. 2). Analysis focusses on the structural organization of talk rather than the semantics of the language used (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998), and interactions are seen as consisting of social actions (the actions of opening a conversation, accepting an offer, apologizing, and so on).
The central guiding question when analyzing an interaction is “Why that, in that way, right now?” (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 66), as CA attempts to uncover which language forms are used to implement which actions. CA research has, for example, uncovered the rules that determine how different people in an interaction take turns to speak (Sacks, et al., 1974).

CA takes an *emic* perspective to analysis. That is, analysts do not view behavior from outside of the system, but attempt to provide an internal view of action from the perspective of the participants themselves (Pike, 1967). In other words, CA analysts claim that they do not use their own terms or notions to describe an interaction, but use the terms that the participants themselves use in the interaction itself. Conversation analysts believe that a priori theorization places constraints on the observation of what is actually happening (Aline and Hosoda, 2009), so they are not interested in predefined analytic constructs or external social or natural explanations for action (Wetherall, 1998). From an emic perspective, what is of interest is what the actions mean to the participants themselves, rather than the analyst’s interpretation of the actions.

The initial focus on conversation has been expanded and CA methods are now used to investigate talk in a wide variety of contexts, including institutional contexts. Researchers have, for example, used CA to investigate the social aspects of language learning (Kapser and Wagner, 2011, p. 117), and “studies using CA to examine language classrooms have drawn attention to its promise as a tool for enriching our understanding of the intricacies of classroom interaction” (Hall, 2007, p. 523). Thus, CA recommends itself as a methodology suitable for meeting my aim of better understanding the ways in which learners perform classroom interactions together.

As discussed in Section 2.4, CA has been used in a number of ways in language learning studies. For example, it has been used to investigate the ways in which language learners perform identities in interactions. Kasper (2004) has shown how participants in German language-learning conversations orient to a variety of identity positions, not limited to those normally associated with foreign language-learning roles (such as learner or non-native speaker, as discussed in Section 2.11). CA research has also analyzed how talk in the target language affords learning opportunities (Kasper and Wagner, 2011, p. 131). For example, SLA researchers have made use of CA’s concept of repair (described in Section 3.8.6, which introduces important concepts from CA) to analyze how
talk may provide moments where a focus on problems within an interaction can provide the stimulus for language learning (Hall, 2007). Other studies, such as Hellermann (2008), have taken a longitudinal approach that tracks learners’ development over time, while Seedhouse (2004) has used CA to describe the typical interaction patterns found in the language classroom.

CA is now becoming an established methodology for analyzing language learners’ interactions, and it is well-suited to my aims of analyzing how classroom interactions are structured, how participants perform identities in interactions, and also how learning opportunities may arise in interactions.

3.2.1 Criticisms of CA

However, CA is not without its critics. It has been argued that, because of the emic approach described above, much of a CA analyst’s interpretation of interactional data is reliant upon the researcher and the participants having some shared cultural knowledge (Cicourel, 1992, 2000; Rampton et al, 2002; Young, 2009). A key aspect of CA is that the same methods are used by both participants and analysts to make sense of what is going on, and CA analysts partly make observations on the assumption of their co-membership in the participants’ cultural community (Firth, 1996; ten Have, 1999). But what happens if the participants and the analyst do not share cultural frames of reference? It is possible that in situations of inter-cultural contact (such as in my study), relying on the somewhat intuitive approach typical of traditional CA could lead to the analysis becoming ethnocentrically biased (Rampton et al, 2002).

Cicourel (1992, 2000) argues for a broader sense of context than that typically seen in CA studies. He found in his studies that he needed to go beyond the sequential context of the interaction to consider the background of the participants in order to understand what was happening. He and others (e.g. Rampton et al, 2002) argue that in unfamiliar social and cultural situations, the researcher may need to make use of ethnographic methods, which I discuss in detail in Section 3.6, to develop an accurate sense of the interpretive frames that participants have available to them in an interaction. Wetherall (1998) similarly argues that a major problem with CA is that it rarely looks beyond the rather narrow social context of the next turn at talk. “Conversation analysis alone does not offer an adequate answer to its own classic question about some piece of
discourse - why this utterance here? Rather, a complete or scholarly analysis (as opposed to a technical analysis) must range further than the limits Schegloff proposes” (Wetherall, 1998, p.388). Because of the limited focus on the proximal, sequential context of talk-in-interaction, a “pure CA” (based on Schegloffian principles) is of little use if we wish to comment on the wider social significance of the issues occasioned in talk (Stokoe and Smithson, 2001, p. 238).

Taking an example of data from a CA study by Harvey Sacks (1992), Talmy (2009) argues that a consideration of wider discourses (e.g. sexism) could advance the CA analysis. CA researchers counter, however, that the use of poststructuralist concepts risks ignoring the interactional context as it is relevant to participants and of seeing presupposed cultural themes manifested in local utterances which were uttered according to their own local logic (Wooffitt, 2005). Here, I would argue that it is the job of researchers to make just these links between the wider social context and the local interactional context, links that may not always be obvious to the participants themselves. However, this should be done carefully and without the analyst assuming that they know best. In fact, it may be just in the inconsistencies between a participants’ and an analysts’ perspective that findings arise.

Billig (1999) has also criticized CA for its supposed ideological neutrality. CA claims to be a methodology that avoids a priori assumptions about the data. However, Billig argues that this claim is problematic as CA presents an ideological view of the social world as participatory and with equal rights of speakership often assumed, which is a view that CA analysts take for granted. No analysis is free from the analyst’s interests and Billig argues that, despite CA researchers’ claims to analyse participants’ talk in their own terms, it is not in fact the participants’ own terms that are being used, but the analyst’s. Wetherall (1998) also takes up this line of criticism, pointing out that concepts such as conditional relevance, which most participants in an interaction would not understand, are used in CA studies.

3.3 Multimodal interaction analysis

In this study, while I make use of CA’s analytical tools, I wish to also look beyond CA’s tight focus on the sequential context of talk to help me better understand what is happening in the classroom. To do so, I considered taking Norton’s
(2013) identity approach to SLA. However, Norton’s poststructural research is not grounded in close analysis of interaction data, and so I decided to reject it. I also considered a language socialization approach (e.g. Duff and Talmy, 2011), which would have allowed me to combine ethnographic data collection with close analysis of interactions. However, I rejected this approach early on as I was not sure what community the learners in a compulsory Japanese university EFL class (the site in which my data is collected) might be being socialized to. Language socialization attempts to understand development through interactions with others who are more proficient, whereas the learners in my study were all approximately of the same proficiency level.

The approach that I decided was best suited to my aims and interests was multimodal interaction analysis (Norris, 2004; 2011), and I developed my methodological approach from this framework. Multimodal interaction analysis (henceforth MIA) is a methodological framework developed to investigate the moment-to-moment performance of face-to-face interactions. As an analysis of sequential real-time actions MIA has much in common with CA, but MIA looks beyond the immediate sequential context of the interaction and includes more ethnographic data in its analysis.

Norris (2004, 2011) defines MIA as “a holistic analysis of the multiple real-time sequential and simultaneous communicative processes that participants engage in” (2004, p. 112). MIA does not assume that language is always the most expressive mode employed in communication, and it seeks to integrate the full range of embodied (e.g. gesture, posture, gaze, etc.) and disembodied (e.g. music, print, layout) modes in its analysis. While MIA is influenced by multimodal research (such as Kress, 2010), rather than focussing on the *modes* themselves as the object of analysis, MIA places its analytical attention on the *actions* that social actors perform through the use of modes. This too offers a point of similarity with CA, which also investigates actions (rather than language itself).

### 3.4 Mediated discourse analysis

Norris was a student of Ron Scollon, and MIA is a development of Scollon’s (2001) mediated discourse analysis (MDA) into a framework to analyse interactions from a multimodal perspective, by combining the central theoretical
concerns of MDA with visual research methods. MDA is a wide-ranging theoretical perspective to discourse analysis that seeks to analyze a variety of topics, such as online adoption (McIlvenny and Raudaskoski, 2005), package design (Scollon, 2008), and meaning-making in virtual environments (Lemke, 2005). MIA develops the broad theory of MDA into a more specific methodological framework that specifically investigates real-time face-to-face interactions, as well as identity.

MDA seeks to move beyond an analysis of texts to consider the actions that people take with them. It attempts to understand what is going on in social situations (Norris and Jones, 2005a), with a focus on coming to understand how humans act in society. As a framework for analyzing actions, it is guided by the questions: “what is the action going on here? and how does discourse figure into these actions?” (Scollon, 2001, p. 1).

It draws on and brings together elements of other well-established theoretical and methodological approaches (Norris and Jones, 2005a). For example, it shares with CA an interest in how social actors construct everyday life through situated social actions, and takes an ethnographic approach to discourse analysis from the ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1986).

MDA is Scollon’s attempt to “develop a theoretical remedy for discourse analysis that operates without reference to social actions on one hand, and social analysis that operates without reference to discourse on the other” (Scollon, 2001, p. 1). While CA does not look beyond the micro-context of the interaction to the wider social context, more social research (such as Bourdieu, 1977) often fails to consider the micro-context of talk. MDA is an attempt to bridge these two perspectives. As such, it addresses my concern with moving beyond the confines of CA’s narrow view of context.

MDA is also concerned with how the research process transforms the situation being studied. It is an underlying aim of MDA to affect positive social change, and the researcher and research process take an active and participatory relationship with the field under study. MDA research transforms social actions through reflection and analysis, and this is done together with the participants in the study to create new ways of doing or seeing things (Norris and Jones, 2005c).

As MDA and MIA have a broader social focus than CA, we might question how compatible they are with it. MDA rejects CA’s privileging of
conversation as a genre of discursive practice, arguing from an anthropological linguistic perspective that it is an empirical question to resolve the relationship between discourse (i.e. talk) and practice (Scollon, 2001). That is, we need to establish the role of conversation in a practice, not assume it. And, of course, MDA and MIA’s integration of a wider social analysis is an approach criticized by CA researchers (e.g. Schegloff, 1997).

However, a wider social analysis and CA can (and should) engage with and complement one another (Wetherall, 1998). Schegloff, (cited in Sahlstrom, 2011) argues that while it is not the task of CA itself to make connections between the micro level and what is presumed to exist at the wider social and cultural level, CA’s methods and findings can be used to contribute to social understandings that reach beyond the micro-context of the talk itself. This undertaking would, he argues, need to be developed outside of a CA framework (which is what I intend to do in this study). Nevile (2005) argues that CA has much to offer MDA, especially given the growing body of work, starting from Goodwin (e.g. 1980), investigating the sequential organization of modes other than talk to accomplish social actions in interaction.

MDA does not in fact prescribe a strict methodology, but rather sees itself as a set of heuristic tools that aim to guide the researcher, making room for any methods deemed useful within the focus on action (Norris and Jones, 2005c). Scollon (2001) suggests that CA might be conceived of as one tool within the MDA toolkit. MDA and MIA share with CA a focus on the micro-level of social interaction in ordinary, everyday situations. They also share a focus on the interpretive and inferential processes by which social actors strategize their own actions (Scollon, 2001). And like CA, MIA looks for interactional meaning in the responses that social actors make to the action being analysed, rather than as being an inherent feature of the language in and of itself. MIA and CA analysts also share a similar perspective in not assuming that they better understand what is going on than the participants under study.

3.5 My methodological approach

MDA provides me with a theoretical outline, which focuses on the social actions that social actors take, while from MIA I take a methodological framework designed to investigate multimodal interactions and identity. The methodological
framework will be enhanced by tools from CA, which contribute to the detailed analysis of spoken language. CA has developed a very useful technical language for describing and analyzing talk, and this is a resource that I wish to draw upon to describe and analyse the sequential, micro-context of talk in classroom interaction. But that technical language has not been developed so well to account for modes other than spoken language. I will use MIA’s analytic framework to analyze actions taken in a wide range of modes (including gaze, gesture, posture, and so on). I will also make use of MDA and MIA’s ethnographic methods of data collection to deepen my understandings, including interviews with participants (something not done in a CA analysis).

3.6 Ethnography

In attempting to move beyond the micro-context to incorporate a more social analysis, both MDA and MIA suggest ethnography as a method of data collection. In her study of identity, Norris (2011) argues that only ethnographic methods allow us to collect the breadth and depth of data necessary to understand the social environment and the identities of our participants. Researchers in language education have also called for more ethnographic studies. In advocating an ethnographic approach, Holliday (1996) argues that we must look wider than the “emicism of verbal data” (p. 234) and look at nonlanguage factors, such as social relationships and body language (here, Holliday uses *emicism* to mean a focus on verbatim data, rather than the more understanding of an emic approach used in CA that seeks to investigate the system from within). CA researchers have typically emphasized a focus on the detailed analysis of the observable aspects of an interaction, but Holliday suggests that research into English language classrooms requires ethnographies of non-verbal behavior and of curriculum design beyond the classroom. Similarly, it is argued that a multimodal approach to CA suggests that close analysis of video data needs to be complemented by ethnography, as we cannot always be sure of the meaning of participants’ behaviour from what is recorded in a video (Deppermann, 2013, p. 4).

There is a lot of work on the topic of ethnography and there is a lot of disagreement about what it actually is (Rampton et al., 2004). So, in order to maintain focus in this project, I will draw my understanding of ethnography
largely from the work of two of my more important influences: Scollon and Scollon (2001) and Sigrid Norris (2011).

Scollon and Scollon (2001) list four general processes of ethnographic research methodology. The first process is *fieldwork*. This is a general term that is used to label the process whereby the researcher goes into the place (or field) where the phenomenon naturally occurs, rather than setting up experimental laboratory conditions for the study. Following directly from the concept of fieldwork, *participant observation* is the process whereby the researcher becomes a participant in the situations that they are studying. This process highlights the way in which the researcher has a sense of personal involvement in the situation as they simultaneously distance themselves from it (Norris, 2011). Following from this, *strange making* describes the dual process of taking up a stance as both participant and observer. Participants who are familiar with a certain situation will perform actions without giving them much thought, so as observers we must *make strange* these familiar actions in order to view them as if we did not know what was going on. This process of *strange making* can be seen in the respective guiding questions of CA, MIA and MDA: “why that now?”, “how do we know?” and “what is the action going on here?”. According to Scollon and Scollon (2001) we do not only need to know what people do, but also what they might have done otherwise, and one way of discovering this is to perform a *contrastive observation* and look at the actions of people in other places or groups. They give the example of business cards, explaining that the North American practice is to give the card with one hand, whereas in some Asian cultures the dominant practice is to give the card with two hands. Using contrastive observation we are able to see both practices as *strange*.

The first three ethnographic processes described above are ideally suited to my project as I will be in the classroom conducting fieldwork as a participant observer (as the teacher of the class). It may not be possible for me to easily perform a contrastive observation across cultures, however, as my observations will come from just one classroom.

Following from the four processes, there is a wide and eclectic range of data collected in ethnographic projects, which includes (but is not restricted to) video recordings, audio recordings, photographs, field notes, diaries, materials produced by participants, interview data, and so on. One type of data outlined by Scollon and Scollon (2001) is *observer’s interactions with members* (what Norris
calls *contested data*). This involves the observer returning their observations to the group under study (Norris, 2011). This allows participants in the study to comment on the findings of the analysis, presenting opportunities to both confirm findings and find starting points for deeper understandings. One important way in which Norris presented her analysis to the participants in her study was to utilize *playback methodology*. This involved showing the participants the data pieces that had led her to a certain analysis and asking for their interpretation before giving her own. This allowed the participants to become involved in the research process, which provided the researcher with useful insights. It also allowed the participants to benefit from the researcher's analysis of their interactions. As will be explained in Section 4.7.2, I will make use of video playback in my study, in order to invite participants’ perspectives on the data.

### 3.7 Role of the researcher

Norris (2011) discusses the role of the researcher and their relationship with the field in some depth. As a participant observer conducting fieldwork, the researcher is a part of and changes the field, and is also changed themselves in some way. The researcher must open up to participants the idea that their behaviour is worth studying and must explain the research focus. It is unlikely that the participants would have thought about their interactions in quite the same way as the researcher prior to the study, and by being confronted by the research project they are likely to think about their own interactions in new ways. On this view, the researcher's role in the field is seen as being participatory, with the researcher being an agent of change. I, for example, used my research for pedagogic purposes. One way I did this was by presenting some of my findings to the participants in the project as classroom teaching materials in order to help them change their own classroom participation for the better. It was an implicit aim of this project that I would change my pedagogic practice according to the findings of the analysis.

Throughout the project, I attempted to be aware of my own role in the study. MDA is conceived of as a reflective methodology that involves interactive decision-making by the researcher (Norris and Jones, 2005c), and key to this process is the researcher coming to a clear understanding of their own relationship to the context they are studying. MDA does not therefore aim for
clinical objectivity, but rather presupposes that the researcher will have some kind of stake in what they are studying and that this stake will give rise to certain perspectives and limitations. In this project I am not only a researcher, but also a participant (i.e. the teacher of the class under study) and as such I am able to bring a certain insider perspective to analysis, but I am also limited in certain ways by my familiarity with the context, as well as my unfamiliarity with some of the cultural frames of the participants. So my position as researcher needs to be reflected upon.

3.8 Important theoretical notions

A number of concepts from the literature are central to my analysis. Although I do not make explicit reference to all of them in the analysis and discussion sections in this thesis, as they were all important in guiding me in my analysis I will introduce them below.

3.8.1 (Mediated) Action

In his CA analysis of EFL classroom interaction, Hellermann (2008) suggests that, in order to better understand how learning takes place in the classroom, we should focus in detail on the social actions that language is used to accomplish. CA researchers see language and other communicative modes as a resource for accomplishing coordinated social actions (Kasper, 2009). This means that participants in interaction do not only need to form linguistically comprehensible utterances, but that they also need to use language to perform certain, recognizable actions (Pekarek-Dohler and Pochon-Berger, 2011). From this perspective, a conversation is locally managed by participants who take turns to make a conversational move of some kind (Nofsinger, 1991). Each move is a social action. The action of accepting may be accomplished with a nod, or with any of a number of linguistic phrases following an invitation.

MDA also focuses on analyzing actions, taking the mediated action as its unit of analysis. The concept of mediated action was proposed by Wertsch (1998), who borrowed it from Vygotskyian psychology (Norris and Jones, 2005b, p. 18). This is different to the CA focus on action. Whereas CA sees language as accomplishing actions (such as the openings and closing of conversations), for MDA the mediated action is an analytical unit that comprises the social actor at
the moment of performing an action through some *mediational means* (I introduced the concept of mediational means in Section 2.1). On this view, an action is never carried out by a person alone, but always with some kind of mediational means. The action of saying “good morning”, for example, requires both the person who says the words, as well as the mode of language, and without either of these, the action would not be possible. This highlights the “irreducible tension” (Norris and Jones, 2005b, p. 17) between an action and the material means of its production, and human action and the tools and objects that mediate it are seen as intertwined (Streeck, 2011). So, from the position adopted here, the mediated action as the unit of analysis is the actor at the moment of acting with some meditational means.

A focus on *mediated action* resolves problems inherent in finding a single unit of analysis when analyzing a number of different communicative modes (Norris, 2004, 2011), as I do in this project. As different modes have different structures and materiality they provide different affordances and limitations and are governed by differing kinds of logic. This creates a challenge when attempting an integrated analysis of modes to find a single unit of analysis that allows for the structural and material differences of all the modes in the study (e.g. we can not use *word* as a unit of analysis, as postures are not made up of words), and this challenge is met with the focus on mediated action.

There are different levels of action, and researchers have described how everyday social actions are made up of series of smaller actions. For example, Barton and Hamilton (2005), writing from a *communities of practice* perspective (see Section 2.1.1), describe how work activities are made up of chains of discrete *literacy events* (signing in at work, checking emails, and so on) that can be broken down into smaller activities (such as writing on a form or reading from a screen). Preserving the *mediated action* as the unit of analysis, Norris (2004, 2011) describes the events that people engage in as *higher-level actions* (e.g. business meetings or telephone conversations) that are bracketed by an opening/closing and are made up of chains of *lower-level actions* (the smallest interactional meaning units). For example, the *higher-level action* of speaking on the telephone is made up of the *lower-level actions* of picking up the phone, dialing a number, greeting the person at the other end of the line, and so on. Each mode being used will provide its own chain of *lower-level actions*, so that a chain of gestures, a chain of spoken utterances, a chain of shifts in gaze,
etc., all occurring simultaneously will make up the higher-level action of talking on the telephone.

As well as lower-level actions produced in embodied modes, disembodied modes, such as print, image, and the layout of a room, are used for communicative purposes in interactions. Norris proposes that these modes can also be analyzed using the unit of the mediated action if they are seen as frozen actions. Frozen actions are actions that were performed at an earlier time and are represented (or frozen) in material objects in the environment.

A partly ritualized opening and closing brackets every higher-level action. Kress (2010) describes these as frames and states that they are “essential to meaning making in all modes” (p. 149) as they mark the spatial and/or temporal limits of the higher-level action or text. For example, a conversation between friends is opened (or framed) by a coming together of individuals and closed by the use of ritualized expressions of farewell and the parting of individuals. But frames do not only apply to higher-level actions, as lower-level actions are organized by pauses (Norris, 2004, p. 93). For example, head nods are bracketed by pauses while intonation units in speech are bracketed by in-breaths.

So, from the perspective adopted here, face-to-face interaction in the classroom is seen as consisting of various higher-level actions that are made up of sequences of lower-level actions. These actions are unique and have their own irreversible logic. Interactions are thus seen as progressing with their own sequential (and consequential) logic in real-time, but also as consisting of hierarchical, simultaneously produced lower-level actions. The actions that produce these social interactions in the classroom also produce what we think of as classroom teaching and learning, as well as producing identities for the social actor.

3.8.2 Modal density

MIA does not assume that language is always doing most of the communicative work in an interaction, as the situation and the social environment determine which modes are important, and this may change between or within interactions. At one moment gesture may be performing most of the communicative work, yet a moment later it may be superseded by pen and paper.
Norris (2004, 2011) proposes the concept of modal density to refer to the intensity and/or complexity of the specific modes through which a higher-level action is produced. Modal density can be achieved by the intense use of one mode, or through the complex interplay of a number of modes. A mode has high intensity when its use significantly changes the higher-level action being performed. For example, in a telephone conversation, spoken language takes on high intensity. We can say this because if one or both participants in a telephone conversation were to cease using the mode of spoken language, the action of speaking on the telephone would be significantly changed. In the case of modal complexity, a number of modes, none significantly more important than the other, work together to produce an action, so a change in one mode will not greatly affect the action being performed. Norris (2004) gives the example of a mother playing with her baby using the modes of gaze, haptics, proxemics, gesture, talk, and so on. As the modes will be complexly interrelated, none of them will be significantly more important than the others to the higher-level action of mother-child play.

One person can engage in a number of higher-level actions simultaneously. For example, a mother may supervise her children while having a conversation on the telephone. Higher-level actions performed with high modal density are attended to more by social actors than higher-level actions performed with low modal density, and by looking at what an actor is attending to the analyst can determine what is important to that actor. A mother may use high modal density when speaking on the telephone, showing that she is attending more to this higher-level action, while at the same time employing low modal density to supervise her children, showing that she is attending to this higher-level action, but less so than to the telephone conversation.

Norris (2004) developed the methodological tool of the modal density circle in order to visualize the modal density a participant employs when constructing a higher-level action. The modal density circle is a heuristic device that visualizes the multiplicity and complexity of interdependent communicative modes used in the construction of a higher-level action. Each mode employed by the social actor is represented by a circle in the diagram, with larger circles illustrating the heuristic weight that a particular mode carries for the actor.
Figure 1 shows a modal density circle that depicts a student's employment of a number of interdependent modes to construct the higher-level of action of *completing an activity in a textbook with a classmate*. Print (i.e. the textbook) takes on slightly more intensity than the other modes and high modal density is developed through the complexity of the modes.

Figure 2 illustrates the modal density of a student who is taking a peripheral role in a *classroom discussion*, but is not attending to this action (the student is more focussed on her smartphone). This student occasionally gazes at the other members of the group and is sat at the same table as them, but does not speak or gesture, and so the action takes on low modal density for her.

**3.8.3 Phenomenal concept of mind**

One challenge when analyzing multimodal interaction is the need to link an analysis of interaction to an analysis of a person’s awareness, and a multimodal interaction approach needs to consider the human mind (Norris, 2004). It is in principle impossible to understand the meaning that another attaches to his or her action (Schutz, 1932/1972, cited in Nishizaka, 1999), so following Chalmers’
(1996) theory of mind, Norris suggests focusing on the phenomenal concept of mind rather than the psychological. The psychological mind is that theoretical part of mind in which people experience thoughts and feelings, whereas the notion of the phenomenal mind is where conscious experience happens. A multimodal interaction analysis is not concerned with the (inaccessible) inner perceptions or thoughts that a person experiences, but with the perceptions and thoughts they express through the actions they take.

3.8.4 Interactional awareness

We can qualitatively analyze one part of the phenomenal aspect of mind that Norris (2004) calls interactional awareness, and we can do this by examining the ways in which individuals react to messages. Experience is dominated by the direction of our attention (Gergen, 2009) and Goffman (1974) has shown that people attend to competing simultaneous events with different levels of attention and awareness. Chafe (1974, p. 111) suggests that “one way to think of consciousness is as a narrow spotlight that can at one time be directed at only a small area of the available scene”, so while we may be able to multi-task and perform several different higher-level actions simultaneously, it is only possible for us to focus on one of these actions at a time (Norris, 2004, 2011). According to Norris, multiple simultaneously produced higher-level actions can be seen as being performed on three (heuristic) levels of attention: foreground, mid-ground, and background. Norris places these levels of attention into a continuum to highlight their fluid nature. A higher-level action with high modal density will be foregrounded, while a higher-level action with low modal density will be in the background of a person’s awareness. This represents the participant’s attention to the higher-level action, rather than its actual significance for the interaction.

Norris’ (2004, 2011) modal density foreground-background continuum allows us to visualize that an individual in interaction is engaged in simultaneous higher-level actions at varying levels of awareness. The notion of modal density (discussed above) is essential to place actions hierarchically on the continuum.

The x-axis illustrates the decreasing attention levels of a particular social actor engaged in a particular interaction, and the y-axis illustrates the amount of modal density employed. Figure 3 heuristically illustrates the importance that a particular person places on four simultaneously performed
higher-level actions at one particular moment, as determined by observing the actor’s actions and utilizing the modal density circles. The graphs are designed to function in tandem with multimodal transcripts, which are described in Section 4.8.1.

![Modal Density Foreground-Background Continuum](image)

*Figure 3. Modal density foreground-background continuum (adapted from Norris, 2004)*

While I do not make explicit reference to the concepts of modal density circles and modal density foreground-background continua in the analysis chapter, these concepts are important as I used them to analyze which higher-level actions the participants in my study were actually focussing on as they went about their business in the classroom. Where I describe a participant as being focussed on a particular action, or backgrounding another action, I have made use of these tools to arrive at that conclusion, and I feel that it is therefore important to have introduced them clearly here.

It is also important to note that the performance of a higher-level action involves the performance of a particular *identity element* (see Section 2.11.1 for an introduction to this concept), and so by foregrounding different higher-level actions a social actor will be foregrounding different identity elements. For example, a social actor may be foregrounding the higher-level action of talking to a friend in the park, while midgrounding the action of supervising their children who are playing in the park. As such, their *friend* identity element is
foregrounded, while their parent identity element is midgrounded. The analytical tools described above helped me to come to conclusions about which identities the participants in my study were foregrounding at any particular moment.

3.8.5 Semantic/pragmatic means

I make a number of explicit references to the notion of means in my analysis and discussion, and it is therefore important to understand this concept. While a social actor may take part in a number of simultaneous higher-level actions, they are only able to foreground one of them at a time. In her multimodal analysis of interactions, Norris (2004) shows how social actors use beat and deictic gestures (and other beat and deictic embodied lower-level actions, such as eyebrow flashes, head movements, foot taps, and so on) to structure the foregrounding and backgrounding of the different higher-level actions. She calls these pronounced (that is, pronounced when compared to a social actor’s “baseline style” (Tracy, 2002 p. 89)) beat and deictic type lower-level actions means to highlight this structuring function.

Individuals mark a shift in the focus of their attention by performing a means just prior to that shift, so that we can discern an individual’s shift in foregrounded higher-level action by looking at the means that they perform. For example, someone may perform a beat gesture by tapping the table they are sat at before standing up to leave (thereby changing the higher-level action they are focused on). This is similar to Robinson and Stivers’ (2001) observation that objects may serve a pragmatic function in being used to transition between activities.

Means are important for a multimodal study of identity production, as a shift in foregrounded higher-level action will often accompany a shift in foregrounded identity (Norris, 2011). Means have two structuring functions in that they simultaneously structure both meaning and interaction, or semantics and pragmatics. A means functions semantically by marking the end of a focus on a particular higher-level action, but is also visible to others and communicates to others that a shift in focus will take place. It is in this way that means have a pragmatic function in structuring interaction. This in turn may lead to a restructuring of someone else’s consciousness as they also shift focus onto another higher-level action in response to their partner’s shift.
3.8.6 Important concepts from CA

As discussed above, I will make use of tools and concepts from CA in my analysis, and below I outline some of the most important concepts.

Turn taking

Central to CA has been the way in which ordinary conversation is made up of efficient exchanges of turns. Less than 5% of speech in most contexts occurs in overlap with another speaker and gaps between turns are minimal (Seedhouse, 2004). This is true even for telephone conversations, suggesting that the turn-taking system is not reliant on nonverbal cues (Levinson, 1983). The turn-taking system appears to be a context-free system for organizing talk that facilitates the remarkable efficiency of talk-in-interaction in all languages. A study of ten languages from around the world (Stivers et al., 2009) found that all of the languages (including, importantly for this study, Japanese) display a general avoidance of overlapping talk and a minimization of silence (what is called an orientation to no-gap no-overlap).

Speakers do not often speak in complete sentences, and from a CA perspective the basic building block of talk is the turn-constructional unit (TCU). While Sacks et al.'s (1974) discussion of TCUs in their seminal paper defines TCUs as syntactic (e.g. sentential, clausal, phrasal, etc.), they also note that prosody and intonation are important for identifying TCUs. So although TCUs have been seen as semantic and linguistic units, they are a social concept rather than a linguistic one, describing an action rather than a unit of language. They are defined more with respect to the turn-taking organization of talk-in-interaction than with respect to language. Ford et al. (1996) also argue that gesture and intonation are just as important as language in determining TCUs. So, while a TCU may be a sentence, clause, or word that “can be understood as a single social action performed in a turn or sequence” (Seedhouse, 2004, p. 30), they may also be performed nonverbally (ten Have, 1999, p. 112).

Selting (1998) argues that a TCU is an intuitive notion, and as such the details involved in determining what one is are far from clear. Similarly, Ford et al. (1996) found that trying to exactly determine the basic make up of a TCU was complicated by a number of factors, as TCUs are emergent in interaction (and, therefore, cannot be predefined). They argue that the use of various semiotic
resources (e.g. syntax, prosody, gesture, and so on) rarely converge to form discrete units, but that varieties of combinations are produced and these combinations are open to manipulation as they are being built. Social actors are, however, able to recognize TCUs in interaction as complete social actions and can project when they are likely to end, and it is using this same ability to determine where a TCU has finished that analysts approach data.

A concern of CA has been to demonstrate how different speakers take turns. Participants in an interaction understand when a current speaker is likely to finish a turn with reference to transition relevance places (TRPs) that occur at the end of TCUs (that is, when a TCU is recognizably complete). These TRPs make a turn transition relevant, but not necessary. Sacks et al. (1974) provide a detailed description of the norms of the turn-taking system that governs transition of speakers at a TRP, describing three major rules for turn-taking. Rule 1 (current speaker selects next) states that the current speaker may nominate the next speaker. If the current speaker does not select a next speaker then rule 2, which states that another participant may self-select themselves as next speaker, comes into effect. If the current speaker has not nominated a next speaker and if no other participant self-selects then, according to rule 3, the current speaker may continue. It is, of course, important to remember that these rules operate more as norms that speakers perform their actions with reference to, and they may be broken to perform affiliative or disaffiliative actions. So while spoken language is generally sequentially structured, participants in interaction sometimes use overlap to show social alignment through the joint-completion of an utterance (Tannen, 1984), or as an interruption in an argument.

**Adjacency Pairs**

CA’s theory of the context-dependent, context-renewing nature of actions is typified by the concept of the *adjacency pair*. Adjacency pairs, which Heritage calls the “basic building blocks of intersubjectivity” (1984a, p. 256), consist of paired utterances usually produced by different speakers in interaction with one another. CA research describes how the production of a *first pair part* (e.g. a greeting or a question) requires the production of a reciprocal action, or a *second pair part* (e.g. a return greeting or an answer) at the earliest opportunity. This second pair part is considered to be *conditionally relevant* upon the production of the first pair part (Seedhouse, 2004).
This does not mean that a second pair part is always forthcoming, but that it is *normatively expected*. The production of a question requires an answer, and if a participant is not able to provide an answer they will often orient to the normative force of the adjacency pair sequence by accounting for the absence of an answer. For example, when a greeting is not returned its absence is noticeable and this may be judged negatively.

**Preference organization**

It is the norm for interaction to be affiliative, and there is a bias to the organization of talk that promotes the avoidance of conflict (Hertitage, 1984a). If we think of a first pair part, there are many alternative second pair parts that may be produced. For example, an invitation may be responded to with an acceptance or a rejection. The acceptance is the preferred option, as this promotes affiliation, and the rejection is dispreferred.

Pomerantz (1984) has shown how preferred and dispreferred actions are performed in different ways. A preferred action will normally be produced without hesitation, while a dispreferred action will often be accompanied by hesitation and hedging. Dispreferred actions are frequently accounted for with an explanation of some kind. By examining which actions are preferred, we can understand how the participants themselves understand the nature of the interaction that they are engaged in.

**Repair**

This is an important concept in this thesis. When trouble occurs in an interaction there are often attempts to remedy, or *repair*, the trouble (Rylander, 2009; Seedhouse, 2004). Again taking an emic perspective, trouble can be anything that participants feel is causing them problems in communication. Repair is vital in maintaining intersubjectivity between participants, as misunderstandings between social actors may cause breakdowns in communication. Repair may be *self-initiated* or *other-initiated*. If it is *self-initiated*, the speaker prompts repair of trouble occurring in their own turn. For example, a speaker who cannot remember a particular word may interrupt their ongoing turn in order to attempt to find the word. If it is *other-initiated*, somebody else prompts repair of trouble in a speaker’s turn. For example, if a speaker does not understand a word used by someone else, they may ask them to clarify the meaning. Once repair has been
initiated it should be completed, and this may be done as *self-repair* (a speaker repairs a trouble source in their own turn) or as *other-repair* (somebody else repairs a trouble source in the speaker’s turn). For example, a speaker asking for help remembering a word (self-initiated repair) may result in another speaker providing that word (other-repair). Researchers (e.g. Levinson, 1983; Schegloff et al., 1977) have described four basic types of conversational repair as follows:

1. Self-initiated self-repair
2. Self-initiated other-repair
3. Other-initiated self-repair
4. Other-initiated other-repair

In terms of preference structure, self-initiated self-repair is most preferred, while other-initiated other-repair is least preferred (Hutchby and Wooffitt, 1998).

### 3.8.7 CA and multimodality

As discussed in Section 2.10, there has been much recent interest in taking more multimodal approaches to CA, and research has shown the importance of modes other than talk or language in some of the key concepts that lie at the heart of the enterprise. For example, Heath and Luff (2013, p. 36) describe how "visible orientation, gesture and others forms of bodily conduct, feature in turn transition and turn organisation". However, the use of multimodality in CA is still a disputed topic, and there have been arguments that a multimodal approach may not easily be accommodated within a CA framework (Deppermann, 2013a, p. 2). This has led to some calls for new conceptualizations of central notions in CA, including the key concept of the turn (Stuckenbrock, 2014).

Whereas the behaviour of non-speaking participants may be absent from transcripts of talk, a multimodal approach shows that silent participants may be contributing in embodied ways (Nevile, 2015, p.136) and speaker turns are supported by embodied behaviour, such as gaze and gesture, in a joint interactional space (Deppermann, 2013b, p. 96; Keevallik, 2014, p. 103). This has potential ramifications for how we understand the very concept of a turn, as "the talk of a speaker and the silent visible displays of hearer work together to construct a turn-at-talk and the utterance emerging within it" (Goodwin, 2013, p.
Therefore, as Hayashi (2005) has argued, we should not treat turns as bounded slots that are given to one participant at a time, but should rather see them as an "unfolding, interactively sustained domain of multimodal conduct" (p. 21) for the production of action.

Some studies have responded to this challenge by extending understandings of CA concepts, such as turns-at-talk, "to include non-vocal components while still employing CA speech-oriented terminology" (Hazel et al., 2014, p. 2), and Keevallik (2014, p. 104) suggests that we should include embodied resources in the means used for turn design. However, this is not necessarily straightforward or uncontroversial. I have already discussed above (on page 83) how Norris (2004, 2011) discusses and attempts to resolve the issue of a unit of analysis in a multimodal study, as different modes operate in different ways. There is a similar issue here, as embodied displays have a different temporality to verbal displays, meaning that turns viewed from a multimodal perspective may be organized differently to regular turns (Keevallik, 2014, p. 118).

As turn construction is not only informed by sequential context, but by the simultaneous behaviour of all participants (Goodwin, 1981), this raises the issue of how CA deals with both simultaneity and sequentiality (Deppermann, 2013a, p. 3). When looking at talk by itself, an interaction may appear to consist of strictly ordered sequences of actions, but when bringing in a broader focus on a variety of modes we can see that the same interaction is multi-layered and temporalities are not always isochronic (Deppermann, 2013a, p. 3). From a multimodal perspective, several resources are used at the same time to perform an action, and an interaction can be seen as consisting of different "laminated" layers of diverse resources (Goodwin, 2013, p. 12). We have seen a similar idea in the discussion of MIA above (pages 83-4), in which a higher-level action is seen as chains of simultaneous lower-level actions in different modes.

So, multimodality challenges CA's understanding of the temporal and sequential organization of action (Mondada, 2016, p. 341), and sequentiality might not be organized "turn-at-talk after turn-at-talk, strictly successively, but rather in parallel flows of action, as emergent embodied conduct responds to a previous action and unfolds simultaneously with it" (Mondada, 2016, p. 346). Therefore, Mondada (2016, p. 346-7) argues that there is a challenge when performing a sequential analysis to account for actions initiated before the turn is
actually uttered, or for how actions can be responded to while a previous action is still being produced, and for how actions are coordinated between speakers.

3.9 Negotiation of meaning and repair from an interactionist approach to SLA

In Chapter 2, I explained that my approach is essentially sociocultural and outlined some sociocultural perspectives to language learning. However, I also noted that I would also be making use of methods associated with a more cognitive perspective to help make sense of my data. Larsen-Freeman (2002, p. 37) has argued that the debate between social and cognitive perspectives cannot be resolved, as they represent two fundamentally different ontological positions with very different understandings of learning. However, making use of both perspectives in a study, while presenting challenges, can help to provide a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation, which may serve to triangulate and enrich the findings of my more social analysis. Foster and Ohta (2005), for example, have demonstrated how applying both sociocultural and cognitive perspectives to analysis of the same data set can enrich our understandings of what is happening.

The concept of repair just discussed is taken from CA, and as such may be considered a sociocultural concept. However, cognitive approaches have also placed repair at the centre of their studies. From a cognitive perspective, Long’s (1996) interaction hypothesis posits that negotiations that occur in interactions drive language learning. More specifically, through negative feedback from an interlocuter, the learner’s attention may be directed towards discrepancies between his or her language knowledge, and the “reality” of the target language (Gass, 2003, p. 235). For example, if a learner incorrectly uses a word, and someone else points this out by initiating other-repair, then that learner may notice their mistake and subsequently learn from it. This perspective relies on the assumption that corrective feedback on learners’ non-target like language use facilitates acquisition (Hall, 2007, p. 515). The focus is on how repair, or negotiation, highlights problems with the learners’ knowledge of the language that may lead to improvement.

CA approaches to repair, on the other hand, have described in detail how participants make use of repair practices to perform classroom interactions
(Hall, 2007), for example revealing how the use of different types of repair initiation may give learners more opportunities to speak (Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 235). While CA focusses on the social actions that repair is used to achieve, cognitive SLA research has sought to quantify how much repair a certain type of talk provides, on the assumption that this repair drives language learning. In this study, although I will focus on describing how learners engage in repair practices from a CA perspective, I will also quantify the frequency in which they engage in different kinds of repair, which is a common approach in studies that adopt a cognitive perspective.

3.10 Complexity, accuracy, and fluency

I will also complement my multimodal interaction analysis with the use of a set of measures used in many cognitive studies of learners' performance in tasks. These are the measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF), which "have proved useful measures of second language performance" (Skehan, 2009, p. 510) and have been “fundamental to research in several domains of second language acquisition” (Norris and Ortega, 2009, p. 555). Researchers have used these measures to analyze interaction data, and as I have collected a large amount of classroom interaction data for this project, I am well-positioned to make use of them in my study. One reason for choosing to use CAF is that these are fundamental concepts that are used in numerous studies of learner interactions, and so allow me to draw comparisons between my study and others. Another reason, as discussed above, is that using notions from a more cognitive approach may afford different perspectives on the data.

An underlying assumption of much research that measures CAF is that communication places demands on a learner’s ability to be simultaneously complex, accurate, and fluent. The assumption is that, because attention capacity is limited, committing attentional resources to one of these aspects of proficiency will have a negative impact on the others (Skehan, 1998a). In other words, by focussing attention on accuracy (for example), a learner may sacrifice some fluency. This is known as the trade-off hypothesis.

However, all three aspects need to be developed, and this requires different kinds of attention that may be brought about by different kinds of task and task conditions. Studies have attempted to investigate this relationship, and
Peter Skehan and Pauline Foster have conducted a sequence of studies (Foster and Skehan, 1996; Skehan and Foster, 1997, 1999) that explored how tasks can be used to deliberately promote different aspects of CAF. The main pedagogical motivation of this line of research is to better understand the relationship between particular tasks (and task conditions) and language learners' performance. This can help teachers to design and choose materials in order to manipulate learners' performance and deliberately focus their attention in predictable ways (Norris and Ortega, 2009; Tavakoli and Foster, 2008). In my study, I wish to make use of CAF to find links between different interaction conditions and the qualities of the talk that these conditions produce.

However, how we define and measure the concepts of CAF is problematic and involves assumptions about the nature of language use and learning. Discussing accuracy, for example, raises questions about what is considered accurate and by whom, and also whether or not we should even expect native-like accuracy from language learners (McCarthy and Carter, 1995). In Section 4.8.2, I will discuss my use of these measures in more detail.

3.11 Learning

In this thesis I am interested in learning conditions in the classroom, and I will take a number of approaches to look at learning in the data. The first will be, following the microgenetic approach outlined in Section 2.4 (e.g. Eskildsen and Theodorsdottir, 2015; Kurhila and Kotilainen, 2017; Markee and Kunitz, 2015), to look for local instances of learning in particular interactions. This means that I will be looking for what may variously be called learning objects, learning potentials, learning behaviours, or learnables, as the participants orient to them in interactions. For example, this will include looking for specific instances of repair, negotiation, word searches, scaffolding, and so on, or moments in the data where a lexical item or syntactic structure is focussed on by the learners as new or problematic. In short, I will be looking for moments in the data where participants can visibly be seen to focus on learning. In doing so, I will be looking for links between the types of learning behaviours that can be observed, and the learners' identities and attitudes, both as displayed in the talk and as revealed in interviews.

Evnitskaya and Berger (2017, p. 71) write that “If participation in social activities is the very site where second language (L2) learning takes place, then
how, when or how often students participate become central concerns for L2 instruction and evaluation in the classroom context". In taking a microgenetic approach, I believe that I can address the how and also the when questions. However, the question of how often suggests a more quantitative approach. Therefore, I also take a quantitative approach, inspired more by cognitive and interactionist perspectives, in which I count the number of instances of certain behaviours (e.g. repair and backchanneling) in different interactions. I also quantify certain phenomena in order to analyze how complex, accurate, or fluent different interactions are. I do so on the assumption that more repair potentially provides for more learning opportunities, while frequently participating in (for example) more fluent talk will help to improve fluency. Here, I will be looking to make comparisons between different types of talk in my data in terms of the amount of repair (and so on) that they provide.

However, looking for learning opportunities in specific interactions, or describing how fluent a particular interaction is, does not necessarily provide evidence that learning is happening in the mid- to long-term. Longitudinal approaches to CA-SLA (e.g. Pekarek Doehler and Fasel Lauzon, 2015) may be able to offer stronger evidence that learning is happening, and this approach has been used to track development over time. My research is longitudinal (classroom data is collected over one university semester) and thus may provide opportunities to track changes and look for learning over a longer time frame. For example, this could include comparing two pieces of data involving the same participants performing the same practice at different moments in time, or may involve looking to see if a new word encountered in one interaction is used again in a later interaction. However, prior to beginning data collection I did not decide to focus on one type of practice or learning behaviour, and neither did I decide to focus on one particular learner. This meant that most weeks I was recording different participants, or the same participants performing different activities. So, although I collected longitudinal data, and did hope to see evidence of learning or changing practices over time, I was not necessarily confident of being able to do so.

3.12 Summary

In this chapter I have introduced some of the key concepts that underlie my methodology. I have described CA, which I use to analyse spoken language in this study. I have also introduced MIA, which provides my methodological
framework, and in particular the methods that I will use to analyze non-verbal modes of communication and the focused attention of the participants. I have also discussed MDA, which provides the theoretical underpinnings of MIA. In doing so, I have discussed how I combine a close interaction analysis with more ethnographic methods, in order to consider both the local sequential context of the interaction as well as the wider context. Finally, I discussed how I complement my sociocultural approach with methods and concepts associated with more cognitive approaches in order to enrich my understandings of what is happening.
4. METHODS

4.1 Setting and participants
One of my main motivations in doing this study was to better understand learners’ interactions in my own classrooms, and so my core setting was relatively easy to choose. At the time of beginning the study, I taught four different compulsory English courses to first-year students at an all-female Japanese university. The courses were a ‘Communication’ course, an ‘Academic Reading’ course, an ‘Academic Writing’ course, and an ‘Academic Listening’ course. My interest was in how learners perform small-group and pair interactions together, and as the course which featured the highest amount of these was the ‘Communication’ course, I selected this as the course in which to collect my data. I will introduce the course in more detail in the Context chapter.

I taught two different groups of students for the ‘Communication’ course. As well as teaching them for the ‘Communication’ course, I also taught both groups for the ‘Academic Listening’ course, which also featured a certain amount of small-group work. I therefore collected data from the ‘academic listening’ course too. The participants were the 15 members of each class (30 in total). These 30 participants had lower levels of English proficiency, scoring an average of around 400 on the TOEFL PBT test. The university used students’ TOEFL scores to stream classes, and the classes investigated in this study were ranked seventh-lowest out of the eight streams.

4.2 Ethics/consent
It is, of course, important that a project of this type is conducted ethically and with the full and informed consent of participants, and prior to collecting data I thought carefully about the ethics of my project and obtained the necessary ethical approval (see Appendix 1). In the very first class of the semester, I explained to the students in the class the nature of this project and why I was undertaking it. I explained that I was attempting to better understand how they interacted in the classroom so that I might be able to improve how classes are taught. I explained that I would preserve their anonymity when presenting findings (by using pseudonyms, for example) and that I would discuss findings
with them as the project progressed. I did this both verbally (in English) in the classroom and through written language in a document that I printed out and gave to every student (in both English and Japanese, see Appendix 2). Students were asked to read and sign consent forms (see Appendix 3), but it was also made clear to them that they should not sign the form if they did not want to and that their decision to participate or not would not affect their classwork.

Flewitt (2006) discusses informed consent in relation to exploratory ethnography, where the precise course taken by the research is unpredictable. She suggests seeing consent as something that is provisional upon the research continuing to develop within the expectation of participants. For example, Hill (2006) describes how in his research project participants gave their full consent before enrolling on the course and understanding fully what that consent meant. So as the project develops it is important that participants are aware of how this might affect their participation in the project and that they are given an opportunity to opt out. As such, I gave students the consent form one more time at the end of the semester, reminding them of what the aims of the project were, to give them another opportunity to either give their consent or not. In this way, I hoped to make sure that consent was as informed as possible.

4.3 Dual role of teacher and researcher

As the teacher of the classes, I was not only a researcher, but also a participant, and this required me to think carefully about my participation. It is important to be mindful of what Sarangi (2002) calls the participant’s paradox. This notion refers to the ways in which the presence of the participants and their expectations affect the researcher’s behaviour. Hill (2006), for example, describes the difficulties he experienced in conducting research with former colleagues and friends at an institution that he once worked at, and how he had to be responsive to their behaviour (whether to represent himself as a teacher, a researcher, a mentor, etc.).

As the teacher of the participants in this study, there was an expectation for me to teach, rather than analyze, the students. I was concerned that my research should not hinder my regular teaching practice (and, actually, I hoped that the research would benefit this practice as I gained new insights into the classroom). I was also concerned, for example, that some students would
not expect to discuss identity issues with their English teacher. So it was important for me to be reflective about my role in the project and about my relationship with the participants. One way to encourage learners to discuss identity issues with me, discussed below, was to collect data outside of the classroom, where I could to some degree focus less on my role as teacher.

Overall, I attempted to keep the classroom data collection practices as unobtrusive to my teaching practice as possible. This was helped in part by the fact that I already made video and audio recordings of students as part of my regular classroom practice (in order to assess and offer feedback on performances). It was also helped by the fact that I intended to analyze naturally occurring talk, rather than attempting a quasi-experimental approach.

4.4. Observer's paradox

The observer's paradox is the notion that it is not possible for a researcher to observe the event that they wish to observe, because their very presence changes that event (Dickinson, 2010). The observer's presence may, for example, cause participants to change their use of language. However, in this particular study, as I am the teacher of the group, we might assume that there is little need to worry about the observer's paradox as my presence in the classroom is already a part of the classroom environment and so does not change what I am hoping to observe.

There might be some concern, too, about the effect of using video cameras to record the participants, as this might also affect the ways in which they behave. However, many classroom researchers (e.g. Mercer 1991; Hill, 2006) claim that in their studies of classroom interaction the presence of a video camera was only momentarily and superficially intrusive. And, as already mentioned above, using video cameras in the classroom was already part of my pedagogical practice. However, in order to minimize disruption, I placed video cameras on the other side of the room from the participants being recorded, using the zoom function to ensure that they were recorded clearly, and I placed a microphone on the table to record the audio, usually hiding this under a piece of paper or a folder (I later combined the audio and video recordings using video-editing software). While the effect of the video camera can never be completely negated, in this way I hoped to minimize it.
4.5 Ethnographic methods

Norris (2011) argues that it is important to study social actors in many different interactions within their social networks in order to interpret their identity production in particular interactions. This requires longitudinal ethnographic data, collected in a wide variety of contexts, to gain both the depth and breadth of insight needed to make claims about a social actor’s identity production.

In this particular study, where I investigated a group of thirty participants in the classroom, it was beyond the scope of the project to do this. However, data collection was longitudinal, with videos being recorded in the classroom over one 15-week semester, and further data (such as interviews and video playback sessions) subsequently collected over a period of about one year. However, all of this data was collected on campus, and predominantly in the classroom. I was the teacher of the students participating in the study and I was concerned to primarily be a teacher for them. While I might occasionally have eaten lunch with students in the university cafeteria or met them outside of the classroom on campus (for consultations or just for conversations), and sometimes even see them outside of the campus when walking around the city, I did not feel that it would be appropriate for me, in my role as teacher, to become as involved in their lives as Norris did with the lives of the participants in her study. Norris’ study (2011) focused on two participants who she lived with while collecting data, and even became involved in one participants’ divorce case. Even if it was possible for me to collect the kind of breadth and depth of data that Norris collected for her study (and as I am analyzing the interactions of thirty participants, I do not believe that it was), I did not feel that it would be appropriate for me to do so. My interest was primarily in their classroom interactions, and not so much in their interactions outside of the university.

4.6 Mediated discourse and methodology

Mediated discourse is an inductive ethnoscience that employs a methodology that is highly contingent, as each research context is different, and the researcher must use whatever means seem appropriate when studying it (Scollon, 2001). I already had some idea of the kind of data that I wanted to collect as I started the project, but as data collection processes are seen as ongoing and contingent I adapted my data collection procedures as the project
developed (for example, I had not intended to use email exchanges to collect data, but I ended up doing so).

So, while I approached the project with a particular research interest, the approach that I took was exploratory, and the precise course that the research took was difficult to predict at the outset. For example, at the outset I had not decided if I should focus on just one or two students of particular interest, or if I should focus on a particular phenomenon in the class as a whole. The data itself helped me to make decisions about the course that the project took, so that the focus was partly contingent on the data and emerged from it. This involved an iterative process of going between video data, transcripts and notes, interview data, and my interpretations, as well as back to the literature. As salient patterns and points of interest began to suggest themselves, I could refine my research methods.

4.7 Data collection

Table 1 gives an overview of the data collected and analyzed in this project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Data collected and analyzed in this project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 hours of video/audio recordings of classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These were central to the analysis, as my interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was in classroom interaction. They were recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every week during one 15-week semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although the video and audio recordings were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made with separate machines, they were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combined using video editing software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 hours of audio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recordings of video playback sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The video playback sessions allowed me to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discuss the recordings of classroom interactions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and my analysis of them, with the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a point of contact with students outside of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom, they also allowed me to ask questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and interview participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I kept a notebook with me in all of the classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that I taught over the semester. In this notebook,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recorded aspects of the classroom interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that were being video-recorded and that were not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
being picked up by the recording equipment. I also made notes of any other behaviour of relevance to the project that was not being otherwise recorded. This included writing down verbatim comments made by students, as well as my own interpretive comments of what was happening. These notes helped with analysis of video data, or suggested themes for investigation. I also gave opportunistic informal interviews in the classroom, making notes of what participants said in the notebook.

Texts produced by students  
I collected examples of student writing to help inform my analysis.

Emails  
I asked five members of the class questions via Email exchanges.

4.7.1 Video and audio recordings

Central to the project was the analysis of video- and audio-recorded classroom interactions between small groups of learners. In total, I made about 7 hours of video recordings, which were made over a period of one 15-week semester (the first semester of Freshman classes). I made these recordings of students performing small-group interactions once a week in the ‘communication’ and ‘academic listening’ classes. As I did not have access to a large amount of recording equipment, and as I did not want the recording equipment to be too obtrusive, I brought only one video recorder and one audio recorder to each class, moving the groups around so that I could record a number of different participants in each class.

Data is always a construct (Scollon, 2001) and data collection is linked to theoretical, methodological, and analytical decisions. A video camera can only capture what it is pointed at, reflecting the interests of the researcher and leaving certain things unrecorded (Norris, 2004). My interest in this study was in the interactions that participants in the classroom had with one another. As such, I positioned and directed the camera in such a way as to record as clearly as possible the heads and bodies of the participants involved in interactions, as well
as the space immediately surrounding them. I also placed audio recorders on the desks at which participants were seated in order to ensure that what was said at the table was recorded as clearly as possible. I did not operate the camera, as I was focused on my role as teacher, so the camera was in a fixed position. I used video editing software to put the audio recording onto the video so that I could easily analyse the data.

As I was only using one video camera, I could not record different groups simultaneously performing the same activity, but as I was recording two different classes I could record different groups in different classrooms performing the same activity. In order to ensure that I recorded every student in the group, I kept a log of who had been recorded each week, and attempted to record different participants the following week. Also, twice in the semester, students took part in group discussions that were not performed simultaneously. This allowed me to record every participant in the class performing the same activity on the same day.

### 4.7.2 Video playback sessions

Throughout the semester, and for a year after it, I invited the participants in the study to watch the video data with me. All participants accepted my invitations, and the sessions took place outside of the classroom at a mutually convenient time. Initially, I invited each participant to take part in the sessions, but in the later stages of the project I narrowed my focus to five participants who had become important in the analysis (the importance of these particular participants was determined through data analysis). The sessions were usually conducted in English (and therefore also served as useful learning opportunities for the students), but participants were told they could speak in Japanese if they wished, and some did so.

Video playback sessions allowed me to present my analysis of the videos to the participants. I selected moments in the data that were of particular interest (e.g. moments that I felt helped to address my research questions, or that were typical examples of certain themes that had developed) and then showed these to the participants. Before offering my own comments, I asked the participants to comment on what they thought was happening using the following questions (the questions were derived from my research questions):
1. What is happening in the video?
2. What do you think your roles are in this interaction?
3. What do you think you were learning?

I sometimes needed to rephrase questions or prompt students who did not understand them, and I also asked more specific questions depending on the nature of the particular video clip that we were discussing.

Following this, I presented my analysis to the participants, and invited them to comment on it, sometimes confirming my analysis, and at other times challenging it. As well as allowing me to present my analysis to the participants, the sessions also allowed the participants to give me their interpretations of the data, and the sessions were important in offering new understandings of the data. Furthermore, they allowed me to better understand pieces of data that I had initially not understood (especially when participants spoke Japanese, or made reference to concepts unfamiliar to me).

These sessions afforded me an important point of contact with the participants where I was not focussed on my role as teacher. As the discussion of the video data sometimes led to a more general discussion, I was able to learn more about the participants, particularly in relation to their attitudes to English and the course that I was investigating. These discussions provided important insights and suggested themes that elaborated and expanded upon my previous interaction analysis, or else suggested new avenues of exploration, and also allowed me to develop a better relationship with the students in my classes.

4.7.3 Field notes

Video frames what is recorded and leaves a certain amount of detail outside of that frame. It was therefore necessary for me to make detailed field notes during and after each class, recording aspects of the environment that the video camera did not capture. The camera did not focus, for example, on the teacher standing at the front of the class or on interactions occurring at the doorway as students come in and out of the classroom (although these were sometimes picked up on the audio recorders). Sometimes participants spoke to students
sitting at an adjacent table who were not being recorded, so that I was not able to see these students in the video data. The field notes were invaluable when analyzing interactions in which certain actions, which became relevant to the interaction, happened off camera.

My field notes also included notes about where students chose to sit and who they chose to sit next to, their performances in classroom activities that were not recorded, and the conversations that I overheard them having. I also made notes about how a lesson progressed, the general attitude of the students, my feelings about the success of the class, and so on. Although I made lesson plans prior to each class, I often changed these in practice in response to the contingencies of the classroom, and so I also made notes about these changes in the field notes. As I analyzed the videos, I constantly made reference to my notes to help me understand what was happening, and also to help identify themes.

4.7.4 Interviews

I also conducted what I refer to as informal interviews (but may be better thought of as “research conversations”) in the classroom, which I recorded in my field notebook. These opportunistic interviews usually arose naturally from classroom interactions, and allowed me to ask participants about themes that were developing in my analysis of the classroom interactions. The insights from these interviews allowed me to confirm my previous interpretations and analysis of video data, and sometimes suggested new lines of investigation.

4.7.5 Texts produced by students

As part of the ‘communication’ course, students were sometimes asked to produce short pieces of writing, which I collected to help inform my analysis. Over the academic year, students produced four longer pieces of writing on personal topics, and this personal writing provided insights that could confirm my analysis or else suggest new themes for further investigation. They also regularly wrote short pieces of writing (e.g. 50 words about their future dreams). Again, these texts sometimes confirmed, or provided more support for, analysis of video recordings, and also suggested new themes.
4.7.6 Emails
I also kept in touch with five of the participants after the end of the course, and the emails that we exchanged allowed me to ask them further questions. These five students had all become important to the study and central to my analysis (two of them will be discussed in some detail in Section 6.6), and so I felt it was important to remain in contact with them even after the end of the initial data collection period (at which time I stopped being their teacher, and moved to another city in a different part of Japan).

4.8 Data analysis
Table 2 outlines the various stages of the data analysis. Although I made a research plan and followed it, these stages were not necessarily predetermined in the way that they are described here. Rather, I took a general inductive approach, and the precise nature of the methods developed as the project developed. This table describes what happened after the fact, rather than a plan that I made at the beginning of the project.

Table 2 The stages of data analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Collecting and analyzing video data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Referring to field notes and texts produced by students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>More detailed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
analysis of video data

allowed me to select specific moments in the video data and analyse these in more detail. This involved closely describing what was happening at certain moments in the videos, which allowed me to further identify/refine the themes I developed in the initial stages (see Appendix 5 for an example of this).

4 Video playback sessions

Once I had performed the more detailed analysis in stage 3, I arranged to meet the participants to discuss my analysis of particular moments in the data with them. The video playback sessions were audio-recorded and I also made notes in my notebook during the sessions. At times the participants in video playback sessions confirmed my analysis, and at other times they offered different interpretations. This helped me to refine my themes, and also offered new themes to investigate. I performed stages 1 to 4 in a cyclical fashion throughout the first semester.

5 Detailed interaction analysis (1)

By the end of the first semester, I had identified certain themes and participants of particular interest (in terms of addressing my research questions). At this point, I selected relevant moments in the video data for a detailed interaction analysis (performed according to the methods described in section 4.8.1).

6 Cognitive methods

As I performed the interaction analysis in stage 5, I also analyzed all of the interaction data that I had collected according to measures of CAF (see section 4.8.2) and how much negotiation of meaning (see Section 3.9) they provided. This offered me an extra layer of analysis that offered a new perspective on my data.

7 Video playback

At this stage, I had narrowed my focus of interest considerably, and approached five participants to
sessions

Following the final video playback sessions, I returned to the video data for a final analysis. This involved analyzing moments in the data that I had not yet closely analyzed, but which I thought would shed light on insights gained in the video playback sessions. It also involved going back to previously analyzed data to confirm or further develop that previous analysis. At this point, I had firmly identified the central themes that are presented in the analysis and discussion chapters.

Emails

I left the data collection site and moved to a new city after I had finished teaching the classes. In order to ask questions and to clarify issues as I started to write up my results, I maintained email contact with the five participants that I had identified in stage 7.

Writing up

At this point I began to write up my analysis. This process in itself also formed a stage of analysis. As I wrote up my findings in detail, I was able to notice new points of comparison between the different interactions that I was analyzing. I also revisited the literature at this point, and was able to form new understandings of how my study added new insights or confirmed the findings of previous studies.

Ten Have’s (1999, p. 125) “very general suggestions” for an analytic strategy for a CA project include first working through a transcript, turn-by-turn, to identify practices in terms of certain organizations (e.g. turn-taking and repair). These may be marked onto the original transcript, or else written in a separate column on the transcript. He suggests that the analyst then tries to formulate some general observations or rules that tentatively summarize what has been found. When a particular phenomenon of interest arises, the analyst can then focus on it, keeping the focus on the original organizations (e.g. turn-taking and repair)
used. This CA approach may be described as *unmotivated looking*. This means that the analyst is open to discovering phenomena, rather than looking through the data for instances of predetermined phenomena (see ten Have, pp. 120-1).

My process was in some ways similar to this. As stage 1 in Table 2 explains, I started by analyzing the video data of classroom interactions as I recorded them, going through each video (as soon as possible after recording it) and making a rough transcript of what happened. This involved describing what was happening in the interaction, focusing particularly on the interaction structure, actions performed, identities, and learning opportunities (relating to my research questions), as well as making more general notes and comments about what was happening. Following both CA and MDA’s inductive approaches, I did not code according to pre-specified categories, but allowed categories to grow out of the data, informed by my research questions and methodology. These initial notes allowed me to familiarize myself with the data and identify possible points of interest to investigate in more detail.

I used these initial transcripts and my field notes to identify themes that may be fruitful for further investigation. Once I had identified these themes, I went back to relevant moments in the video data to perform a more detailed analysis and refine my themes. This involved describing in some detail what was happening at a particular moment in the data, always keeping my research questions in mind. This more detailed analysis allowed me to explore themes I had identified, refine my ideas, and also provided new insights about what was happening. Going between my analysis, the ethnographic data, and the participants’ interpretations, particular themes began to suggest themselves as being more prominent and useful in addressing my research questions than others (I kept a notebook throughout the project where I made notes and attempted to bring my thinking together, and this notebook was important in helping to identify these themes). Once I had identified the themes of particular interest, I then performed my final detailed analysis. I did this by selecting relevant moments from the data and analysing them following the methods described below. It is this detailed analysis that forms much of what is presented in the analysis chapter.
4.8.1 Multimodal transcription

The purpose of the transcripts in this project is to describe the sequence of actions taken in time by participants in an interaction. Transcription is a process of transformation that involves reducing complex phenomena for the purpose of analysis (Flewitt, 2006), and a multimodal transcript must transform both visual and audio aspects of an interaction into a printable format. Transcription is also theory, reflecting the aims of the research and directing the research findings (Ochs, 1979). The process of transcription that I use is largely taken, as is the methodological framework, from Norris (2004).

Multimodal transcription is complicated, involving a number of steps and methods (Goodwin, 2001), and the multimodal transcription methodology described by Norris (2004) involves making multiple transcripts for any one interaction. This first involves separating the communicative modes, as far as this is analytically possible, and producing a separate transcript for each mode. Once these separate transcripts are produced, they are then combined and the final transcript displays only the most important aspects of the interaction (these relate to the focus of the project).

Norris suggests transcribing the spoken language first as it has high information value. She combines transcription conventions for CA (Sacks et al., 1974) and interactional sociolinguistics (Tannen, 1984) in her study. However, I prefer to follow CA conventions more closely in this study, partly because I have more experience with CA transcripts than with Tannen’s, but also because I make use of tools from CA. Also, much recent research into classroom interaction has taken an approach influenced by CA, so CA transcription conventions appear to be more widely used in the field (see Appendix 7 for the transcription conventions for spoken language used in this thesis).

As Nevile (2015, p. 133) notes, while CA has well-established methods for transcribing written language, there is no commonly shared format for multimodal transcripts. The standards for spoken language are based on what research has shown participants in interaction orient to (Deppermann, 2013, p. 3), and I largely follow these when transcribing talk. However, the phenomena captured in multimodal transcription depend more on what the participants in the data orient to, as well as the research questions and analytical interests of the researcher, and multimodal transcripts may be seen as a product of detailed
analysis rather than a precondition (Deppermann, 2013, p.3). Transcripts can thus reflect the participants’ and researchers’ behaviour and interests.

Many CA researchers provide screenshots of video data in their transcripts (Nevile, 2015, p. 133), and the use of screenshots is central to Norris’ (2014) approach to visual transcription. Once the spoken language is transcribed, Norris goes on to make transcripts for the other modes. Whereas many approaches to transcription have used only written language, even when representing modes other than language, Norris’ approach involves documenting actions primarily through the use of video stills. Her transcript for each mode consists of a number of screenshots that represent how each action in an interaction was performed. The use of images makes it much easier to represent certain aspects of the interaction, such as posture, in the transcript. However, certain aspects of the interaction are represented less clearly than others. It is not always possible, for example, to easily represent a small eye movement in a screenshot.

Actions performed in every mode are bracketed (Norris, 2004). That is, the lower-level actions performed in a particular mode do not occur continuously, but are bracketed by (sometimes very brief) pauses. These pauses allow us to identify chains of discrete lower-level actions performed in different modes. Making transcripts for each mode involves identifying these actions and representing them in the transcript. This involves taking screen shots of the video data at the moment a particular action begins and ends (and possibly making another at the mid-point of the action). So each action may be represented by two or three (or sometimes more) screen shots. All of these separate transcripts are assembled into a final transcript. As many actions in different modes co-occur there is often a lot of overlap in the images captured for the individual modes.

As well as taking screenshots, in order to facilitate my analysis I made tables in which I represented all of the actions performed in each communicative mode in a different column (see Appendix 6 for an example of this). These tables helped me to see more clearly the relationships that actions performed in different modes had with each other, and also how different modes and actions were related to the performance of different identities across time. On pages 94-5, I discussed the issue of sequentiality in multimodal CA research, and while I would not wish to claim that a MIA approach solves any of the problems raised,
I do believe that it is well-placed to analyze the sequential performance of chains of actions in different modes. Hopefully, by combining a CA approach with a MIA framework, I am able to see things that might otherwise have not been visible had I not combined these approaches.

Transcription systems must attend to two separate fields, in that they must accurately represent the structure of the events for analysis, but must also be as clear as possible for presentation to an audience (Goodwin, 2001). It is not possible for a transcription of video data to be completely comprehensive (Deppermann, 2013, p 3), and the transcript used in the analysis may need to be simplified to enhance readability when presented to others. The transcripts that I present in the analysis chapter of this thesis have been greatly simplified for presentation. CA authors have focussed on presenting transcripts that can help them to support claims made in the analysis (Nevile, 2015, p. 133), and I have chosen to show only those aspects of each interaction that are important for the analysis and discussion in this thesis. This means that I have greatly reduced the number of images that I present in order to save space, and have in fact presented transcripts that are somewhat different to those that I analyzed. The transcripts that can be found in the analysis chapter include CA-like transcripts of spoken language (incorporating some features of embodied behaviour - see page 116) alongside screenshots that are intended to show some of the more important aspects of what was captured in the video data, without showing too much detail in order to be more readable. An example of a transcript that I analyzed on can be seen in Appendix 6.

Norris (2004, p. 65) argues that it is “essential” in a multimodal analysis to de-emphasize spoken language, and her multimodal transcription methodology highlights visual aspects of the interaction due to the salience of the images in the final transcript. In her publications she positions the verbal in relation to other modes, representing it as waves (showing prosody, with an upward curve representing rising intonation) moving across the images. However, I feel that this creates a transcript that can be somewhat difficult to read (especially when translations into English are also required in the transcript). I also think it can sometimes be difficult to easily understand from the transcript who is speaking and in what order they speak, and phenomena described in CA research (such as overlap or latched utterances) are not always clearly represented. Because of this, in the presentation of my analysis in this
thesis, I prefer to keep the spoken transcripts separate from the images, placing what is said (and other descriptions) just below the image.

I have also decided to represent some non-verbal modes in the spoken transcripts, again in order to reduce visual clutter on the page and make the transcript easier to read. It is common for CA researchers to represent some aspects of embodied behaviour, such as "salutes" or "demonstrations", within the written transcript (Nevile, 2013, p. 133). However, transcripts that present examples such as "all right ((nods))", present problems for sequentiality that may lead to phenomena being underexplored (Nevile, 2013, p. 136). In examples such as this, it appears as though the actions were performed one after the other, whereas often this is not actually the case. At times, in order to present a simpler transcript, I do something similar, which means that I cannot always show precisely how or when a particular embodied action was performed. However, I have tried to ensure that the transcripts represent the actions recorded in the video data as closely as possible while being easy to read, and have attempted to include as much detail as is required for the particular analysis or discussion. It is also important to remember that the transcripts as presented here are not the exact transcripts on which I performed my analysis, and I believe that my analysis has been thorough. When I do need to present the reader with a more fine-tuned analysis in which the detailed ordering of embodied actions is of particular importance, I have presented figures that represent the actions more precisely, as well as providing more detailed written descriptions.

4.8.2 CAF measures

As I have already discussed, while my project is guided by a mediated discourse approach, I also made use of concepts from more cognitive approaches to SLA to help make sense of the data. I did this to provide a further layer of analysis (confirming observations made in my qualitative analysis, or providing new insights) once I had identified the themes I was interested in. Here, it is important to outline the CAF measures that I used in my study.

**Fluency**

Fluency has been defined as "the capacity to produce speech at normal rate and without interruption" (Skehan, 2009, p. 510) and "the capacity to use language in
real time, and emphasize meanings, possibly drawing on more lexicalised systems" (Skehan and Foster, 1999, p. 96). These definitions are, perhaps necessarily, a little vague. What is "normal rate", for example? However, they bring to attention that fluent speech is seen as involving controlled and smooth language production in real time. These definitions also apparently neglect more interactional features of talk. McCarthy (2010) has criticised what he calls the monologic bias of approaches to spoken fluency, arguing that fluency involves smoothness across turn boundaries. It is useful here to turn to CA research, which has shown that proficient speakers in casual conversation orient to no-gap no-overlap speaker transition (Sacks, et al. 1974). Carroll (2000), for example, has argued that gaps at speaker transitions in L2 talk can be attributed to disfluencies in the talk.

When measuring fluency, researchers have conceptualised it as: (1) break-down fluency, which involves counting unfilled pauses; (2) repair fluency, which involves counting the number of repetitions and self-corrections; and (3) speech rate, which is usually counted as the number of syllables produced in a certain unit of time (see Bosker, et al., 2013). Another common measure of fluency is dysfluency, which involves counting the number of dysfluency markers (e.g. pauses, false starts\(^1\), repetitions, self-corrections, and so on) in a given production unit (e.g. an utterance). These conceptualisations are not unproblematic, and these features of talk occur in what we might consider to be fluent L1 speech. We might want to ask, for example, what a fluent amount of syllables-per-minute is, and whether or not speaking quickly is necessarily a sign of fluency.

While I am aware of the problems inherent in these measures, I will proceed on the assumption that, generally speaking, a language learner who frequently pauses, repeats words, and speaks comparatively slowly can be judged to be less fluent than a speaker who speaks smoothly. I will first of all make use of break-down fluency, or unfilled pauses, to determine how fluent an interaction is. It is important to look at where pauses occur, as proficient speakers do frequently pause at the end of clauses (Skehan and Foster, 2008), and pauses that occur mid-clause are more likely to indicate a communicative breakdown and lack of fluency (Davies, 2003; Skehan and Foster, 2008). I

\(^1\) Utterances that are abandoned by the speaker before completion.
therefore use these as one method of measuring fluency. In keeping with my use of CA methodology, I will count the number of unfilled pauses per TCU (rather than clause). As a second measure of fluency, I will count disfluency markers. I will not include within-TCU pauses in this measure, as I am already counting them separately. However, given that proficient speakers have been shown to orient to no-gap no-overlap turn-taking practices, I will count gaps at speaker transitions as a sign of dysfluent talk. Again, I will use the TCU as the production unit against which I measure these dysfluency markers. Finally, following Foster and Skehan (1997) I will count the total amount of silence-per-minute in an interaction, as well as the number of syllables-per-minute, in order to measure speech rate.

Accuracy

Skehan and Foster (1999, p. 96) define accuracy as "the ability to avoid error in performance" as well as "the avoidance of challenging structures that might provoke error". In other words, they see accuracy as not only evidencing control over the language, but also a conservative attitude that avoids risk-taking. They measure accuracy as the number of error-free clauses produced by a speaker. In line with my use of CA, I will instead measure accuracy here as the number of accurate TCUs\(^2\) as a percentage of total TCUs.

Determining whether an utterance is error-free is not unproblematic, and often involves looking to the surrounding utterances for clarification. Also, spoken utterances do not necessarily follow the same patterns as written sentences, which are often used as a basis for determining grammatical accuracy. For example, there may be extensive use of ellipsis, pre-posing, and post-posing in spoken language that might be considered 'incorrect' in written language (McCarthy and Carter, 1995). In the following example from their spoken data, McCarthy and Carter (1995, p. 211) note how the word "pasta" is post-posed to the end of the utterance: "'cos otherwise they tend to go cold, don't they, pasta". Judging the accuracy of a spoken utterance in this project involved some interpretation of what is correct on my part.

\(^2\) While a TCU is not a grammatical construct, like a clause it is a unit of language that attempts to build up larger structures. The structural accuracy of a TCU can often be judged in itself, but may sometimes need to judged with reference to the TCUs that occur before or after it.
Complexity
Skehan (2009, p. 510) simply defines complexity as involving "more advanced language", which may include more risk-taking and less control over the language. The structural complexity of talk has most commonly been measured in one of two ways (Norris and Ortega, 2009). One is based on length, and involves dividing the number of words by a particular production unit. Ortega (2005), for example, measures complexity by counting the number of words and prepositions per utterance. The other involves subordination, and involves dividing clauses by a particular production unit. For example, Skehan and Foster (1999) measured the number of clauses per C-unit. Here, I measure complexity using subordination (the number of clauses per C-unit), as well as length (number of words per C-unit). I have opted to use C-units here as this made measuring subordination simpler. Making use of multiple measures allows me to make a 'thicker' description of what is happening.

4.9 Summary
So, to recap, in this project I took a largely exploratory and data-driven approach. This involved a moment-by-moment analysis of videos of classroom interaction, following the methodological frameworks of Multimodal Interaction Analysis and Conversation Analysis. I also collected more ethnographic data and asked participants for their own interpretations of the data in video playback sessions.

As well as this sociocultural approach, I made use of the measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency, which are associated with more cognitive research. These measures do perhaps sit somewhat uncomfortably with my more sociocultural perspective, and applying them in my analysis was not always straightforward. However, the extra layer of analysis that they add does, I feel, provide support for and triangulate claims made using my more sociocultural and qualitative methods. They also allow me to make the somewhat vague statements of my qualitative analysis (e.g. “interaction X features more silence than interaction Y”) into more concrete statements (e.g. “interaction X has on average 10 seconds of silence per minute, compared to interaction Y, which has 5 seconds of silence per minute”). And, of course, they offer another perspective that allows me to see things that I would not have been

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3 A C-unit (or communication unit) is a sub-clausal unit (e.g. a word) or simple clause and the subordinated clauses that go with it.
able to see otherwise.
5. RESEARCH CONTEXT

5.1 The university and the courses

It will be important for the reader to have some understanding of the research context. I have already explained in the previous chapter that the data for this study was collected from two different classes and two compulsory courses at a Japanese university. These courses were taught to all first year students at the university. Two years prior to the data for this project being collected, as part of a rebranding and restructuring of the university, an International College of Arts and Sciences was established, with an emphasis on developing students' English skills. This involved the creation of an Academic English Program taught mostly by non-Japanese lecturers. All first year students enrolling in the International College of Arts and Sciences were required to take the English classes, which in the first semester consisted of two 'Communication' courses, an 'Academic Listening' course, 'Academic Writing' classes, and 'Academic Reading' classes. Official literature produced by the university emphasized these classes, and the focus on “studying in English, not studying about English”.

A group of six full-time teachers, including myself, were hired and created a set of goals for these courses, as well as choosing textbooks and developing materials to help meet these goals. The following is taken from a document produced by the six teachers and is an outline of the goals for the first semester's work on the 'Communication' course (the semester in which my data was collected):

The goal of this course is to improve students' ability to use oral English in an academic setting through a variety of speaking activities that focus on developing fluency and building conversation skills. There will be an emphasis on dialogic interaction between learners, rather than on teacher-fronted classroom activities or simple displays of knowledge/language. In-class activities will focus on small-group speaking practice, and will give opportunities to practice basic phrases and expressions necessary for communication in academic settings, as well as strategies for handling communication breakdown.

A set of general goals for all semesters was also agreed upon. The goals relevant to the class in which my data was collected are as follows:
• Students will interact with classmates and teachers in an academic setting at a level typical for first-year university students
• Students will take part in unrehearsed, dialogic interactions that promote communication skills as much as accuracy
• The course will build students' fluency, enjoyment and confidence to communicate in English
• Students will develop the ability to extend oral interaction, and to manage communication difficulties and breakdown

A set of more specific language skills and strategies to focus on was also specified. Those that were relevant to my data are as follows:

• Paraphrasing
• Summarising
• Performing repair ('asking about meaning')
• Performing repair ('asking for help')
• Circumlocution
• Asking follow-up questions
• Responding to others' comments
• Using discourse markers
• Pausing and filling silence
• Describing objects
• Giving instructions
• Using English backchannels
• Using appropriate register

As can be seen, there was a focus on developing speaking skills, and in particular on improving fluency and students' ability to take part in discussions and conversations. In these classes, the teachers were generally concerned to push students towards more spontaneous, dialogic interactions and away from rehearsed performance (e.g. presentations), and there was a focus on language and strategies used in naturally-occurring conversations. There was a strong focus on fluency, extending interactions, and managing problems in interactions.
5.2 What do we mean by dialogic?

I have already discussed the concept of dialogic on pages 46-49, but as the notion of dialogic interaction is important for the courses from which the data was collected, the concept needs a little elaborating upon here. To very briefly recap what I wrote earlier, much discussion about the concept of dialogic has been influenced by thinkers such as Bakhtin (1981), who saw dialogic as involving interactions between persuasive cultural voices rather than just between people. However, many SLA researchers use the term more simply to describe interactions that occur between multiple participants, such as discussions. This is contrasted with monologic talk, which is usually seen as involving one person speaking without the immediate involvement of another person, such as often happens in a lecture. This is the most basic sense in which the monologic-dialogic distinction was used by the teachers of the 'Communication' course. The primary concern was to push learners beyond performing rehearsed spoken presentations and to give them opportunities to engage in unplanned interactive dialogues with one another.

Further, the dialogic interactions that we hoped to see in the classroom involved learners responding spontaneously to the meanings of each other's turns to build up dialogues and conversations together. These interactions should feature a chain of utterances, with each utterance giving rise to another utterance, so that what one speaker says affects what the next says. The answer to a question should not be the end of an exchange, but the start. This would mean that learners could not plan everything that they say in advance, as the course that a dialogic interaction takes should be in some way unpredictable. Learners should think in the here-and-now and deal with interactional contingencies and problems as they arise, using skills and strategies taught on the course.

5.3 Activity types from the textbook

Most of the activities used in the courses came from the Communication Spotlight textbook (Graham-Marr, 2009), as well as supplementary activities designed by teachers at the university. The following recurring activities from Communication Spotlight were used in the classes:
Warming up
These activities are used at the start of a class, prior to any new language being introduced, to help students start thinking in English. For example, they include vocabulary-sorting exercises and simple spoken activities. An example of a simple spoken activity asks the students to first of all write questions to ask other students in the class, and then to ask those questions in conversations (p. 32).

Getting the basic idea and getting details
These are two different listening activities. As the names suggest, the first asks questions about general meaning while the second focuses on details.

Practicing
These are speaking activities designed to give students an opportunity to practice language introduced in the listening activities. These vary according to the language focused on, but include picture description activities and simple discussions. These activities often had quite a high level of control. For example, the practicing activity on page 15 of the textbook tells students to "Work with a partner. Have a conversation. Follow the pattern below". The pattern shown is as follows: greeting, greeting, ask about hometown, respond, comment or question about your partner's answer, answer.

Spotlight on listening
These listening activities focus on particular "features of natural English" (p. 8). These features included weak vowels, sentence stress, and linking sounds.

Spotlight on memory
These activities ask students to try to remember dialogues that they have listened to and to practice them with a partner.

Spotlight on speaking
This section introduces speaking skills and strategies, and usually involves students reading and writing something in the textbook, as well as listening to the audio track one more time. For example, on page 49 students are asked to read two conversations. A number of speaking strategies are provided in textboxes on the side of the page, and students are asked to draw lines between
the names of the strategies and the places they are used in the conversations. Another activity (p. 24) provides an example conversation in the form of a cartoon. The cartoon is designed to draw students' attention to strategies they can use if they don't hear or understand what their partner says (e.g. using phrases such as "I beg your pardon", or strategies like repetition of a word or phrase). They are then asked to listen to the audio again to find the strategies used by the speakers.

**Trying what you've learned**

This section, similar to the *practicing* activities, is designed to allow students to practice using specific skills or strategies introduced in the textbook. An example of this is an activity (p.30) that asks each student in a pair to look at a different page showing an incomplete crossword puzzle. One student has half of the correct answers written in the crossword, the other has the other half. The words written in the crossword are everyday objects, such as *stapler* and *key*, and each student needs to describe their objects so that the other student can correctly guess the missing words. Another activity asks students to work together to write a script for a dialogue, and then to read it together (p. 17).

**Using what you've learned**

These activities are designed to be used at the end of a class. They are more open speaking activities that give students a final chance to practice using the language introduced in the book. For example, on page 17 students are asked to "have a few conversations with your classmates using the topics above. Keep each conversation going as long as possible". Another activity used in the class tells students to ask each other questions about their plans for tomorrow and for the weekend, instructing them to "listen to the answers and ask follow up questions" (p. 35).

There are also two sections that are used as homework, and so were not used in class and are not described here. The activities described above were supplemented by activities designed by the teachers of the course. For example, a series of activities asked students to work together to design and administer a simple survey of their classmates, and to then discuss the findings of the survey in small groups, while another activity asked students to design an
English-language board game for their classmates to play. What these activities had in common was that they were intended to be performed in English, they involved students working together to make some written product (e.g. the survey and the board game), and they were designed to involve students in some interactive dialogue (giving the survey and playing the board game).

5.4 Activity types in the data

As I performed my analysis I decided that it would be useful to group the activities that I had recorded in my video data into different types, so that I could notice patterns more easily and make comparisons between the different types of talk. However, the different sections of the textbook described above were not so useful in helping me to group the interactions that I was analyzing. This was because each section featured some variety in the actual activity instructions. For example, the using what you've learned activity on page 31 of the textbook asks students to describe objects to one another. As such, it has more in common with the trying what you've learned activity on page 30 (in which students need to describe objects to help each other complete a crossword) than it does with the using what you've learned activity on page 43, in which students are asked to have a discussion.

Therefore, I derived my own set of data-driven categories that helped me to group the activities in a way that made sense in my analysis. I developed these categories with reference to my analysis of turn-taking and the participants’ understandings of the activity they had been asked to do. For example, I have included two types of discussion in my categories. This is due to differences in turn-taking and other observable features of the talk, the kind of questions being discussed, and also how the participants themselves said that they understood the activities. Here I provide a brief description of each category.

Formal discussions

From the teacher's perspective, these were discussions on usually more challenging, and often less personal, topics, which included: “Women should stay at home while men go to work. Do you agree?” and “Should smoking be banned in public places?” They were intended to be more debate-like and to engage the students more in critical thinking, challenging and supporting ideas,
and so on (although, as will be discussed later, there were no actual debates, or even discussions as such, recorded in the data). They were usually performed towards the end of class, and were sometimes used for assessment purposes.

In the preceding paragraph, I described these activities in terms of how the teachers of the course understood them. However, in determining whether a specific interaction could be considered a formal discussion or not, I considered other factors as well. These included a consistent set of interactional features (described in the analysis chapter) and the participants’ own understandings of how formal the interaction is.

Informal discussions
These were discussions on often simpler, and more personal, topics. The discussions were generally intended to give students opportunities to practice language or strategies introduced in the class, or else as warming-up activities to start students speaking in English. The questions to be discussed were sometimes given by the teacher or textbook, and were sometimes created by the students themselves based on the teacher’s or textbook’s prompts. Examples of questions asked in these discussions included: “What is your favourite food?”, “What do you do in your free time?”, and “What are you going to do this weekend?”

However, it was not necessarily the topic that defined a discussion as formal or informal. For example, some groups in the study had what I refer to as a formal discussion on the topic of “What are you going to do this weekend?” The level of formality was often determined locally by the students and how they interpreted the situation. I categorized the activities in this study by both analyzing the features of the talk and also by asking the participants themselves how they had understood the activities in video-playback sessions. Both my analysis of the structural features of the interaction and the understandings of the participants allowed me to determine which interactions to classify as formal, and which to classify as informal.

I further divided informal discussions into two sub-categories: informal discussions where students responded to a common question or topic, and informal discussions where students took individual responsibility for asking a question or set of questions. An example of the former is a discussion in which a group of students all discussed the question “Which place would you most like to
“visit?”, while an example of latter required each student to individually write down some questions to ask each other (in order to find out more about each other) before they started talking.

**Information exchange**

*Information exchange* activities are designed to promote interaction between learners, as different learners have different information to share in order to complete the activity. For example, in one activity each student in a group was given a different picture that she needed to describe to the other members of her group. Based on this student’s descriptions, the other students needed to guess what the object in the picture was. In another activity, each student in a group was given different information about some cities that they needed to share with one another (this was followed by a discussion about the cities). Most often, *information exchange* activities required listeners to make notes of what the speaker was saying.

**Making sentences**
The teacher had intended these activities to be discussions in which the students used specific language presented in classroom materials to perform certain actions. Students were told to "talk together" and were given a particular language point to focus on as they spoke. For example, in one activity the students were given a handout containing examples of language used for comparing and contrasting. They were then asked to speak in pairs and compare and contrast two things using that language. However, the students rarely engaged in discussions, but quite simply used the activity to practice making sentences.

**Writing a text**
Students were sometimes asked to work together to produce a text of some kind, such as a script for a conversation.

**Reading a text**
Students were also asked to read texts together. Sometimes they needed to answer specific questions in the textbook, while at other times they were simply asked to read something and to make sure that they understood it by talking
about any points of difficulty with each other.

Now that I have hopefully given the reader a clearer idea of the research context, I will present my analysis of the data in the next chapter, starting with a detailed analysis of turn-taking practices in formal discussions.
6. ANALYSIS

I start this section with a detailed analysis of the video data, focussing in particular on turn-taking practices in small-group discussions, before examining turn-taking in other types of classroom activity. I then move on to examine students’ consciousness. In doing so, I analyse how the participants in this study are sometimes thinking more about their own upcoming turn in an interaction, rather than focussing on what the current speaker is saying, and how they are often performing more for the watching teacher rather than attempting to engage meaningfully with one another. Following this, I present my analysis of the personal interactions that certain participants began to perform later in the semester and how these differed from the regular classroom activities. Finally, I focus the analysis on two participants in particular, who took different approaches to their classroom practices. In doing so, I discuss their identities and how these relate to classroom interaction practices and learning potentials.

6.1 The structure of focal participant interactions

In performing my initial analysis of the video data recorded in the classroom, it was soon obvious that participants who were engaged in small-group discussions frequently oriented to a set of turn-taking practices very similar to those described by Hauser (2009). In his analysis of two small-group discussions, which I discuss in some detail in Section 2.12.4, Hauser described the turn-taking practices as centring on there being one “primary speaker” at a time. That is, rather than having an actual discussion in which they responded to or challenged one another, the participants organized the interaction so that they could take it in turns to give their opinions, and I noticed a very similar pattern in the small-group discussions in my data. Furthermore, as I was looking at a much larger amount of data than Hauser and investigating different kinds of discussions and activities recorded across a semester, it also became clear that something similar was happening not just in small-group discussions, but in all the English-language classroom activities that I recorded. However, while all of the interactions were characterized by one learner at-a-time taking a turn as what might be termed the 'primary speaker', in different types of activities the interactions were organized differently, and I observed variations in the
Before discussing these turn-taking practices, I would like to make a quick comment about terminology. In this thesis, rather than use the term 'primary speaker' that Hauser uses, I use the term *focal participant*. This is because the participant assuming this role becomes the focus of the work being done (in that this student is responsible for the performance of a certain action or set of actions that moves the activity towards completion), and speaking is only one of the actions that this participant is responsible for. There are, in fact, times when the *focal participant* does not do most of the speaking. The exact actions that the *focal participant* performs depend on the nature of the activity, or more precisely on how the participants understand the activity. What is important is that the participants take it in turns, one at a time, to be the *focal participant* who is responsible for these actions.

Interaction patterns associated with the performance of the *focal participant* role afforded and constrained the kinds of talk that the participants in my study could engage in (i.e. the actions that they could perform in English) and so were important for language practice and subsequent learning opportunities. The *focal participant* was not oriented to at all moments in the data, but became relevant at certain moments, and the way in which different participants made use of this role changed across the semester.

Given the prevalence of the *focal participant* in my data, and its importance to this thesis, it is necessary to give a clear description of what it is. In this section I will provide an overview of when we see the *focal participant* role oriented to and what it looks like in different kinds of activities in my data. The focus in this section is on the interaction structure, more than on learning opportunities or the participants’ identities, which will be discussed later.

### 6.1.1 When are *focal participant* practices oriented to?

Students oriented to the *focal participant* role whenever they were engaged in a pair or small-group activity where they perceived the aim of the activity to be speaking in English. In other words, when speaking primarily in English, the students performed *every* small-group student activity while focusing on the *focal participant*. As such, understanding the *focal participant* is very important for understanding the students’ experiences in this classroom.
In Chapter 5, I outline the main activity types used on the course. As mentioned above, while Hauser analyzed only small-group discussions (what I have termed *formal discussions*), I found the *focal participant* oriented to in a variety of different kinds of small-group and pair activities. All of the *focal participant* interactions in these different kinds of activities are performed according to the same basic patterns, but the exact turn-taking practices oriented to depend on the type of activity, and more specifically what work needs to be done for this activity to be considered complete.

In the following, I will describe how the *focal participant* is oriented to in the different kinds of activity. I will begin with the focus of Hauser's study, small group discussions (here *formal discussions*), providing some support for the generalizability of his findings. I will then move on to look at different activities and, building on Hauser's findings, will present an analysis that helps us to better understand how students in a Japanese EFL university class organize their English-language interactions.

### 6.1.2 Formal discussions

In the following, I present my analysis of what I call *formal discussions*, providing support for the generalizability of Hauser's findings. The learners performed these *formal discussions* on a number of occasions throughout the semester, and there was around 90 minutes of video data of this kind of activity captured for analysis. Each group consisted of three or four participants, and they organized their interactions in remarkably similar ways to the groups described in Hauser's chapter.

I present Excerpt 1 below in order to help illustrate the most salient features of *focal participant* turn-taking in *formal discussions*. I could have chosen many similar examples from the data in order to illustrate the points that I wish to make, and in some ways my choice of this precise moment in the data is arbitrary. However, one of the participants (Miki) is central to the later analysis, and this influenced my decision to present this moment from the data here. In this excerpt, the students are responding to a discussion-prompt that the teacher had printed in English on pieces of paper and given to them at the start of the activity. The prompt is: "Women should stay at home and look after children while men go to work. Do you agree?"

Transcription conventions for spoken language are provided in
Appendix 7. Following conventions for written English, the transcript should be read from left-to-right and from top-to-bottom (i.e. starting in the top-left corner, moving to the top-right corner, and then carrying on down the page). Each image represents a moment in the interaction, and the time below the image represents the time in the video-recording at which that image was taken. The images have been chosen to show the reader as many important non-verbal features of the interaction as possible, but non-verbal actions have also been included in the written transcript below each image. The written transcript below each image occurs in the period between the time that the image above it was taken and the time at which the subsequent image was taken.

All of the names used here are pseudonyms. We can see in the first screenshot, taken from 0:33 in the video, that Natsumi (in the middle of the three participants) and Kimie (on the right of the image) are gazing at each other. Miki (on the left of the image) is gazing at the desk. At the beginning of the excerpt, Natsumi is completing a turn as the focal participant, while Miki becomes the second focal participant at 0:55 (line 20).

Excerpt 1

0:33
01 N: in the future ((gaze@)) I want
to ((gaze away)) (1.5)
02
03 N: I want to: (1.0)
0:37
04 N: work.
05 ((gaze@K & nod))
06 M: ((slight nod))
07 K: (((*nod*)) (1.0)
0:40
08 N: ((gaze@desk)) (1.0) after (1.0) I
09 ((gaze@K)) (1.0)
134

0:47
10 N: **get my children.** (nod)
11 K: **un** (slight nod)
12 M: [((slight nod)) (1.0)]

0:51
13 N: **ok.**
14 [((FORWARD NOD))]

0:51
15 N: [((BACKWARD NOD))]
16 [((gaze@desk & lean forward))]
17 K: **ok ok** (nod)
18 M: **ok** (slight nod)

0:54
19 N: [((gaze@M))] **how about you?**

0:55
20 M: [((gaze right))] **un. I**
21 [((gaze@N))] **agree to you?**
22 [((gaze@desk))]
23 N: **un** (nods)
24 K: **inn** (nods)

0:58
25 M: **my mother** (1.0) **walk** [work (...)]
26 N: [((nods))]
27 M: [((and. (1.0))]
28 K: [((nods))]

1:03
29 M: **look after** [((gaze@N))]
30 [us]
31 [((slight nod)) [((gaze@desk))]
32 N: [((nods))]
33 K: [((nods)) (0.5)]

1:07
34 M: **but she is** (1.0) **SO** [((nods))]
My analysis provides the following support for Hauser’s (2009) findings.

**One participant at a time will take an extended turn as the speaker.**

The above excerpt from the data only shows part of Natsumi and Miki’s turns as *focal participant*. Natsumi’s complete turn as the *focal participant* is from 0:13 to 0:54, while Miki’s is from 0:55 to 1:39. This kind of extended turn is typical throughout the *formal discussion* data.

**As the focal participant takes her turn, the other participants perform minimal backchannel continuers that invite the focal participant to keep speaking, but do not comment on the content of the turn, and the talk is somewhat monologic.**

During their turns as *focal participant*, Natsumi and Miki are the only participants who take more than a minimal turn. The *listeners* respond to the *focal participant* with minimal backchannel nods\(^4\) and the nonlexical receipt token *un*\(^5\). These continuer-backchannels do not make any claims to a turn-at-talk, nor do they make any meaningful comment on the ideas that *focal participant* is expressing.

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\(^4\) Nods are argued to be the most frequently observed non-verbal behaviour in Japanese conversation (Miyazaki, 2010) serving multiple functions (Maynard, 1987), such as acknowledging receipt of an answer or accepting speakership (Hauser, 2009). Aoki (2011) argues that head nods in Japanese are more common when participants are gazing at one another, and complement and heighten the regulatory function of gaze by marking points where recipients’ actions are relevant and inviting immediate response (such as backchannels), as can be seen in the excerpt under analysis.

\(^5\) *Un* (or *nn* or *mm*), which translates as something like *yeah, uh huh* or *ok* in English, is a freestanding backchannel token typically used by Japanese speakers as a continuer that passes an opportunity to talk and invites the current speaker to keep speaking (Kushida, 2011). Maynard (1990) found it to be frequently used in her study of casual interactions in Japanese, as did Hauser (2009) in his study of student discussions in a Japanese university EFL class.
They mainly serve to demonstrate that the listeners are listening and that the focal participant may keep speaking⁶. It is only when the focal participant makes a claim to have finished that another participant will take a full turn-at-talk, as is discussed below.

This means that the talk is somewhat monologic. Each focal participant turn generally does not challenge or support the meaning of previous focal participants’ turns, but is rather a direct response to the prompt given by the teacher, and talk is not dialogically developed. In the excerpt above, although Miki says “I agree to you” in lines 20-21, what she is indicating is that like Natsumi she will disagree with the statement given to them by the teacher. She is not specifically responding to anything that Natsumi has said, such as Natsumi saying that she wants to work after she has children, and in fact Miki’s focal participant turn was planned prior to Natsumi completing her turn. This analysis will be returned to and further supported in the section on ‘consciousness’ below.

**Interactional work is undertaken to negotiate who the subsequent focal participant will be.**

Throughout the data, I have found support for Hauser’s finding that a change of focal participant involves three stages: (1) the focal participant claims to have finished their turn; (2) the subsequent focal participant is nominated; and (3) the subsequent focal participant accepts her turn. In line 14 in the above excerpt, after a couple of seconds of gazing at Kimie in silence, Natsumi says “ok” and then performs a pronounced nod. This fits Hauser's description of a "claim", providing support for his finding that the first stage in a change of focal participant is for the current focal participant to make a claim to have finished. Natsumi then shifts her posture forwards, gazes towards Miki, and verbally nominates Miki as the next primary speaker by saying “how about you?” This is the second stage described by Hauser. Finally, Miki accepts her turn as focal participant in line 20 by uttering “un” and shifting her gaze and posture, which is the third stage. Although this is perhaps not the most overt or complex example of the negotiation of an exchange of focal participant that occurs in my data, the

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⁶ Stivers (2008) argues that head nods are often used to provide social affiliation and that vocalized response tokens (such as un) demonstrate an alignment to the structure of the interaction. By nodding and producing minimal verbal response tokens the hearers are building and maintaining social links with the speaker, demonstrating that they are listening and inviting the speaker to continue with their turn.
three stages are still evident.

The focal participant role is passed around the table, in the direction established by the first change of speakers, so that the order of turns is predictable.

Prior to the beginning of Excerpt 1, Kimie had read the teacher's prompt out loud and Natsumi had then selected herself to be the first focal participant to respond to it, thus establishing the direction in which turns are passed around the table. Miki is the subsequent focal participant, followed by Kimie. Throughout their interaction the focal participant turns are passed anti-clockwise around the table to the participant sitting next to the current focal participant. This is common across the data collected for my study, offering support for Hauser's finding.

Further evidence for the predictability of this turn-taking pattern is seen when the expected pattern is deviated from, as in the following short excerpt of another group performing a formal discussion. We are primarily focusing on two of the participants: Hiromi, who is sat on the left closest to the camera, and Kazuna, who is sat on the right of the table furthest away from the camera.

Excerpt 2

This excerpt starts as the participants are still reading the prompt and before anyone has taken a focal participant turn. In line 1, Kazuna has just finished silently reading the prompt and says “what do you think this topic” while the other three participants gaze at their own sheets. She then nominates Hiromi, who responds by sitting upright and exclaiming “oh” in a loud voice, indicating that she is surprised at being nominated first. All of the other participants then laugh. Hiromi’s surprise at being nominated to speak stems from her expectation that a
participant sat directly to Kazuna’s left or right would be selected to speak next.

**Each participant must be focal participant at least once.**
Throughout my data it is clear that each participant must perform the *focal participant* role at least once in each activity, and any student who passed up her *focal participant* turn was subject to interactional work (i.e. repair in CA terms) from the rest of the group to make sure that she did eventually take it.

**There is not only a 'primary speaker', but also a 'primary listener'.**
While the previous points have all provided support for Hauser’s analysis, something that he did not apparently note is that the current *focal participant* will gaze most often at the previous *focal participant*, directing her utterances towards her. There is, therefore, what may be called a *primary listener* role, which is also passed around the table. As the previous *focal participant* also gazes back at the current *focal participant* an "eye-to eye ecological huddle" (Goffman, 1963, p. 95) is created between them that places other participants outside of the focus of the interaction.

Looking back at Excerpt 1, we can see that during Natsumi’s turn as *focal participant*, Kimie gazes continuously at Natsumi. Natsumi often looks away from Kimie, but gazes towards her (and not Miki) at the end of each TCU, which is common behavior for a speaker taking a longer turn (Argyle and Dean, 1965; Kendon, 1967). Kendon (1967) notes that speakers gaze at the person they are speaking to, while Norris (2004) argues that direction of gaze is an important indicator of a social actor’s focus of attention, and Natsumi is here directing her turn towards Kimie.

Miki, on the other hand, is gazing at the prompt written on the piece of paper on the desk, demonstrating that this is her focus. So, although Miki does participate in the interaction (by backchannelling), she is outside of the “ecological huddle” established between Natsumi and Kimie. As we will see later, this is important as Miki mid-grounds the ongoing interaction and foregrounds her own upcoming turn as *focal participant*. This means that Miki is not fully engaged with what Natsumi is saying.
6.1.3 Making sentences activities

In the previous section, I presented an excerpt from a formal discussion to illustrate how my analysis supports and adds to Hauser’s (2009) analysis of turn-taking practices in small-group discussions, focussing in particular on how the focal participant role is passed around the table. In this section, I will explicate how another type of activity, which I have called making sentences, also follows focal participant practices. For the most part, these practices are very similar to those described by Hauser (2009) and in the section on formal discussions above. However, there were two important differences.

The focal participant turns were generally shorter than those in the formal discussions.

In the formal discussions the students expected to give their opinion in response to a prompt given to them by the teacher. In order to do this, they oriented to a need to justify or explain their opinions and so focal participant turns were quite long. In the making sentences activities, the students were instructed to use the language in the book to perform a specific action (e.g. compare and contrast two things) while taking part in discussions with each other. Once a focal participant had produced a turn that performed the specified action (such as compare and contrast two things), her turn was considered adequate and the focal participant role was passed around the table. This meant that focal participant turns were often shorter and less complex than in the formal discussions, as they could often be completed in one sentence.

Excerpt 3

Excerpt 3, which is on page 140, is from a transcript of Miki taking part in a making sentences activity with Yoko. It provides an example of these shorter focal participant turns. The lesson that this excerpt is taken from was focussed on making comparisons. The students had been asked to talk about the similarities and differences between two things, and Miki and Yoko had selected Japanese and American food as their topic. Miki is sat with her back towards the camera, facing Yoko. Although there are only two participants, and so the order in which focal participant turns are passed around the table does not need to be negotiated, we can still see that this is a focal participant interaction.
At the start of the excerpt, Yoko is taking a turn as the *focal participant*, with Miki providing backchannels (in lines 04, 08 and 10). Once Yoko has completed an utterance that compares or contrasts Japanese and American food in some way, which she does in line 7, she has fulfilled her obligations as the *focal participant*. She then makes a claim to have finished by nodding and leaning forward (line 9), which are actions commonly performed at the end of a *focal participant* turn. Miki then takes a turn as *focal participant*, producing an utterance contrasting Japanese and American food, with Yoko providing backchannels (in line 14).

The transfer of *focal participant* is not performed smoothly here, as Miki had not been focused on listening to Yoko’s turn, but rather on thinking about what to say in her own upcoming turn. This meant that she initially missed her chance to start her turn and Yoko began to take another turn as *focal participant* in line 11. Miki and Yoko go on to exchange *focal participant* turns for the next two minutes.

As with the *formal discussions*, talk was not dialogically developed and each *focal participant* turn was a standalone utterance that responded directly to the teacher’s instructions. The following excerpt (in order to simplify the data, I do not provide images here) provides a further example of this. The participants in this interaction are Nanako, Chie, and Aya.
Excerpt 4

01 N: it is rude to speak loudly in cinema
02 C: [((nodding)) nn nn nn nn
03 N: [((nods, shifts posture, gazes@A)) (1.0)
04 C: ((gazes@A)) hai dozo
05 A: ((gazing@text)) hee? ((shifts posture)) (4.0) it is
06 not okay ((gazes@N))
07 N: ((nods)) un
08 C: ((nods)) un
09 A: write personal information in internet

This time the interaction is between three participants, who the teacher had asked to have a conversation in which they talked about appropriate and inappropriate behavior in different situations, making use of language presented in the textbook. In line 1, Nanako takes a turn as focal participant to give an example of something that she considers to be inappropriate behavior. She then makes a claim to have finished by nodding and shifting posture (line 3). There is then some negotiation of the next focal participant, with Nanako nodding, shifting posture and then gazing at Aya in line 3, before Chie gazes at Aya and says “hai dozo” (a Japanese phrase which may be translated as “go ahead”) in line 4. Aya was a passive member of this group and she was reluctant to speak. In line 5, she reluctantly accepts the turn (saying hee and then pausing before beginning her turn), which she completes in line 8. This illustrates how focal participant practices ensure that all members speak, even when they may be reluctant to do so. As we can see, the focal participant turns are short, as they reach completion once the focal participant has given an example of appropriate or inappropriate behavior, and Aya’s focal participant turn does not respond to the meaning of Nanako’s turn, so dialogic talk is not developed.

The non-focal participants take a more active, but still limited, role.
In the formal discussions, the non-focal participants only provided minimal backchannel continuers that allowed the focal participant to keep speaking. Even when the focal participant had problems producing her turn and sought help, the non-focal participants almost never contributed anything. However, this was not the case in the making sentences activities. In these activities, the non-focal participants would sometimes help the focal participant by joining her

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7 Hee is a ubiquitous non-lexical response token that is hard to translate, but has been glossed as “wow”, “geez”, and “golly” (Tanaka, 2013). It might here be taken to show that this task is difficult for Aya.
in a word search when she was having trouble producing her turn, but they would only do so once the focal participant had sought help in someway (e.g. by asking directly, by using gaze to elicit help, etc.). It was more likely for the previous focal participant (the primary listener) to provide this help than another member of the group. In the making sentences activities, the focal participant’s duty is to think of an example sentence that meets the activity’s brief (e.g. compare or contrast two things), but once she has an idea for that sentence she may seek help finding the best words to express it.

6.1.4 Informal discussions

As explained on pages 126-7, I have divided informal discussions into two types. The first involved the students in discussing a shared topic or question, such as “What place would you most like to visit?” These interactions mostly followed the same turn-taking practices as the formal discussions. However, as with making sentences activities, focal participant turns were often shorter and non-focal participants played a more active role in the interaction. As well as joining in word searches, non-focal participants would also sometimes prompt a focal participant to justify something that she had said by asking her “why?” Often, the instructions for a discussion explicitly told students to give reasons, and asking “why?” demonstrated that the focal participant turn was not adequate in meeting the activity’s requirements. Beyond this there was usually very little engagement with the meaning of the focal participant’s turn. That is, there was rarely any actual “discussion”, and the “why?” was performed to prompt the focal participant to complete her duty, rather than for genuinely communicative reasons.

The other type of informal discussion involved each student taking individual responsibility for asking a question or set of questions to the rest of the group. In these interactions, each focal participant turn was not an opportunity to give a response to a question being discussed by all participants. Instead, the focal participant was required to ask a question, or some questions, to the other students. This meant that these interactions were not characterized by a focal participant taking an extended turn with non-focal participant being passive. Instead, non-focal participants were required to contribute more to the talk by answering the focal participant’s question(s). The focal participant elicited their
responses similarly to the way in which focal participant turns are passed around the table (that is, one student at a time, around the table in a clockwise or anti-clockwise fashion).

This is illustrated in following excerpt, taken from the first class of the semester, in which the teacher had instructed the students to "have a discussion in English to get to know each other". Prior to the discussion, they had been given two minutes in which to think of questions that they would like to ask the other members of their group.

Excerpt 5

This excerpt shows part of Miki's turn as the focal participant. Miki is sat on the right of the image, wearing a dark top, Chinami is sat in the centre of the image and Nanako is on the left. Once they have finished preparing themselves to start the discussion, Chinami selects Miki as the first focal participant in line 1. She does this by inviting Miki to ask her a question, an action she performs by gesturing towards herself while saying "please" and gazing at Miki. This
demonstrates that the main responsibility of the focal participant is to ask questions to the other participants, and demonstrates how these learners are concerned with the order of turn-taking.

Miki then shifts her posture forwards and backwards. In the preceding sections, I have referred to Hauser's (2009) finding that a focal participant makes a “claim” to have finished at the end of her turn, or that she may shift position or nod when claiming a focal participant turn. Following Norris’ (2004, 2011) framework, these “claims” may be seen as means (see Section 3.8.5) that indicate a shift in the focus of the participants’ attention as she moves out of the focal participant role. Miki’s posture shift may be seen as a means demonstrating her acceptance of the focal participant role. Miki first asks her question to Chinami in line 3. Once Chinami has answered her question in line 4, Miki makes no attempt to respond to the content of that answer (e.g. by making a comment about Exile, or by asking Chinami another question) and instead nominates Nanako to answer the question in line 7, gesturing towards her and speaking in Japanese. Miki and Chinami receipt Nanako's turn with minimal backchannels in lines 11-12, but again the topic is not developed further.

Rather than developing the talk, all three participants then gaze down at the desk in line 13 (shown in the final screenshot), which indicates that this phase of the interaction (i.e. Miki's first question) is complete. Miki does not take a turn to answer her own question, but instead gains permission from Chinami to ask her next question in lines 16-17. After Miki says her next question, she again first nominates Chinami and then Nanako to answer it. After Nanako finishes answering Miki’s second question, Miki says “finished” with a sweeping gesture, which is a claim to have finished her turn as focal participant. The sweeping gesture communicates clearly that this phase of the interaction is complete, and that they should move on to the next phase. Chinami nominated Miki to be the first focal participant, establishing that focal participant turns would be passed clockwise around the table (the turn passed from Chinami, who was nominating, to Miki who was receiving). Following this order, Nanako takes the next turn as focal participant and asks her two questions to Chinami and Miki.

Once each of the students has been focal participant once, and therefore completed their duties (as they understand them) as students in this activity, Chinami says “finish” and they disengage from the interaction and sit in silence. Participants in this study often say “finish” (or something similar) once
each member of the group has completed a turn as *focal participant*, which demonstrates that focal participant interactions have a pre-determined end-point that is reached once every participant in the talk has completed at least one turn as *focal participant*. Once they have "finished" their interaction, some groups sit in silence, others talk in Japanese, others review their notes, and later in the semester others go on to have *personal* interactions in English (see Section 6.4). This demonstrates how, when performing spoken classroom activities in English, they are not engaged in meaningful, open-ended interactions, but are taking it in turns to fulfill their duties as *focal participant*.

So, rather than taking an extended turn as primary speaker to deliver her response to a discussion question, the *focal participant* here is responsible for eliciting a response to her questions from the *non-focal participants*. The spoken interaction consists almost entirely of question and answer pairs, and there is no need for the *focal participant* to answer her own questions.

### 6.1.5 Information exchange activities

Unlike discussions and *making sentences* activities, *information exchanges* usually had clearer roles built into the activity instructions. For example, whereas discussions have potentially quite an open structure, in *information exchange* activities one student would be required to give certain information to another student, and this would be clearly specified in the instructions. Even so, *information exchange* activities also generally followed the interaction practices described by Hauser (2009) and in the section on *formal discussions* above (i.e. one student at a time was *focal participant*, *focal participant* turns were passed around the table, etc.). However, as with *making sentences* activities and *informal discussions*, *non-focal participants* were more active.

However, the *non-focal participant* did not take a very active role. Instead, in these activities it was the *focal participant*’s responsibility to take a turn that gave some information to the *non-focal participants*. Excerpt 6 shows three participants performing an *information exchange* activity. Hitomi, on the left on the screenshot, has a picture with some missing elements. The other two participants (Rumi, on the right of the image, and Kimie who is sat just out of shot to the right of Rumi) have the complete picture and are taking it in turns to be the *focal participant* who describes elements of the image to Hitomi.
In lines 1 and 3, Rumi takes a short turn as *focal participant* to describe an element of the image to Hitomi. In line 4, Hitomi performs a confirmation check by repeating the final part of Rumi’s turn. In line 7, at the same time as Hitomi says “ok” and starts to draw, Rumi makes a claim to have finished by shifting posture, gazing at Kimie and nodding. Rumi has given some information about an element of the picture to Hitomi, and so has fulfilled her duty as *focal participant*. Once Hitomi has finished adding the element to her picture in line 8, Kimie takes the next turn as *focal participant*. *Focal participant* turns were exchanged between Rumi and Kimie in this way for four minutes. Although Rumi and Kimie had the same information, they did not attempt to work together to give information, but rather took individual turns in which they produced utterances unaided.

The range of actions taken by *non-focal participants* was limited. In *making sentences* activities, the focus was on making example sentences, and *non-focal participants* sometimes supported the *focal participant* in making an utterance by helping her to find suitable English words once she had sought help. This did not happen so frequently in *information exchange* activities. Instead, the focus here is on the exchange of information, so *non-focal participants* were more likely to perform confirmation checks (e.g. lines 4 and 12 above), most often to confirm something that they had already understood in the *focal participant’s* turn (confirmation checks were not so common in *making sentences* activities).

However, while they occasionally performed confirmation checks, they
rarely negotiated meaning beyond this. We can see in the above excerpt that Hitomi does not ask any questions to Rumi or Kimie to get detailed information about the elements of the image (such as the type of dog, the size of the plane, the direction in which the plane is travelling, and so on). It was also very unlikely that any participant would attempt to correct another student’s mistakes. For example, in one interaction, a focal participant was describing an image for two non-focal participants to draw. When one of the non-focal participants drew the wrong image, which was clearly seen by the other participants, neither of them attempted to correct her. Only once the activity was finished did anyone mention this mistake. And if a non-focal participant did not understand a word used by the focal participant, they did not usually attempt to ask about the meaning of this word. Confirmation checks most often focused on words that they already knew, but wished to confirm that they had correctly heard.

Occasionally, non-focal participants would ask the focal participant questions if the activity specified. For example, one information exchange activity told students to ask each other questions, such as “What is the population of (Turkey)?”, and the focal participant gave information in response to these prompts. However, it was not usually necessary for non-focal participants to ask questions, as focal participants often simply gave the information that was needed without being asked. They could do this because these activities often involved incomplete images or tables from which focal participants could easily infer what information they were required to give. For example, in one activity students were given tables that contained information about different cities to exchange with each other, and each focal participant gave the information in her table without being asked any questions.

So, in information exchange activities, students oriented to the need for the focal participant to take a turn that gave some information to the non-focal participants, and also for the non-focal participants to somehow record this information. Non-focal participants played a greater role than in the formal discussions, as they sometimes asked questions and occasionally attempted to perform confirmation checks. However, there were few attempts to negotiate meaning beyond this. And on the occasions they did ask questions, it was not usually for genuinely communicative reasons (this is because, had they not asked the questions, they would have usually received the same information from the focal participant anyway, as the structure of the activity most often
made clear what information the focal participant needed to give).

So, dialogic talk in which students negotiated meaning together was not developed, but this can be partly attributed to the design of the activities, which assigned quite clear roles to the students. There were, however, some information exchange activities that the teacher had specifically hoped would promote more dialogic talk. In fact, the teacher had not intended these particular activities to be information exchanges, but rather discussions. In one of these activities, the teacher gave the students ‘personal information forms’, and told them to have a discussion with another student, filling in the form as they did so. However, rather than have a discussion, the students passed focal participant turns around the table to meet the aim of exchanging only the information contained in the form. There was even no need to ask questions, as it was clear from the form what information was needed. The form played a large role in turning a discussion into an information exchange, as students focused on fulfilling the requirement of completing the form, rather than having a discussion.

6.1.6 Summary: what is the focal participant role?

I would argue that what Hauser (2009) was describing in his chapter was a particular instantiation of a more general set of behaviours for organizing English-language interactions in classroom activities. These centre on the facilitation of one student-at-a-time being the focal participant, who is responsible for the performance of an action or set of actions that help to achieve the aims of the activity as they are perceived by the students. The following offers a summary of the focal participant interactions, based on the above analysis.

The focal participant is a role passed almost literally around the table during an activity in which the perceived focus is on speaking in English. As the focal participant role is exchanged, participants perform means (Norris, 2004), such as pronounced head nods, postural shifts, gestures, and spoken utterances like “ok” or “finished”. They also most often engage in some negotiation to select the next focal participant (despite the order of turn-taking being predictable).
Each participant must assume the focal participant role at least once, and is responsible for the performance of an action or set of actions that satisfy the activity's brief (as it is understood by the participants) while doing so.

The way in which the students perform the activity depends on how they understand the brief. So, by looking at what the focal participant does, we get a good understanding of how the students have understood the nature of the activity. For example, in the formal discussions, the students understood the brief to be for each of them to give their opinion on a certain topic. In these interactions, the focal participant turns focussed on responding to the teacher-assigned prompt. In informal discussions in which each student takes responsibility for asking some questions, the students orient to the need for each participant to ask their questions to all of the other participants. The focal participant is responsible for eliciting answers from each of the other students, but they do not need to comment on the other students' responses. In none of these focal participant activities does any group orient to the aim of "having a discussion" or developing dialogic talk.

Depending on the activity, the non-focal participants also have varying duties, which support the production of focal participant's turn.

What the non-focal participants do also depends on how the participants interpret the brief. In formal discussions, for example, they provide continuers backchannels that allow the focal participant to keep speaking, but they do not provide repair or attempt to negotiate meaning. In the informal discussions in which each student takes responsibility for asking certain questions, it is the duty of non-focal participants to provide responses to the focal participant's questions. In the making sentences activities, however, they sometimes participate in word searches that help the focal participant to find a particular lexical item so that she can successfully complete her turn.

In all of these activities, the non-focal participants provide the focal participant with support in meeting the perceived aim of the activity (e.g. giving an opinion in a classroom discussion, producing an English utterance, asking questions, or giving information).
**Dialogic talk is not developed.**

Even when the non-focal participants do take a more active role, the range of actions that they perform is limited. They do not (or very rarely) attempt to develop the talk or pass comment on the meaning of the focal participant’s turn. Nor does the current focal participant’s turn build on or otherwise engage with the meaning of previous focal participant turns (other than the occasional “I agree with you”). Each focal participant turn can most often be seen as a standalone utterance, or set of utterances, that attempts to fulfill the perceived aims of the activity (e.g. giving an opinion in response to a teacher-assigned question) without genuinely engaging with the preceding talk. Further to this, focal participant interactions often reach recognizable end-points once every student has been focal participant at least once. At these points, some students may take another focal participant turn, but often participants will make verbal claims to have “finished” before disengaging from the interaction completely.

So focal participant turns are fairly monologic. They are also monologic to different degrees, with the formal discussions being the most monologic. On the other hand, informal discussions are less monologic as participants ask each other questions, but talk is constrained and is not developed beyond the performance of simple question-answer pairs, so it is difficult to call these “dialogic” interactions (in the sense described in the Context chapter).

**6.1.7 When do students not orient to the focal participant role?**

Students did not initially perform focal participant interactions when engaged in small-group activities where they perceived the focus to be primarily on reading or writing a text, rather than on speaking in English.

Although the teacher always instructed students to "work together in English", they worked in Japanese when performing these activities (although this changes for some participants as the semester progresses, see section 6.4). For the most part, the English that was spoken tended to be a phrase that was nominated to be written down (in a writing activity) or else a word or phrase to be discussed in Japanese (in a reading activity). That is, English was not used to speak to other participant for genuine communicative purposes. It was, rather, an object to be worked with in a Japanese interaction.

Unlike the focal participant interactions, turn-taking was quite free and
there was shared ownership of ideas as students worked together to either make or make sense of a text. However, this meant that certain students dominated interactions at the expense of others and there was no practice of interactional English. The students were not using English to work together, and one of the guiding principles of the curriculum ("Studying in English, not studying about English") was not being followed.

6.1.8 Focal participant: conclusion

In short, the focal participant role allows each student to efficiently take a turn at performing the perceived task. That is, students take it in turns to fulfill what they perceive to be the aim of the activity, becoming the focal participant when they do so. The exact nature of the activity (or more precisely, how the students interpret the activity) affects how turn-taking is structured. The non-focal participants’ contributions support the production of the focal participant’s turn (and at times even force a focal participant turn on someone who is reluctant to take it), and also vary according to the nature of the activity. Once the minimum requirements of the activity have been met, the focal participant turn can be concluded and further talk is not developed. So, students are not focussed on actually talking to one another, but on taking a turn as focal participant (i.e. producing their student identities and fulfilling their classroom duties). In this sense, the interactions are not dialogic.

6.2 Focal participant and consciousness

In this section, I wish to move on from the CA analysis of turn-taking and make more use of concepts from MIA. Using a MIA framework (Norris, 2004, 2011) allows us to consider not only the turn-taking structure of interactions, but to go beyond this and consider the participants’ consciousness. This allows us to see that in the focal participant interactions the students are not really focused on engaging meaningfully with one another, but are instead performing for the teacher, and that their utterances are not always spontaneous, but are often rehearsed mentally while another student is talking. This means that they are often not working towards some important course aims (e.g. "students will take part in unrehearsed, dialogic interactions").
6.2.1 Foregrounding an upcoming turn (a dual focus on listening and thinking)

In Excerpt 1 above, we can see that Miki is not completely focused on listening to Natsumi. She gazes at a question sheet on the table throughout Natsumi’s turn and places her right hand on her mouth (in a ‘thinking’ pose) with her left hand touching the question-sheet that is closest to her. These lower-level actions produce the higher-level action of thinking about the question. Her thinking action takes on high modal density (Norris, 2004, 2011, see pages 84-6) here and is therefore foregrounded in her consciousness, while she mid-grounds the action of listening to Natsumi.

Miki confirmed this when watching the interaction in a video-playback session. She commented that her attention was split between listening to what Natsumi was saying and thinking about her own upcoming turn, and her primary concern was with the prompt given to her by the teacher and how she would respond to it. Although Miki obviously paid some attention to Natsumi’s turn (she says "I agree to you" at the start of her turn as focal participant), she was more concerned with having to perform her own response to the prompt than she was with listening to and interacting with Natsumi. So, as Natsumi speaks, Miki plans what she will say in her own upcoming turn as focal participant and she is foregrounding the action of, in her own words, “thinking about my comment”. Non-focal participants frequently foregrounded their own upcoming turns, rather than listening to the focal participant.

Miki is allowed to take this passive role due to the participants' expectations about the role of the non-focal participants in a classroom discussion, such as this one, and the predictable nature of the turn-taking (this is not a situation where it is expected that anyone could speak next). This demonstrates that there is little focus on developing talk, but rather on performing for the teacher in a pre-allotted slot. The students do not expect to respond to what each other says, but rather to produce a turn that directly addresses the prompt set by the teacher.

The orientation to the focal participant divides the interaction into smaller parts, each part consisting of one student’s turn as focal participant. At transition points between these different parts of the interaction, as discussed above, we see participants performing a number of actions that both facilitate
this change and indicate that it is occurring. These actions function as what Norris (2004, 2011) calls *means*.

Norris (2004, 2011) argues that *means* facilitate the organization of higher-level actions in the performer’s mind, and also indicate a shift in foregrounded higher-level action to the other participants. In Excerpt 1, which is presented on pages 133-135, Natsumi finishes her turn as focal participant in line 10. She then makes a claim to have finished (“ok” in line 13) before performing a pronounced nod, first moving her head downward towards the desk and then moving it back up quickly to a position that is further back than its original position. This elaborate nod is accompanied by a beat gesture with her right hand. These actions (the uttering of “ok”, the pronounced nod and the beat gesture) are a *means* that indicate an upcoming change in higher-level action from *speaking* to *listening*. They are shown in Figure 4 below.

![Figure 4. Natsumi’s means](image)

We can say this is a *means* as Natsumi shifts the focus of her awareness from one foregrounded action (*responding to the prompt*) to another (*listening to Miki*) after performing the *means*. This also affects a shift in role as she changes from
being the focal participant to being a non-focal participant, and also causes Miki to shift from foregrounding the higher-level action of thinking about the question to foregrounding the higher-level action of responding to the question as the focal participant.

We do not see these means performed so often as different speakers take turns in conversations, where there is less of a division between speaking and hearing roles and participants engage more with the meaning of each other’s turns. So, rather than the performance of this discussion activity involving the participants focussing on one higher-level action (i.e. the action of having a discussion with group members) and being focused on that action throughout the time allotted for the activity, the participants are instead performing different higher-level actions and shifting their focus between these. The roles of focal participant and non-focal participant are separated from one another in each participant’s consciousness, and speaking and listening (and thinking about the question) constitute separate higher-level actions. This provides further evidence that the participants are not really thinking together, and are not engaged in dialogic talk with one another.

6.2.2 Multimodal co-construction of the transfer of the focal participant role

In my earlier analysis of Excerpt 1 (on p. 136), I noted how the focal participant role is passed from Natsumi to Miki. Here I would like to return to that piece of data to provide a slightly more nuanced picture of what happened. An analysis of the spoken language alone shows that Natsumi makes a claim to have finished by saying "ok" in line 13, then nominates Miki to be the next speaker in line 19, and finally Miki accepts this nomination by saying "un" and beginning her turn in line 20. This seems like a straightforward case of the current speaker selecting the next speaker. However, a closer look at the embodied actions in the video suggests that something more detailed may be happening.

Natsumi performs the various actions that constitute her means (Figure 4, above) from 0:51-0:54, before she verbally nominates Miki to take the next turn at 0:55 in the video. There is almost no gap between Natsumi’s nomination and Miki starting her turn. Prior to this, at 0:52 in the video (as Natsumi performs her means and just after she has said "ok" while gazing at Kimie) Miki, who is gazing at the desk, nods slightly and also says "ok". She then slightly opens and
closes her mouth, taps her finger against her lip, and gazes up from the desk to a mid-point somewhere in between Natsumi and Kimie at 0:54. This shift in gaze and head position is shown in Figure 5 below. These actions are performed in preparation for her upcoming turn, which she is not nominated to take until 0:55. After being nominated, she then slightly shifts her body posture, tilts her head to the right and moves her hand away from her mouth as she starts to speak.

![Figure 5: Miki’s shift in head position and gaze](image)

It is noticeable that when Natsumi gazes down at the desk, during her means at 0:52, Kimie (who had been gazing at Natsumi throughout her turn) shifts her gaze towards Miki (Miki does not gaze back at Kimie here, and in her upcoming turn will gaze more at Natsumi). It is also noticeable that after gazing down, Natsumi does not look back up to gaze again at Kimie (who she had been gazing at through most of her turn as focal participant) at 0:54, but rather gazes up at Miki (this is the first time she gazes at Miki since starting her turn as focal participant). All of these actions show that, prior to Miki being verbally nominated to speak at 0:55, all three participants had oriented to Miki becoming the next focal participant. This shift to focus on Miki had occurred after Natsumi had begun to perform her means. After Natsumi begins this means, Miki shifts her posture and head position so that she is more open to interaction (she is no longer gazing down at the desk but is gazing up into the interaction space), and Natsumi and Kimie shift their gaze to Miki. It is only then that Miki is verbally nominated to take the focal participant turn. In this way, the shift between focal participants is achieved collaboratively by all the members of the group.

Evnitkskaya and Berger (2017) have shown how a participant in a language classroom projects an up-coming turn through body-repositioning at a
precise moment in the interaction where an opportunity for speaker change occurs, and Lee (2016, p. 7) observes that establishing speakership in a peer discussion requires “multimodal preparation” (Deppermann, 2013b, p. 96) to achieve joint orientation. I would argue that here, Miki’s embodied actions project her own, and expected, upcoming turn as speaker, while the actions of all three participants work to create a joint interactional space that will allow Miki to take her turn (and, throughout Miki’s turn, Kimie and Natsumi will continue to perform actions that allow Miki to keep speaking). The actions of all three participants show how they smoothly orient to and accomplish the practice of passing a focal participant turn around the table in an orderly fashion, and that they had all obviously expected Miki to be the next speaker. This also shows how sequentiality might not be strictly organized turn-at-talk by turn-at-talk (Mondada, 2016, p. 346), as the transition of the focal participant role from Natsumi to Miki can be seen to start at 0:52, a full three seconds before Miki is nominated to speak.

6.3 Performances, or presentations, for the teacher-superaddressee

Participants saw small-group speaking activities as requiring each of them to perform the role of focal participant, and each focal participant turn can indeed be seen as a kind of performance. This was a theme that emerged in the video-playback sessions, with participants comparing focal participant turns with presentations.

That the participants often see focal participant turns as a kind of performance, or mini-presentation, can be seen in features of the interactions. For example, as well as performing means and making verbal claims to have completed a focal participant turn (e.g. by saying “finished”), there were occasions where participants marked the conclusion of a focal participant turn with applause. An example of this is shown in Figure 6 on page 157. I am introducing this figure here, rather than a longer excerpt, simply in order to visually illustrate the way in which participants applauded the end of a focal participant turn.
Prior to the moment represented in this figure, Sachiko, sat in the middle of the image, had completed her turn as *focal participant*. The other two participants then spontaneously applauded, and she herself joined in with this applause. Following this, Chie, on the left of the image takes the next *focal participant* turn. When asked about this in a video-playback session, Toko (seen on the right of the image) explained that applauding like this was not normal behaviour outside of the classroom and that she saw the turns to speak in this activity as a "sort of presentation".

In the same interaction from which Figure 6 is taken, at the end of her turn as *focal participant*, Chie summarizes what she has been saying with the utterances "conclusion. I would love to go to Australia. end". Alongside this course, these students had also been taking another ‘Communication’ course that focussed on presentation skills, including the basic presentation structure of introduction, body, and conclusion. Here, Chie uses a concluding utterance that summarizes her main point, suggesting that she treats her focal participant turn as a mini-presentation, which she confirmed in a video-playback session.

More than engaging in dialogic talk, these participants are performing presentation-like turns, and these presentations are not so much for the other members of their group, but more for the teacher. This can be seen, for example, in Excerpt 1, where Miki is primarily concerned with responding to the teacher’s question rather than engaging with the meanings expressed by the other members of the group. In *focal participant* interactions generally, students focus on taking it in turns to perform actions that meet the perceived aims of the activity that the teacher has assigned them, and rarely go beyond this to engage
meaningfully with one another. This was a theme that emerged in the video-playback sessions, where participants explained that, when speaking English, they were often more concerned with their language performances being assessed by the teacher than they were with actually speaking to the other members of their group.

However, it is not necessarily the actual classroom teacher (i.e. me) they are performing for, but more a general teacher-superaddressee. One reason for making this claim is that the students do not always follow my instructions, even when they have been understood. I made the course aims and how I would assess participation in classroom activities clear to all students, for example by distributing assessment rubrics. The rubrics included items such as "asking questions to other students", "paraphrasing", "confirming what others mean", "agreeing or disagreeing with others", "supporting others' ideas", and so on. All of these items were covered by the textbook and were the focus of classroom activities or whole classes. However, participants rarely performed these actions in English interactions in the classroom, even though in interviews and video-playback sessions they confirmed that they understood the course aims. In fact, many participants negatively evaluated their own performances in relation to these rubrics.

So, while the participants claimed they were concerned with being assessed by the teacher, they rarely did the things I was assessing positively. This was not simply a language proficiency problem, as many students evidenced an ability to perform the actions contained on the rubrics when engaged in personal interactions (this is discussed in detail in Section 6.4). Instead, they were performing the student role as it was familiar to them, and this role was performed in relationship with a teacher-superaddressee who was assumed to be watching and assessing them. They were focussing as much on the institutional roles and actions that they expected to perform for this teacher-superaddressee, as much as those that they have been asked to perform by the actual classroom teacher.

An example of this can be found in the interaction from which Figure 6 (page 157) is taken. In this activity, I had asked the students to have a discussion and work together to choose a holiday destination, emphasizing that there should be negotiation and that "everyone must agree on the final decision". The classwork on that day had focussed on agreeing and disagreeing, as well as
asking follow-up questions. Example language had been presented in the textbook, on the whiteboard, and on audio CDs, so that the students had been exposed to many models of the kind of interaction I was hoping they would engage in.

However, rather than attempting to agree or disagree with one another, what transpired was a focal participant interaction in which each student took a turn to talk about a place she liked to the rest of the group, without comment from the other members of the group. It was only once each student had taken a turn as focal participant that Chie oriented to my instructions, demonstrating that she understood them, by saying "choose one place". At this point another participant (Toko) nominated a country ("Canada"), which had not been previously mentioned in the interaction, and Chie immediately accepted this idea without negotiation and without asking Sachiko what she thought.

Although these participants said that they were concerned about the teacher’s assessment, this interaction met almost none of the criteria I had set out. In a video-playback session, the participants explained that they were aware of my aims, and many of them actually found these aims desirable, but they were more familiar with being assessed according to how accurately they spoke, rather than how much they interacted with each other, and that this affected their performance on the activity.

The teacher-superaddressee is not only thought to be assessing the students' language performance (to make sure that it is "correct"), but he or she is also seen as preferring certain kinds of identity display. When Toko nominated Canada as the groups’ destination, she gave her reason as "because when in English class", while gesturing towards the camera. The gesture towards the camera clearly indicates that this utterance was performed with the watching teacher in mind. When I asked her about this in a video-playback session, Toko confirmed that she had no interest in visiting Canada, but that she thought a teacher of an English class would expect his or her students to want to visit an English-speaking country. In an informal interview and other discussions outside of the classroom, Toko had previously told me more than once that she had no interest in travelling to another country. Even though she knew that I was aware of her lack of interest in travelling to another country, she still attempted to perform the role of the English student who wants to travel abroad. She was performing
the English student role as she believed was expected of her by the watching teacher-superaddressee (rather than the actual teacher, who knew full well that she did not want to go to Canada).

So, to summarize the above, the students in this class were not engaged in meaningful interactions with one another, so much as performing focal participant turns for a watching teacher-superaddressee.

6.4 Personal identities

All of the participants in this study oriented to the focal participant interaction patterns, described in Section 6.1, when engaged in classroom activities where they perceived the focus to be on speaking in English. However, from the fourth week onwards, some participants also began to perform what I call personal identities in English in the classroom.

Early on in the project, when analyzing a reading a text activity in which the participants mostly interacted in Japanese, I noticed that the interaction was characterized by frequent shifts in topic, which were also accompanied by a range of different embodied practices (such as shifting gaze and body posture, the participants leaning closer to or farther from one another, placing a hand in front of the mouth, pointing a pen at a textbook, and so on). These shifts were mostly between doing the activity and different kinds of off-task talk, such as making jokes, gossiping about friends, and having a conversation about marriage. As I closely transcribed this particular interaction, I noticed that prior to each shift between focussing on on-task and off-task interaction, one of the participants performed a means (see page 89). From this, I could see that these shifts were actually shifts in the foregrounded identity elements of the participants, from on-task student identities to off-task personal identities.

I looked through the rest of the data to see if I could observe something similar happening elsewhere, and indeed I did. Throughout the data, there are frequently moments when one or more participants perform a means prior to a shift in focus from on-task interaction to off-task interaction, or vice versa. At the beginning of the semester, the off-task talk occurred almost exclusively in Japanese, but as the semester progressed there were increasingly examples of off-task talk occurring in English too. This seemed to be of great relevance to my research questions, and so I investigated the phenomena of off-task English talk.
more closely.

I labelled this talk as *personal* talk. This was not a category that I brought prior to analyzing the data, but rather it emerged from my analysis. As discussed on pages 62-3, I use the term *personal* identities to refer to a range of *interactional* identities that we might normally expect to be performed outside of the classroom, such as participants' identities as members of particular social clubs, roommates, part-time workers, job hunters, fans of particular television programmes, people who are or are not interested in marrying a foreigner, and so on. In the off-task talk, I noted how participants frequently shifted attention away from the activity to talk together as *friends* (e.g. referring to parties they had attended together, gossiping about each other, talking about future trips they would take together, talking about a television programme that they liked, talking about each other's families, etc.), how they shared personal experiences (e.g. talking about the unusual eating habits of a foreign roommate), discussed their personal attitudes and beliefs (e.g. talking about their attitudes to English), and attempted to establish and build interpersonal rapport (e.g. through telling jokes), and so on. These interactions were on personally relevant topics that involved the participants' lives beyond the classroom.

To categorize a particular moment in the data as involving a focus on *personal* identities in English, I analyzed the peer interactions that occurred predominantly in English. These interactions were mostly characterized by the *focal participant* interaction practices described above. I then looked for the performance of *means* that signalled a shift in the foregrounded attention of the participants. Once I had identified a *means*, I then looked at the interaction practices prior to and following the *means*. If there was a change between *focal participant* practices and more conversational practices, then I would tentatively label this as a shift between *focal participant* and *personal* talk. To confirm my labelling, I looked at the topic of the talk. Here, I was looking to see if the conversation was on a personal topic (for example, a favourite television programme that a participant had watched the previous evening), rather than an attempt to manage the classwork or otherwise engage in a discussion of some *student* work, such as a grammar point, or the teacher's instructions, for example. If all three of these were present, that is, if there was a *means*, a subsequent change to more conversational turn-taking practices, and a personal topic, then I labelled that part of the transcript as *personal* interaction. To further
confirm my labelling, I also presented the video data to the participants in video playback sessions. I showed them videos of themselves performing both on-task focal participant talk and what I had labelled personal talk and asked them what they thought was happening in each video, and their comments invariably supported my labelling. For example, a participant called Miki (see section 6.6) described her on-task behaviour in a video as being "the classwork", whereas by contrast, the personal video was "not the work", and she was "talking to my friends". Topics in English personal talk included: the participants' complaints about cafeteria food, the sleeping habits of the participants' roommates, one participant's attempts to rent an apartment, one participant recently getting a new part-time job, a party attended by the members of the class, a TV programme the participants had seen, the participants' family members (in particular, their sisters), how hungry the participants were, and one participant's trouble with oversleeping most mornings.

6.4.1 When do we see personal identities performed in English?

All of the peer interactions that were performed predominantly in English followed either focal participant practices, or were examples of personal talk. There are other types of talk occurring in English in the data, but these interactions involve the teacher. When students went off-task to do something else other than engage in personal talk, such as make sense of teacher instructions or engage in pre-task preparation work, this was usually done in Japanese. So, English interactions were either on-task and followed focal participant turn-taking practices, or else were off-task and involved personal talk.

However, it is important to stress that there was some variety within these two types of interaction. The focal participant practices that I describe are largely a way of organizing longer sequences of turns so that each participant has her opportunity to participate in the activity. As such, rather than being one monolithic and uniform type of talk, focal participant talk includes a variety of different types of interaction (longer monologues, information exchanges, question and answer exchanges, etc.). And while all personal interactions involve similar conversational turn-taking practices, there are a variety of identities performed. I have used the label personal to cover all of these more personally relevant identities.
In the first few weeks of the semester, personal identities were only performed in Japanese, and were generally treated as a kind of covert talk to be hidden from the teacher. From the fourth week onwards, however, we start to see personal identities performed in English by some participants. These participants performed these personal identities without attempting to hide them from the teacher.

Longitudinal studies can explore developing classroom cultures (Pekarek Doehler and Fasel Lauzon, 2015, p. 421), and we see a definite change in classroom practices here. In the first 20 videos of small-group activities recorded for this project, there are only three examples of personal identities being performed in English, which account for a total of 6 minutes and 10 seconds, or 3.2% of the total time recorded in these videos. In the second 20 videos there are eleven instances of personal identities being performed, accounting for 10.2% of these videos.

Personal identities are only performed in English once every participant in the particular interaction has been focal participant at least once. That is, in the video data recorded for this project, they are not usually focussed on until the participants believe that they have fulfilled the minimum requirements of the activity they had been engaged in.

6.4.2 Who performs personal identities in English?

19 of the 30 participants in this study can be seen performing personal identities in English at some point in the video data. Among those 19, some were more likely to do so than others, and I observed that two participants in particular were most likely to perform personal identities in English. Both of these participants were recorded performing personal identities on five separate occasions.

6.4.3 Shifting focus from student identities to personal identities

When participants shifted from foregrounding their student identities (as they performed focal participant turns) to foregrounding their personal identities, they performed a means (Norris, 2004, 2011) that marked this shift. An example of this can be seen in Figure 7 (on page 164). The images in this figure are taken from a formal discussion between three participants: Ai, Hana, and Chie (only Ai, on the left, and Hana, on the right, are shown in the figure). As discussed above,
a shift in focus from student to personal identities occurs only after each participant has been focal participant at least once, and Figure 7 is taken from a point in the interaction when each participant had already been focal participant once.

Figure 7 shows Ai and Hana perform a means almost simultaneously. Hana starts her means first, beginning her action a fraction of a second prior to Ai, but it is Ai who produces the more pronounced means. The screenshot taken at 5:05 shows the onset of the means. At 5:06 we can see that both Ai and Hana are pushing their chairs away from the desks, so that Ai is moving backwards and the angle of Hana’s body is becoming more horizontal. The screenshot taken at 5:07 represents the peak of the means. At this moment, Ai has moved her chair so that her whole body (with the exception of her feet) is now relatively far from the desk, while Hana has now positioned her body more horizontally. By 5:07 Ai has also started to speak and Hana has turned her head in order to gaze at Ai. They then both move their chairs back towards the table as Ai continues speaking. By 5:10 Hana’s body posture is similar to her body posture at 5:05 (prior to performing the means), while Ai is now closer to the desk than she was at 5:05.

Figure 7. Ai and Hana’s means
Ai effectively moves herself out of the interactional space (Mondada, 2009) of the student discussion, and then moves herself back into it, but with a new focus on personal identities. Prior to performing these actions, the participants had been exchanging focal participant turns as they foregrounded the higher-level action of responding to the teacher’s prompt. Just after the onset of these pronounced actions, which are performed at no other time in the video, Ai introduces the topic of a party that all three participants attended, and in the subsequent talk they foreground the higher-level action of talking to friends.

Participants always perform a means of some sort when shifting from a focus on their student identities to their personal identities. I believe that this shift is important, as it demonstrates how participants’ consciousness is structured when they perform activities in English in the classroom. When performing a classroom activity, it is not until they have met the minimum requirements of the activity (as they understand it) that the participants can then affect a shift to focus on more personal identities. And it is not until this shift has been performed that the participants begin to engage in the kind of dialogic interaction in English that had been a major aim of the course.

6.4.4 What do personal interactions look like?

While the participants in this study predominantly focussed on their student identities (and the focal participant role) throughout the semester, personal identities are performed in English in approximately one third of the videos that I recorded. I would like to provide the following excerpt as an example of what personal interactions look like and to show that participants were capable of performing more dialogic talk in English.

This excerpt from the data is taken from an interaction performed at the end of June, which is comparatively late in the semester. Prior to the start of the excerpt, the participants completed their focal participant turns and then shifted their focus to more personal identities. In the excerpt itself, they are discussing the topic of their roommates. I am predominantly interested here in their use of language and turn-taking, so it is only necessary to present a transcript of what the participants say, and I include no video screenshots. The participants here are Hana, Kiki, and Chinami.
Turn-taking is freer than in **focal participant** talk

As can be seen, turn-taking in personal talk is much freer than in focal participant interactions. Turns are not just passed around the table, and turn-taking is more conversational. Although this cannot actually be seen in Excerpt 7:1, there is more competition for turns, as multiple speakers sometimes attempt to claim the same turn and speak over one another other. Rather than waiting for a turn to talk as focal participant, anyone can potentially be the next speaker. For example, in Excerpt 7:2, which is presented below, as soon as Chinami reaches a TRP (in line 4 at the end of the utterance "in night"), Hana self-selects as the next speaker, following rule 1(b) as set out Sacks et al.'s (1974) study on conversational turn-taking, and there is no negotiation of who will speak next. As Hana starts her turn she also speaks in overlap with Chinami, who self-repairs a problem with her utterance (this, too, is uncommon in focal participant talk).

**There are more attempts to resolve language problems**

If there are language problems, then there are attempts to resolve them, which
rarely happens in the *formal discussions*. In line 5, Kiki interrupts Hana's ongoing turn-at-talk to initiate repair of the word "custom", which Kiki doesn't know. In line 6, Chinami offers this repair (by translating "custom" into Japanese), which is confirmed by Hana in line 7. In line 27, Hana repairs Chinami's use of Japanese, by translating the Japanese word "urusai" into English. Also, in line 16, Hana asks Chinami a question in order to obtain more detailed information from her (this helps her to better understand the meaning of "early" in line 14).

**More dialogic talk is developed**

The *personal* talk is more dialogic as participants' turns frequently respond to and build on the meaning of previous speakers' turns. In lines 1 and 3 of Excerpt 7:1, for example, Hana completes a turn in which she complains about her Japanese roommate (the start of this turn is not shown). Chinami then takes up this topic in her own turn, which starts in line 13. The end of Chinami's turn is shown in the Excerpt 7:2, which starts approximately thirty seconds after the end of Excerpt 7:1.

**Excerpt 7:2**

01 C: so so my room my unit (.) very quiet
02 H: [o::h
03 K: [o::h
04 C: in night (.) [in the night
05 H: [my Chinese friend (.) so early uh ten o'clock
06 C: oh
07 K: [hee
08 H: [eleven o'clock room ano is (.) [dark
09 C: [dark

In the 30 seconds between Excerpt 7:1 and Excerpt 7:2, Chinami had been talking about her non-Japanese roommate's bedtime, and from line 5 Hana starts a turn that again develops the topic, by talking about her own non-Japanese roommate's bedtime. She does not explicitly say the topic of her utterance (i.e. the *bedtime* of her roommate) as this can be understood from the sequential context. That is, the topic of Hana's turn can be understood to be the same as the topic of Chinami's turn. We can also see that, in lines 8-9, Chinami co-completes Hana's turn, evidencing that Chinami is engaged with the meaning of Hana's ongoing turn.
Participants perform a greater variety of actions
The interactions were more dialogic and, as well as co-completing and offering repair, participants were also much more likely to ask each other questions in personal talk. In line 16 of Excerpt 7:1, for example, we can see that Hana asks Chinami “what time?” This question is performed for genuinely communicative reasons (rather than as an attempt to fulfill her responsibilities as a focal participant), as she is seeking to qualify what “early” in line 14 means. As well as asking each other questions for a variety of reasons (e.g. to negotiate meaning), participants also performed actions such as paraphrasing one another, co-completing one another’s utterances, making affective comments, performing affective backchannels (e.g. really?), engaging in phatic communion, and so on, more often in personal talk than in focal participant talk.

The talk is quite challenging
Although the language used seems comparatively simple, being grammatically uncomplicated, we can see that it is challenging for these lower-level learners, who all reported that they found English conversation difficult. Going back to Excerpt 7:1, in lines 1 and 3 Hana struggles slightly and needs to pause and recycle "this" as she searches for the word "custom" to complete her utterance. This evidences that the word was not readily available to her. As already mentioned, this word was not known to Kiki, who needs to initiate repair so that she can understand the meaning of Hana's turn, making this a learning opportunity for Kiki. We can also see in lines 13, 20, 24 and 26, how Chinami pauses, stretches words, and uses a Japanese word as she speaks. This shows that she is struggling to produce her turns in English.

6.4.5 Personal talk: a summary
During personal talk, the participants are not speaking to, or for, the teacher, but are expressing real-world meanings with each other. The order of turns is not pre-allocated and predictable, so that the end-point of the interaction is not known in advance. Instead, turn-taking is unpredictable and there is no recognisable end-point to the talk, as it may possibly continue to develop dialogically forward as long as the participants are allowed and willing to. In fact, in the case of the example currently being discussed, the teacher needed to stop
the interaction for lunch, and even then the participants continued the conversation after the end of the class. This is not simply a display of the participants' linguistic competence or a language game, but a genuine attempt to talk and make meanings together. It also provides some evidence of the English-speaking personal identities that participants perform in class being taken outside of the classroom (as the conversation continued into lunch).

6.4.6 Focal participant and personal identities when reading a text or writing a text

In Section 6.1.7, I explained that we do not see focal participant talk in activities where the participants perceive the focus to be on either reading or writing a text. While this is indeed largely the case, certain participants changed the way in which they approached these kinds of activities as the semester progressed.

At the start of the semester no participants used the focal participant pattern during these activities, preferring instead to work predominantly in Japanese with freer turn-taking. However, by the end of the semester, certain participants began to perform these activities almost entirely in English, and did so while orienting to the focal participant role. That is, they changed from seeing the main focus of these activities as being to read or write a text, and began to see speaking in English as being a major focus of the activities.

The participants who made this change were those who were most likely to perform personal identities in English, and they also frequently performed personal identities during these interactions, once focal participant turns had been completed. So, as well as moving beyond the focal participant interactions to perform more personal identities during activities with a focus on speaking in English, these participants also began to perform focal participant interactions in English where previously they had been interacting in Japanese. Other participants never made this change. I will now discuss how focal participant talk was organized in both writing a text and reading a text activities.

6.4.6.1 Focal participant and personal interactions in writing a text activities

Towards the end of the semester, the students were asked to work in small groups to make a written quiz in English. Some of the groups worked in
Japanese, and the English used was, for the most part, phrases that were being nominated to be written down. However, these groups did work quite collaboratively as they constructed questions together.

Just over half of the groups, however, followed the focal participant pattern of passing turns around the table and speaking almost completely in English. In these interactions, each student took a turn to think of a question and some multiple-choice answers for that question, which they said verbally to the rest of the group. Once the question and possible answers were written down (usually by one member of the group who assumed the role of scribe), this focal participant turn was complete and the next focal participant could take her turn. As with making sentences activities, non-focal participants helped with the construction of utterances when the focal participant sought this help. However, it was the focal participant’s duty to be responsible for the content of the question. When they had finished making the quiz questions, some of the groups shifted their focus to personal identities and took part in English conversations together. On the other hand, other groups performed the same activity almost entirely in Japanese, and the members of these groups never focussed on personal identities in English.

6.4.6.2 Focal participant and personal interactions when reading a text

I wish here to provide examples of two groups performing the same reading a text activity late in the semester. I do so to illustrate the different classroom experiences that they had. In this activity, the teacher asked the students to read four language school advertisements provided in the textbook and to make sure that they understood them. They were also asked to circle three points that they thought were important in each advertisement.

The first group I will focus on performed a focal participant interaction (and actually really took part in something similar to a discussion). The following excerpt shows the beginning of this interaction, and features Rumi (on the left) and Miki (on the right). Miki was one of the two participants in the project who I observed to be most likely to perform personal identities in the classroom.
We can say that this is a focal participant interaction as the learners take it in turns to produce utterances that meet the perceived aims of the task, and they perform *means* when the focal participant role is exchanged (e.g. lines 9-10).

The first duty of the focal participant in this activity, as the participants themselves understand it, is to select an important point from the text on the page and to say what this is. We can see Miki and Rumi do this in lines 1-2 and 21-27 respectively. In lines 3 and 28, the non-focal participant prompts the focal participant to justify her opinion using "why", as the second duty of the focal participant is to give a reason for her opinion. Beyond the focal participant being asked to give a reason for her opinion, the content of the focal participant's turn is not challenged or supported and the topic is not developed any further. We can also see that when Rumi pauses extensively during her turn as focal participant (lines 18-27), Miki does not attempt to compete for a turn, or otherwise talk, but lets her speak, and she does not always foreground the ongoing interaction (e.g. when she checks her dictionary). In April, at the
beginning of the semester, these same two participants performed a very similar activity, but did so in Japanese without following focal participant turn-taking.

6.4.6.3 The focal participant role provides important opportunities to practice speaking

As they take focal participant turns, Rumi and Miki practice some of the language points introduced in the class and on the course. As well as asking follow-up questions (i.e. "why?") and justifying their opinions, Miki and Rumi make use of a number of other interactional practices and language resources that have been taught in the classes. For example, we can see in lines 13-14 that Rumi, as the non-focal participant, paraphrases what Miki has said. Paraphrasing was taught and practiced on this course as an active listening strategy. In line 22, Rumi gazes at the whiteboard. This is to read the phrase "I think this one is good", which the teacher had written on the board earlier in the class. In lines 16-17, Miki also uses a phrase from the whiteboard. This phrase ("what do you think is important?") is used to prompt the focal participant to fulfill her first duty of selecting an important point from the text. Although these participants are not meeting the course aim of taking part in more dialogic interaction, they are practicing a number of practices taught on the course within the constraints of the focal participant role.

I want to look now at three other participants performing the same activity on the same day. In the following excerpt (on page 173), we can see Ana on the left of the image, Bela in the middle, and Chisako on the right. We can see from this excerpt that the interaction is quite different to Miki and Rumi's. This is not a focal participant interaction and, for the most part, the interaction consists of the participants reading English words from the textbook (lines 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 32 and 33). The only English words in this excerpt that are not taken directly from the textbook occur in lines 8 and 34 ("important") and in line 6 ("four").

When the participants talk meaningfully in longer utterances, this occurs in Japanese. For example, in lines 19-24, Chisako speaks in Japanese to tell the other participants that her electronic dictionary has run out of battery power. In Miki and Rumi's interaction, on the other hand, what might be termed off-task talk was conducted in English. For example, a third participant, Kimie,
came to the class late and joined Miki and Rumi’s group. When she arrived, they performed personal talk in English, talking about why she was late and who else was absent that day. Excerpt 10 (which can be found on page 174) provides a short illustrative example of this.

Kimie does use Japanese in line 2. However, she does so to initiate repair and ask for help expressing "sonna ni osokunai" in English (her utterance can be translated as "what is sonna ni osokunai?"), and she is seeking help from
the others to express personal meaning in English. In lines 3-4, Miki and Rumi provide repair and Kimie produces the English utterance in line 5, which is a learning opportunity for her. In line 6, Miki develops the topic and moves the interaction forward. The participants are here orienting to a need to speak in English, which does not happen in Ana, Bela, and Chisako's interaction, while Kimie makes use of shared Japanese language resources to focus on learning.

**Excerpt 10**

01 M: when did you go the bed (1.0) last night?
02 K: ah yesterday (2.0) sonna ni osokunai tte nan da
03 M: not so
04 R: [not so late
05 K: [not so (. ) late
06 M: so late (1.0) but (1.0) you ca::n't get up (0.5) in the time.

By codeswitching (or translanguaging, see pages 17-8), Kimie initiates repair using Japanese, but as the interaction progresses repair is also performed in English, as can be seen in the following short excerpt. In this excerpt, the focus on learning allows the participants to come to a local understanding of "internet English".

**Excerpt 11**

01 K: what is internet English
02 M: maybe (0.5) all thing can (1.0) online can be online

In Ana, Bela, and Chisako's interaction, repair is mostly performed in Japanese. When repair initiation does occur in English, it takes a much simpler form than that seen in Miki, Rumi, and Kimie's interaction, with the participants simply saying the trouble source with rising intonation (e.g. "summer programme?"). However, repair is still provided and learning oriented to.

The trajectory of the repair is also different. In Excerpts 10 and 11, once repair is initiated the other participants orient to a need to offer that repair immediately. For example, in Excerpt 10 Kimie initiates repair in line 2, and other-repair occurs immediately in lines 3-4. In Excerpt 11, Kimie initiates repair
in line 1 and other-repair occurs in line 2. Once repair is initiated, the preference is for that repair to be offered in the subsequent turns.

In Excerpt 9, however, Bela initiates repair in line 1 (saying “summer programme?” with rising intonation to indicate that this is problematic for her). However, in the next line Chisako does not offer repair, but instead attempts to initiate repair of the phrase “extra activities”. It is not until line 12 that Chisako begins to attempt to offer repair to Bela (she opens her dictionary to check the meaning of “summer programme”, but her dictionary has no power). It is not until line 26 that Ana attempts to offer repair to Chisako’s repair-initiation of the trouble source “extra activities” (by translating this into Japanese).

While one problem may have been that no participant was confident enough to offer repair (Ana hedges her repair in line 26 by using ka na, which is a Japanese epistemological marker indicating some uncertainty), there is no attempt to account for the immediate lack of repair, which evidences that they do not see this as a dispreferred action. If providing immediate repair was seen as preferred, then we would expect the participants to somehow account for the lack of repair (perhaps saying something like “sorry, I don’t know”). This does not happen, and these participants do not orient to a need to always immediately provide repair.

This is partly due to the structure of the turns. By asking “what is Internet English?” (Excerpt 11, line 1), Kimie produces a specific question that makes an immediate response relevant. All participants know exactly what Kimie’s trouble is. However, simply saying “summer programme?” does not make clear exactly what Bela’s problem is (does she know what this means, or is she surprised by this, and so on). Bela’s turn is under-determined and does not have the same force as Kimie’s in making a next action relevant.

6.4.6.4 Summary: participants who performed personal identities in English were more likely to engage with the aims of the course

The two groups performed the same activity in very different ways. Miki, Rumi, and Kimie performed both a focal participant interaction and personal identities in English. In doing so, they practised a range of actions, such as repair, paraphrasing, asking follow-up questions, and so on. This was very different to the way in which they performed similar activities at the beginning of the
semester, when they spoke mostly in Japanese, and also very different to the way in which Ana, Bela, and Chisako performed the same activity on the same day. While both groups engaged in some negotiation of meaning, Miki, Rumi, and Kimie did so while also using English repair practices that had been an aim of the course and also allowed for learning opportunities that arose from contingencies in the interaction. On the other hand, Ana, Bela, and Chinami’s use of shorter, under-determined turns meant that repair was not always immediately forthcoming (and sometimes never came).

Miki, Rumi, and Kimie were all participants who were more likely to perform personal identities in English, while Ana, Bela, and Chinami were not. We can see how those learners who did perform personal identities were more likely to perform English interactions that met the aims of the course, providing opportunities to practice a range of actions in English interactions.

In this section I have attempted to show how some participants in the study changed the way in which they performed activities as the semester progressed. At the beginning of the semester, none of the participants performed personal identities in English, and they spoke mostly in Japanese when working together to read or write a text. However, as the semester progressed, some participants started to perform personal identities in English, usually once they had completed their duties as focal participants in a particular interaction. As well as this, these participants also started to perform focal participant interactions when reading or writing a text together. This meant that they had more English speaking practice, with more opportunities to negotiate meaning and perform a greater variety of actions in English that helped meet the aims of the course than those participants who do not make this change.

6.5 A more cognitive comparison of personal and focal participant interactions

In the previous sections, I described how the participants in this study performed focal participant interactions when focused on speaking in English during small-group and pair work activities. I also described how some learners changed their classroom practices over the semester and began to perform more personal identities in English classroom interactions. In doing so, I used a CA of turn-taking practices to show how these personal and focal participant
interactions were different. In this section, I will further compare these two types of talk, using a more cognitive approach. To do this, I will first look at the interactions in terms of how much negotiation of meaning (Long, 1981, 1996) they afford, looking in particular at repair practices. Then, drawing on a strand of SLA research (e.g. Skehan and Foster, 1997), I will describe how fluent, complex and accurate the different types of talk are. Finally, I look at how the participants’ use of backchannels can tell us something about how engaged they are with the meaning of each other’s turns.

6.5.1 Repair in focal participant and personal interactions

On pages 95-6 of this thesis I discussed negotiation of meaning, conversational repair, and Long’s interaction hypothesis. To briefly summarize what I said there, the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) posits that negotiation of meaning (which includes conversational repair) is important for language learning. Therefore, following this hypothesis, more repair is considered to be a good thing, as it is more likely to push learning.

Table 3 Types of repair by interaction type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Type</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>SO</th>
<th>OS</th>
<th>OO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussions</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal discussions</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information exchange</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sentences</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In my data, repair is more frequent in personal interactions (1.4 instances of repair per minute on average) than in focal participant interactions (0.76 instances per minute). To give an idea of the types of repair performed, Table 3 shows the type of repair as a percentage of all repair performed in that type of talk (where SS is self-initiated self-repair, SO is self-initiated other repair, OS is
other-initiated self-repair and OO is other-initiated other repair). I have not included figures for the reading a text and writing a text activities, as the video data does not contain many of these interactions occurring in English.

The key figures to note in Table 3 are that formal discussions contained mostly self-initiated self-repair (SS), and therefore were unlikely to promote repair involving more than one participant (and, as such, negotiation of meaning). Repair involving more than one participant (SO, OS, and OO), and particularly other-initiated repair (OS and OO), was most likely in personal talk.

6.5.1.1 Other repair

Other repair is a type of feedback obtained during an interaction, and can be facilitative of L2 development (Long, 1996, p. 414). Other-initiated other-repair (where repair is initiated and completed by a speaker who is not the speaker of the trouble source) is argued to be rare in conversation (Schegloff et al., 1977). While this is indeed the case in all of the focal participant interactions, I found this type of repair to be surprisingly common in the personal interactions in my data. We have already seen two examples of other repair in Excerpt 7:1. The first instance occurs in lines 3-8 and provides an opportunity for one of the participants, Kiki, to learn the English word custom. The second instance is again provided here.

Excerpt 12

24 C: I (1.0) I:: (1.0) she say me
25 K: un
26 C: eh to (1.0) urusai
27 H: a:h noisy
28 C: [noisy
29 K: [a:: noisy

In this excerpt, Chinami uses the Japanese word urusai. This is treated as repairable by the participants, and repair is offered in line 27, as Hana provides an English substitute word. This leads to Chinami modifying her language, as she repeats the English word "noisy", simultaneously with Kiki, in line 28. Although we can see in line 27 that Hana has understood Chinami, we see that she still offers repair of the word urusai, which the other participants take up in
This demonstrates an orientation to the need to speak in English, and also to learning. Eskildsen and Theodorsdottir (2015, p. 160) note similar cases where, although intersubjectivity has been established and a language focus might be considered topically redundant, repair is still performed, and they argue that this additional unnecessary effort is an orientation to learning.

Although we cannot be absolutely sure that the word noisy was not previously known to Chinami, or that due to this interaction she learned the word, we can say that she did have a problem producing this word in her turn and that through this interaction the word "noisy" has been brought to her attention and noticed by her. This may allow her to learn the word for the first time, or else may serve to reinforce her understanding of the word and how to use it. The following is example of other-initiated repair taken from my data.

**Excerpt 13**

01 M: I think TOEFL prep  
02 R: prep (0.5) what is prep.  
03 M: maybe study  
04 R: oh.  
05 M: preparation  
06 R: ah (.) preparation

In line 2, Rumi performs a clarification request and initiates repair of the trouble source "prep". In lines 3 and 5, Miki provides this repair, and Rumi makes a claim to understanding in line 6. This provides Rumi with an opportunity to learn the meaning of the abbreviation "prep". Other-initiated other-repair and clarification requests focused on the meaning of lexical items, as seen in Excerpt 13, were most common in personal talk.

We can see in Table 3 that information exchange activities also produced a relatively high percentage of other-initiated self-repair. However, rather than clarification requests (as in Excerpt 13), confirmation requests were more common. This has already been discussed in the analysis of Excerpt 6 in Section 6.1.5. In that excerpt, Rumi and Kimie were describing elements of an image to Hitomi. There we saw how, after Rumi had finished saying "in the top left corner is plane" (lines 1 and 3), Hitomi repeated the word "plane" (line 4) and then Rumi nodded (line 5).
This is typical of the confirmation check sequences in the information exchange interactions. A focal participant describes something, a non-focal participant repeats part of that utterance, and then the focal participant confirms that the repetition is correct. While this allows participants to display intersubjectivity, it does not lead to modified language use or the learning of a new word or phrase. Hitomi is here confirming the meaning of Rumi’s turn, which she had already understood.

Self-initiated other-repair occasionally provides opportunities for negotiation of meaning when it is used to perform word searches. Again, this type of repair is least common in the formal discussions. It is, however, common in informal discussions and the making sentences activities. This is because, in these activities, students often requested help in completing utterances that they had started, but were struggling to finish. I have already presented an example of self-initiated other-repair in Excerpt 10 above. In line 2 of that excerpt, Kimie initiates repair when she says “sonna ni osokunai tte nan da” (“what is ‘not so late’?”) and Miki and Rumi offer repair by translating the Japanese phrase into English in lines 2-3. Kimie then produces the English utterance herself in line 4.

This kind of assisted performance (Ohta, 2001) may be useful for promoting language learning. Ohta (2001, p. 9) has revised Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to account for L2 learning as, “the distance between the actual development level as determined by individual linguistic production, and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a teacher or peer”. That is, language development may happen as classroom peers assist each other in producing utterances that they may not have been able to produce alone.

One reason for the relatively high percentage of this type of repair in informal discussions and the making sentences activities was that students generally avoided other-initiated repair in these activities, so if negotiation of meaning was to occur it had to be self-initiated. It was also quite common in personal talk, although not at all common in formal discussions.

6.5.1.2 Self-initiated self repair

Self-initiated self-repair, as might be imagined, involves little negotiation of meaning between participants. In this type of repair, a speaker recognizes and
repairs a problem within her own turn without input from the other participants. The following is an example of self-initiated self-repair taken from my data.

**Excerpt 14**

1 R: many students is- many students have long vacation

The trouble source here is Rumi's use of the word "is". She recognises the problem and initiates and provides repair herself, replacing "is" with "have". This is the most common type of repair across the data, but is particularly common in focal participant talk, especially the formal discussions.

**6.5.1.3 Avoiding performing repair in English**

In formal discussions, self-initiated self-repair is by far the most common type of repair. As discussed in the analysis of Excerpt 1 above, non-focal participants usually only contribute minimal backchannels, and do not provide repair. Even when a focal participant seeks to initiate repair it is usually not supplied by the non-focal participants, as can be seen in the Excerpt 15.

Misa, who is on the right side of the image furthest from the camera (and is partially obscured), is taking her turn as the focal participant. In line 05, she has a problem with her turn-in-progress and pauses for four seconds, before saying “eh?” and then pausing for a further two seconds. This indicates that she is struggling to complete her turn.

**Excerpt 15**
During this pause she gazes at Chie (who is sat on the left of the image), performs a gesture with her right hand, and mouths something inaudible, but that appears to be Japanese. These actions are shown in Figure 8.

![Figure 8. Misa attempting to initiate repair.](image)

Although Chie saw these actions, and confirmed in a video-playback session that she understood that Misa was seeking help, she felt reluctant to provide repair. Most participants said that, in this type of activity, they thought it was important for the speaker to perform her turn unaided, and also that they did not feel confident or comfortable in giving repair. A need for repair was seen as being a problem with language competence that would be negatively evaluated by the teacher. This reluctance of participants to perform repair in *formal discussions* meant that potential learning opportunities were missed.

In *focal participant* interactions, potential trouble sources are sometimes identified and repaired in Japanese before the start of the activity. For example, participants sometimes spoke in Japanese to clarify the meaning of a problematic word in the teaching materials prior to actually beginning the English interaction. This allowed them to avoid potentially face-threatening repair sequences in the performance of the activity.

And, as well as repairing language problems, in *focal participant* activities there are instances where participants focus on repairing the *focal participant* turns themselves. That is, the repair focuses on making sure that each student properly takes a turn as the *focal participant* (rather than focusing on the meaning or accuracy of what anyone is saying).

### 6.5.1.4 Summary: repair

Finding out where, how, and why repair happens are important questions for EFL researchers to address, and require researchers to identify where learners...
attempt to correct communication breakdowns (Foster and Ohta, 2005, p. 408). Seedhouse (2004) discusses repair in what he calls meaning-and-fluency contexts, arguing that repair in these interactions tends to focus on meaning, rather than on linguistic form. In my data, formal discussions, informal discussions, and personal talk can all be argued to have a focus on meaning-and-fluency. As can be seen in the above, rather than repair in these different types of talk being similar, they are in fact somewhat different.

While both focal participant and personal interactions allow for repair and negotiation of meaning, the personal interactions recorded in the data for this project produce other-repair and repair in general more frequently. Repair that leads to modified language performance, as commonly seen in personal interactions, is theorized to be facilitative of L2 development (Long, 1996, p. 414; Wong and Waring, 2010, p. 229) and can provide participants with valuable learning opportunities. Furthermore, encouraging students to perform this kind of repair was an aim of the course.

Among the focal participant interactions, informal discussions and making sentences activities were most likely to produce self-initiated other-repair, which allows for assisted performance in the ZPD that may help to promote language learning. Information exchange activities did produce some self-initiated other-repair and other-initiated self-repair, but this was most often in the form of comprehension checks that did not lead to modified language or collaboratively produced utterances. The formal discussions contained almost no examples of repair involving anyone other than the current focal participant, and therefore did not provide opportunities for negotiation of meaning.

6.5.2 Complexity, accuracy, and fluency
In the following, I analyze the different types of English-language talk found in my data according to how fluent, accurate, and complex they are.

6.5.2.1 Fluency in personal and focal participant interactions
In Table 4 below, the figures for pauses show the number of pauses that occur per TCU across the data for the particular type of talk. Dysfluency shows the number of other dysfluency markers per TCU across the data for the particular type of talk. Silence is given as a percentage, showing what percentage of that
type of talk was silent. Speech rate shows the total number of syllables for that type of talk, divided by the total number of minutes of that type of talk that were analyzed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pauses</th>
<th>Dysfluency</th>
<th>Silence</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussions</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>67.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal discussions</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information exchange</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sentences</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>53.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have already seen in Section 6.5.1 that personal talk contained the lowest percentage of self-initiated self-repair, and it is perhaps unsurprising that personal talk can be judged to be the most fluent type of talk across the data. The table shows that this type of talk contained the least amount of pauses, the least amount of dysfluency markers, and also the least amount of silence, as well as the highest rate of speech.

According to this analysis, the least fluent types of talk were the formal discussions, information exchange, and the making sentences activities. The informal discussions were more fluent than these activities, but less fluent than the personal talk.

**6.5.2.1.1 Dialogic talk tends to be more fluent**

Skehan and Foster (2008) report that dialogic tasks lead to greater accuracy and complexity, but not fluency. Michel at al. (2012), on the other hand, found that talk in dialogic tasks is more fluent than in monologic tasks. My study provides some support for Michel at al., as the more dialogic the talk in my data, the more fluent it tends to be. I have found the most fluent type of talk to be the personal talk, which I also argue is the most dialogic. Focal participant talk, particularly the formal discussions, is fairly monologic, and this is the least fluent talk in my data.

However, as discussed in Section 2.6, SLA studies often define a
dialogic task as a task that involves two or more participants in interaction together, contrasting this with a monologic task involving just one participant. I am using the terms dialogic and monologic a little differently to Michel et al. In this study, I refer to small-group interactions as being fairly monologic if the participants rarely engage with the meaning of each other’s turns. I refer to talk as being more dialogic when participants engage with each other and the talk develops dialogically forward.

Also, Michel et al. (2012) attempted to control conditions to better measure the monologic/dialogic factor. To do this, they asked participants to perform two very similar tasks, one with an interlocuter and the other alone. I did not do this, which means that other factors could have led to the increases in fluency. Skehan and Foster (2008), for example, report that tasks based on concrete and familiar information are easier and more fluent than tasks on more abstract and unfamiliar information. Most of the informal discussions in the data were on more simple and concrete topics than formal discussions, which may, therefore, have had an effect on the level of fluency.

However, personal talk also often developed out of focal participant talk, and so was often on the same or a closely related topic. This can be seen in the two excerpts below, which occurred in the same video. In the first excerpt, Natsumi is performing a focal participant turn to answer the teacher-assigned question, "Which is more important: friends or family?" In the second excerpt, Natsumi is continuing the discussion in personal talk with Miki at the end of the video.

**Excerpt 16**

01 N: I can't under- uh uh I can't (0.5) find? find (1.0) one. (1.5) both of them is important. (2.0) we should (1.5) stay with family (1.0) when I eat dinner (.) or trip (.) etc (0.5) but I want to: play with my friend (1.0) so we have to: (0.5) have: (0.5) which time (1.0) case by case (9.0) when I was a junior high school student (0.5) I:: um (1.0) for me eh (0.5) more important friends than family but now (0.5) family:: is important for me
In Excerpt 16, Natsumi draws on personal experience to try to answer the question. In Excerpt 17, which is more fluent according to the measures that I have adopted, she is talking about a hypothetical future involving her and her family. It is not easy to determine exactly how difficult a question is for a student to answer, and whether Miki's question in lines 24 and 26 ("If your husband don't want to live there what do you do?") is as difficult as the question "which is more important: friends or family?" However, I would argue that both of these questions are more difficult than questions such as "who is your favourite musical artist?" or "which countries have you been to?", which were asked in informal discussions. These questions have simple, concrete answers ("my favourite artist is X" or "I have been to France") compared with the questions being answered in Excerpts 16 and 17. However, the talk in these informal discussions is not generally more fluent than that in the personal talk.

Therefore, I would argue that, for the data collected for this study, it is not necessarily the difficulty of the topic that affects how fluent the talk is. Rather, I would argue, like Michel et al. (2012), that there is a link between how dialogic an interaction is and how fluent it is, which is one reason the participants in this study are more fluent when focused on personal identities.
6.5.2.2 Complexity in personal and focal participant interaction

I have analyzed complexity using two measures, both of which focus on syntactic complexity rather than lexical complexity (which measures the variety of words a speaker uses). Table 5 shows both of these measures.

Table 5 Complexity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Subordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal participant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussions</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal discussions</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information exchange</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sentences*</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Although I have included this figure, the complexity in these activities depended on the language that the learners were being asked to practice. If the target language was more complex, so was the talk.

The first measure of complexity is the mean length of C-unit (see the note on page 119 for a definition of a C-unit). The second measure, subordination, involves counting the average number of clauses per C-unit. The minimum value for subordination is 1.0, as each C-unit must contain at least one clause or sub-clausal unit.

We can see that the formal discussion activities were the most complex type of talk recorded across the semester (standard deviations for subordination tend to be small, as the number of clauses will be at least one and will only rarely reach three or four). During these more monologic activities, participants tended to produce longer turns uninterrupted by other participants. The more dialogic personal interactions, on the other hand, featured a quicker exchange of shorter turns that were generally less complex. Table 6 provides some examples of turns taken from formal discussions and personal interactions, all of which were recorded on the final day of the semester. We can see that the formal discussion turns are generally longer and more complex.
Table 6 Examples of turns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal discussion</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hana:</td>
<td>I have not meet see with family for four months since I entered university so I miss my family.</td>
<td>Ayaka: Do you have brother or sister?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chie:</td>
<td>This topic is difficult for me but family is important for me because my family and I's bond is uh is important than friend but friend uh I talk I talk easy friend deeply it is difficult. I can't choose two.</td>
<td>Ai: Especially Kimie is very interesting person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machiko:</td>
<td>When I was a child my mother worked and I have little time with my mother but my grandmother stayed home.</td>
<td>Ai: No plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natsumi:</td>
<td>I don't think so. Not only woman but also man should look after children. Now woman can work some anywhere. In the future I want to I want to work after I get my children.</td>
<td>Natsumi: I love my family. I want to live with my family in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoko:</td>
<td>It is difficult but I am more important family because when I was born and grow I am with my family</td>
<td>Hana: I'm looking forward to next week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riko:</td>
<td>I want to see your younger sister.</td>
<td>Riko: I want to see her. My sister is poker face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai:</td>
<td>No plan.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayaka:</td>
<td>Have younger sister.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miki:</td>
<td>If your husband don't want to live there what do you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My study again provides some support from the classroom for Michel et al.’s (2012) experimental findings. They found that monologic interactions produced more syntactically complex language, which is the case here. One explanation for this is that more interactive talk prevents speakers from building up complex utterances as turns are exchanged frequently.

### 6.5.2.3 Accuracy in personal and focal participant interactions

The following table shows accuracy as the percentage of error-free TCUs.

**Table 7 Accuracy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Error-free TCUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal participant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal discussions</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal discussions</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information exchange</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sentences</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the measure of accuracy that I used, the informal discussions are the most accurate type of talk in the data. Increased accuracy may indicate a conservative attitude and the avoidance of risks (Skehan and Foster, 1999) and that appears to be the case in my data, as informal discussions were also some of the least complex activities. In informal discussions, participants are challenging themselves less (e.g. by avoiding the use of new or difficult language, or by not attempting to build up more complex turns), and instead communicate using familiar phrases and sentence patterns in constrained focal participant turns.

In terms of accuracy, there is little difference between the personal talk and the formal discussion activities. I would argue that, although personal talk is sometimes on what might appear to be mundane and simple topics, the participants still find this talk somewhat challenging to perform accurately in English.

Michel et al. (2012) and Skehan (2009) report that dialogic tasks push greater accuracy from language learners, but that is not the case in my data. What seems to be the case here is that in informal discussions students
challenge themselves less and so avoid making errors. The more linguistically challenging activities (by which I mean, activities in which participants attempt to express more difficult meanings) are, on the whole, less accurate.

6.5.2.4 Summary: CAF

Michel et al. (2012) undertook a series of studies that compared learners working alone (the monologic condition) with learners working together (the dialogic condition) and were conducted in experimental conditions outside of the classroom, which allowed them to control the activities so that the monologic and dialogic tasks were otherwise very similar. My study, on the other hand, was conducted in the classroom, and the monologic-dialogic comparison is not between a learner working alone and learners working in a group, but between different moments in group interactions. While Michel et al. would possibly define all of the group activities that I analyze in this study as being dialogic, I would argue that they are often in fact neither completely monologic nor dialogic, but are somewhere between the two conditions depending on the activity and the foregrounded identities and roles of the participants. Furthermore, I did not control the activities in order to allow comparisons to be easily made between them.

Despite this, my findings provide some support from the classroom for Michel at al., as like them I found that monologic talk was more complex, but less fluent, than dialogic talk. However, my study does not provide support for Michel at al.’s finding that dialogic talk is more accurate. Informal discussions, which were less dialogic than personal talk but more dialogic than the formal discussions, were the most accurate type of talk in my data.

6.5.3 Generic and specific backchannels

One point of difference between focal participant and personal interactions is in the use of backchannels, and this tells us something about how engaged participants are with one another. In the focal participant interactions, and particularly in the formal discussions, we can see that non-focal participants frequently use nods and nn-type tokens, which are focused on allowing the focal participant to keep talking rather than affectively engaging with the speaker’s turn. These are generic backchannels (Tolins and Fox Tree, 2014), and they are
often followed by continuations of the preceding talk.

Of course, we see *generic* backchannels used in *personal* talk, but we also see more of the use of a different kind of backchannel. For example, *really?* is often used as a backchannel in *personal* talk, but only very rarely in *focal participant* talk. This is an example of a *specific* backchannel (Goodwin, 1986) that, like a *generic* backchannel, demonstrates continued attention, but also provides an affective response to the preceding speaker's talk. It is often a cue for the previous speaker to confirm or elaborate on their turn.

In the *formal discussions*, which are the most monologic type of talk in my data, approximately 90% of all backchannels are *general*, while in the *informal discussions* approximately 67% are *general*. This is compared to 54% in *personal* talk, which has the highest percentage of *specific* backchannels. Furthermore, when *specific* backchannels are used in *focal participant* talk, they are more likely to provide support for the speaker's turn, rather than to challenge it in some way (e.g. *me too* provides support to the speaker and is less challenging than *really?).

One reason for the very high percentage of *general* backchannels in the *formal discussions* is that *focal participant* turns are generally longer and therefore need more supporting backchannels from the listeners to reach completion. However, this is not the only reason. In the following excerpt, taken from a transcript of a video recording of a group performing a *formal discussion*, we can see how the participants use of *general* backchannels displays little or no affective engagement with the focal participants turn. Here, Misa is responding to the prompt, “Women should stay at home and look after children while men go to work: do you agree?”

**Excerpt 18**

01 M:  I don't think so.
02 C:  [mm:
03   [((nod))
04 S:  [mm
05   [((nod))
06 M:  because I (0.5) like (4.0) eh:. (0.5) I like (0.5) to go out.
07   [((laughs))
08 C:  [mm:::
09   [((nods))
In line 1, Misa states that she disagrees with the statement. This means that she also disagrees with both Sachiko and Chie, who have previously taken turns to say that they agree with the statement. However, Chie and Sachiko’s response is to perform general backchannel continuers. Even as Misa reaches the end of her comparatively short turn, there is no affective response (lines 8-9), and following the end of this excerpt the next focal participant starts her turn.

Japanese interaction has frequently been described as being based on principles that promote the maintenance of group harmony over individual expression (e.g. Fujii, 2012; Reischauer, 1988; Rosch and Segler, 1987), and this focus on group identity could account for Chie and Sachiko’s backchannelling here. However, it is certainly not the case that all Japanese interaction is determined by the maintenance of social harmony, as Saft (2004) demonstrates, and we should not assume that this is the case here.

In personal interactions, participants generally performed more potentially face-threatening acts (such as other-initiated repair). They also used more backchannels such as really? which, rather than suggesting intersubjectivity, as a general backchannel might, demonstrate that something is surprising. While this does not constitute strong disagreement, it can demonstrate difference (e.g. a difference of opinion) and affective engagement. It shows that the participants in this study can use backchannels to engage with and challenge the content of one another’s turns, and that this may drive the interaction forwards dialogically.

I would therefore argue that, in Excerpt 18 above (as in all focal participant interactions that I analyzed), the focal participant role and all of its attendant discursive practices help to constrain Chie’s and Sachiko’s backchannelling, rather than an inability or general unwillingness to perform these kinds of backchannels.

6.5.3.1 Backchannels and engagement

An analysis of the use of backchannels suggests that participants in personal talk are more engaged with the meaning of each other's turns than they are in focal participant talk. In particular, participants engage affectively very little with one another in the formal discussions.
One reason for promoting communication in the classroom is that it is considered to be more likely to affectively involve the learner, and Allwright (1983) argues that learning is more likely to be effective if learners are more engaged. As we have seen above, while the participants were expressing personal meanings in the focal participant interactions they were following interaction practices that constrained their engagement with the content of each other’s talk. However, in the more dialogic personal talk the participants were more affectively engaged with one another.

6.6 A focus on two learners

In the previous sections I have focused more on analyzing interactions and what kind of conditions for learning that they might provide. In the following, I wish to shift my attention to look more closely at the participants in the study. To do so, I will focus in particular on two participants in order to gain insights that help to explain why some students perform personal identities while others do not, while also gaining further insights into how identity issues are important in the classroom.

I have not selected the two participants randomly, but have chosen one as an example of one of the participants who I observed to perform personal identities in English most frequently, and the other as an example of a participant who I never observed performing personal identities in English in the classroom. By focusing on these two learners, I hope to provide insights that are not possible with the kind of analysis that I have presented in the preceding sections. I will, however, make occasional references to other participants to provide some support for my analysis.

6.6.1 The two learners

One participant that I will focus on is Chie. At the beginning of the study, like all the participants, she was an 18-year-old first year university student with a comparatively low English level. Chie had studied English at high school, but had no experience of communication classes. She was, however, highly motivated to study English and saw English as being important for her future career (although she didn't have a particular career in mind). As well attending English evening classes, she had a plan to study English in
Canada in the future.

I almost never observed Chie performing *personal* identities in English and, in all of her English language interactions recorded in the data, Chie oriented to the *focal participant*. In these *focal participant* interactions, she demonstrated that she was one of the more competent speakers in the class. And, as a motivated learner, she frequently took a leading role in group interactions.

A number of interrelated themes emerged in discussions and interviews with Chie, as well as in analysis of her performances in the video data. To summarize these, what emerged was that when speaking in English Chie was performing, or role-playing, for the teacher. She very rarely, if ever, foregrounded *personal* identities when speaking English, and instead focussed on trying to accurately perform a target role or language structure. She saw the ultimate aim of her studies to be able to speak “natural” English like a “native” speaker, which for her meant learning to “overreact”. The *focal participant* afforded her a comfortable space in which to participate in the classroom, but as Chie's aim was to speak English "naturally", she negatively evaluated these *focal participant* interactions.

Miki, the other participant that I will focus on, was one of the two learners who were most likely to engage in *personal* talk. She came from a small village in rural Japan, far from any large city. In coming to attend the university, she was leaving her hometown for the first time and moving to the big city, unlike many of the other participants who were from the local area. She explained that, as her hometown was very small, she felt that her world was very small, and she saw English as something that might help connect her to a larger social world.

Miki was also a strong character in the classroom, and like Chie she often led the group in which she was working. Unlike Chie, Miki did not go to an evening school to study English, although she did seek out opportunities to speak English outside of the classroom, for example by attending international parties.

With Miki, the themes that emerged centred on her concern with “real” English. Miki felt that the classroom materials were not connected to her life, and she continually sought to move away from them and to learn about the other people in the classroom. Rather than concern herself with
the language that was being taught, Miki saw “improvement” in terms of her ability to learn about other people as she spoke English.

6.6.2 Criticisms of focal participant interactions

Both Chie and Miki expressed a concern with being able to use “real” or “natural” English, and they were both critical of their performances in focal participant interactions. In a video playback session, Chie criticized this talk for not being “natural” enough, commenting that her group did not talk to each other, respond to each other, or ask each other questions.

She also criticized focal participant talk in the video data itself. In one video, during a long silence as another learner was thinking about what to say in her turn as focal participant, Chie said to the student sat next to her “nanka shizen ni shiyou to omottara sa”, which can be translated as “I had thought I would be natural, but you know...”\(^8\). By this, she means that she had intended to speak “naturally”, but that she had not been able to do so, and she is expressing some dissatisfaction with this.

Like Chie, Miki negatively evaluated focal participant talk for not being “real” English. She said that while performing focal participant talk she was concerned with the teaching materials, such as the textbook, which she felt constrained her. She commented that the classroom materials were “independent” from her, and that when taking focal participant turns she was only responding to questions in those materials, rather than speaking to the other people in her group. This, she explained, was “not good”. She contrasted this with her ability to "speak free" when focused on personal identities. Her use of the word "free" is instructive, as she contrasts the "free" personal talk with the constrained focal participant talk.

6.6.3 Miki and “real” English

Miki equated "real" English and improvement in class with social interaction. In an interview, she commented that "if it's real communicating I want to know people, my partner". For Miki, focal participant classroom talk was not "real", as she was not genuinely engaged in social interaction with other

\(^8\) I arrived at this translation in consultation with a Japanese colleague, and the participant herself.
participants' personal identities.

In interviews, she frequently returned to the idea that learning English was connected to learning about others and widening her social world, and when asked about her English learning goals her first response was that she wanted to "meet many people". She often specifically talked about improvement in connection with asking questions to other members of the class. She commented that, rather than responding to the questions the teacher gave to her, to improve she needed to think of her own questions, adding "to know partner I have to question a lot". When watching a video of herself interacting with another student called Keiko, for example, she commented that she had "to improve". When I asked her what she meant by this, she explained that, "I have to improve to know Keiko". She was connecting improvement with learning about other people in the class, rather than with language goals per se.

6.6.4 Chie and “overreaction”

While it was important for Miki to be herself, Chie was quite often trying to be someone else. While Miki talked about “real” English and improvement with regards to social interaction and learning to engage with others in the here-and-now, Chie spoke about “natural” English and improvement with reference to a particular English speaker identity that she needed to learn to be in the future. This English speaker identity was centred on her image of English speakers as “overreactors”.

There are instances in class where Chie attempted to be an “overreacting” English speaker. For example, in one video, while taking her turn as focal participant, Chie suddenly became loud and animated, using exaggerated gestures and exclaiming "I'd love to go to Australia!" while laughing. When she later watched this video she explained that she was trying to "overreact", because this is how she perceived ‘English speakers’ to behave. Chie connected “overreaction” with her idea of “natural” English and improved English-speaking skills. For Chie, then, an ‘English speaker’ is someone who "overreacts", and she explained that by “overreacting” she was trying to fully become like an ‘English-speaker’. When I asked about her future aims for English study, Chie replied that she wanted to study abroad
for one year so that she could become able to speak English and "overreact". She believed that she needed to try to change herself to become the ‘English speaker’ she was aiming to be, and felt that in order to affect this change she needed to go to an English-speaking country.

In saying “I’d love to go to Australia”, Chie was actually role-playing and copying a voice from a CD that she had heard in her ‘Listening’ class. In that audio track, one speaker had used the phrase "I'd love to" with especially exaggerated intonation, and Chie had decided to copy this in her efforts to sound like an English speaker. This is, then, not a spontaneous in-the-moment interaction, but a rehearsed performance of an "overreacting" English-speaker role. Chie is not attempting to speak with her own voice, but with an affected voice copied from an audio CD. This may also be seen as a type of stylization, which is a "communicative action in which speakers produce specially marked and often exaggerated representations of linguistic varieties that lie outside their habitual repertoire" (Rampton, 2013, p. 361).

Clearly Chie is not here performing her own personal identity in English, so much as performing, role-playing, or stylizing her idea of what English-speakers are like, from within the constraints and “comfort” of a focal participant turn. This role-playing allows Chie to perform the kind of English-speaker identity that she sees as a goal of her study. However, it is inhibiting her in performing her own English-speaker identity. Although Chie does want to visit Australia, and so is expressing some personal meaning, she expresses this meaning while performing a role that is discarded as soon as her turn is finished.

Chie explained in an interview that she did not feel that "overreaction" was something that she usually did in Japanese. That is to say, she did not see herself as someone who "overreacted". So the "overreacting" English-speaker identity that she was aiming for, and that was reinforced in many of the texts presented in class, was in many ways incompatible with how she currently saw herself. This can be seen as a type of ideal L2 Self (Dornyei, 2005), or future self, which promotes a kind of perfectionism that is difficult to meet, resulting in negative behaviour, such as fear of making mistakes (see Lake, 2013, p. 228). By her own assessment, Chie failed in her attempts to speak “natural” English, or in other words, perform personal identities in English, in the classroom. The
discrepancy between her actual identity and the future self that she imagined played some part in this, as she claimed that she was unable to speak English in the way that she wanted to. Chie commented that she needed to change herself as a person if she wanted to speak English “naturally”, and a large part of her motivation to study in Canada was a desire to affect this change.

6.6.5 Atteru and mined language

In attempting to copy voices on the CD, Chie was attempting to copy a model presented in class. Chie said that, when speaking English, she was concerned with being "correct" ("atteru" in Japanese), and this was not just a grammatical concern, but also a performance concern. That is, she wanted to use “correct” grammar, but also perform in a way that was “correct” for the “native speaker” identity that she wanted to copy. But while she attempted to role-play and copy the voices on the CDs used in class, she also explained that sometimes the voices on the audio tracks "sounded funny" to her, and she wondered if she could really speak like them. It was not just that she found the language difficult, but that she found it difficult to use the language in the way that she thought it should be used. For example, an activity designed to practice backchannelling focused on simple phrases and sounds, such as really, I see, and uh-huh. While using these simple phrases was not linguistically challenging for her, she said that she felt "funny" saying them, and when performing the activity she was unable to use them successfully.

Miki was much less likely than Chie to attempt to use new language introduced in the class, and she never tried to role-play in the same way as Chie. That Miki was less likely to “mine” the language she used from the classroom materials can be seen clearly in an analysis of Miki and Chie performing two very similar making sentences activities. In her performance of the activity, Miki took turns as the focal participant to produce a series of statements that compared and contrasted two things (an aim of the activity), without once using the language in the textbook. Once focal participant turns had been exchanged a number of times, Miki initiated a change of focus to personal identities and had a conversation in English.
Chie's group, on the other hand, oriented to *focal participant* turns throughout their English interaction. Unlike Miki, Chie took the language in the textbook as the starting point for every *focal participant* turn that she took. At the start of each turn, she typically read a sentence stem from the handout, such as "It is polite to...". She then gazed up from the handout, pausing momentarily as she thought of something to say, and then attempted to complete the utterance. While Miki started each turn by trying to express a particular meaning, Chie started each turn with a focus on the language presented in class, and only later thinking about the meaning of her turn.

6.6.6 *Teacher-superaddressee*

It is noticeable that the participants who were least likely to focus on *personal* identities were also those most likely to role-play and speak more directly to the watching teacher. Chie, for example, was one of the students most likely to talk to or acknowledge the presence of the video camera, whereas Miki often completely forgot that she was being recorded. For instance, at the end of one activity, Chie leant in to the recording equipment and said, "don't give us homework". Apart from being a very rare example of Chie saying something for genuine communicative reasons in English, this clearly indicates that Chie is concerned with the recording equipment, and that this equipment represents the teacher who will watch the recording later.

She also commented that part of her reason for "overreacting" when she said “I'd love to go to Australia" was that she was being recorded by the video camera. However, while her performance can at least partly be attributed to the presence of the camera, I observed occasions when Chie performed similarly while not being recorded. Chie saw the camera as representing the teacher's presence, and most of Chie’s classroom performances were for the teacher who she assumed was watching her, even when she was not being recorded.

While Miki also spoke for the *teacher-superaddressee* in *focal participant* turns, her classroom performances were characterized by attempts to focus on *personal* talk. For example, Miki was one of the participants who was
most likely to speak to me about my personal life, and therefore to attempt to engage with me not as a *teacher*, but as a person with a lived experience outside of the classroom.

6.6.7 "Safe house" talk

Many participants in this study performed *personal* talk in English conversations at some point during the semester. Others, including Chie, did not. This did not mean that they never performed *personal* identities, but that they performed them in Japanese rather than English. As discussed above, participants like Chie were concerned with the watching teacher, and they attempted to hide their *personal* talk from the teacher in *safe houses* (see Canagarajah, 2004), performing it quietly, as they leant in towards one another to minimize personal distance.

Had it been performed in English, this would often have been exactly the kind of "natural" talk that Chie saw as an aim of her studies, and it would have been closer to the kind of dialogic talk that the teachers of the course were hoping to see. Furthermore, it was most often directly connected to the activity being performed. For example, in an activity that asked students to talk about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, Chie and another participant engaged in Japanese *safe house* talk to discuss what they considered to be the inappropriate eating habits of some of the foreign students on the campus. This was both on-topic and clearly engaging for the participants, who laughed and smiled as they talked.

However, the talk was performed in Japanese, while the activity was supposed to be performed in English. It was also performed at a moment when, as students and members of this class, they should have been listening to the teacher (the teacher had briefly paused the activity to give extra instructions). Rather than performing this kind of talk in English and in the open (as Miki often did), it was performed separately from the activity, as a kind of 'illegitimate' talk.

Canagarajah (2004) argues that students are under pressure to conform to the dominant discourses and identities of the institution. They therefore seek sites that are relatively free from surveillance to perform unofficial, off-task or extrapedagogical talk in which they can negotiate other identities. When, for example, there is an English-only policy in the classroom, *safe house*
talk may be performed in the L1. However, it should be noted that for Chie the "natural" English-speaker identity that the course and teacher were attempting to foster was actually desirable and very much in line with her own language learning goals. In fact, she often used safe house talk to criticise her own performances in the classroom for not being "natural" enough.

Clearly, a major reason for Chie hiding this talk from the teacher was that it was performed in Japanese, and the teacher had asked the students to speak in English. Chie performing her personal talk in Japanese is not simply explained by linguistic problems, as most students in these classes scored similarly on English tests and many of them were able to regularly participate in English conversations in the classroom. Neither was she shy in speaking English in focal participant turns. In fact, Chie demonstrated a higher-than-average (for the participants in this study) ability to speak in English when taking focal participant turns. Nor did she lack motivation to speak English, as she repeatedly said that her aim was to speak “natural” English, and she applied to study English in Canada for one year to achieve this aim.

The problem was more to do with her lack of confidence to speak English "naturally" outside of familiar classroom discourse structures. Focal participant turns provided her with comfortable spaces to perform a limited range of actions specified by the activity. However, Chie said that did not currently see herself as an English speaker, and as discussed above, the discrepancy between her actual self and her ideal L2 self was so great that it led to her avoiding personal talk in English through fear of making mistakes. If Chie had felt comfortable performing personal identities in English, she may have been able to perform this safe house talk in English, which would have been a very large step towards achieving her goal of speaking “naturally”.

Furthermore, the identities of her interlocutors were important for Chie’s understanding of how “natural” an interaction could be. For her, “natural” English was associated with “native speakers”, and the Japanese students in her class were not “native speakers”. Miki, on the other hand, talked about “real” English as being English used for “real” communicative purposes, such as learning about her partner. “Real” English for Miki involved her in engaging socially with those around her, whereas for Chie “natural” English invoked a certain kind of “native speaker” identity, which was not easy for her to perform.
6.6.8 Appropriate classroom talk

Chie also reported that she did not normally expect to be allowed to take part in personal conversations in the classroom. Indeed, many of the participants said that at the beginning of the semester they had been surprised that their teachers encouraged them to talk together in English. Almost all of them had not previously been encouraged to, or expected to, take part in English conversations or discussions in the classroom. Some of the students said that their high school teachers had actively discouraged them from talking together and that teachers had tightly controlled classroom turn-taking practices. Even at the end of the 'Communication' course, Chie explained that she did not necessarily see conversation as being appropriate in the classroom.

Again the teacher-superaddressee is important here. Chie said that she actually thought taking part in English conversations was useful in helping her to improve her language skills, but that she did not expect the teacher to find conversation amongst students acceptable. This at least partly explains why, when she does engage in personal talk, she hides this from the teacher, as she imagines that the teacher-superaddressee would not permit it. On the other hand, when I asked Miki what she learned on the course, her first response was that she had "learned to enjoy conversation". Over the semester she had come to see conversation in English as an appropriate and enjoyable classroom activity. Chie had not "learned" this.

6.6.9 Caveats

However, Miki was also held back in her English studies, often by competing social discourses and identities, which often revealed themselves in what I call her caveats concerning her future English experiences. For example, Miki expressed a desire to travel, but said that it would be difficult for her to actually do this. Japanese people often express the view that Japan is a "safe" country while other countries are comparatively "dangerous". Although Miki expressed a strong desire to travel, she did not travel and had never been abroad, and one reason for this was her fear of the danger involved in travel.

It was not just the perceived danger of travel that held her back. In an interaction recorded in the video data, Miki said that the English phrase
"Japanese wife" sounded good to her. Another student then commented that Miki seemed to be the "international-marriage type". That is, she seemed to be the sort of person who would like to get married to a non-Japanese person. Miki responded, "I don't know, in reality my grandparents and parents would not agree with it". While she does not reject this identity, she does not accept it either, giving as a reason the opposition of her family. No-one in the interaction challenges this, and it is understood by all that parental opposition would be a valid reason for not being able to have an international marriage. The discourse of filial peity that underpins the assumptions behind Miki's response, and Miki's identity as a good daughter, are given and accepted as reasons for not being able to get married to a foreigner. Again, while she expressed much interest in international marriage, this "caveat" was an important modifying detail that inhibited her.

So, while Miki is in many ways a young woman with an international outlook and a desire to broaden her social world (seeing English as a tool to help her achieve this), she also describes herself as being constrained by discourses and identities that limit the choices that she can make. Chie, on the other hand, is more constrained than Miki in the classroom, but is less constrained in making decisions to travel and study abroad outside of it.

6.6.10 Connections outside of the classroom

While she was constrained by certain discourses and identities, Miki was able to make connections between the world outside the classroom and the world inside it. She did this by often performing personal talk in the classroom, but also by continuing the English conversations that she had in class outside of the classroom. Those participants who were most likely to perform personal identities in English generally did this. For example, in one video recorded for the project, Natsumi takes part in a simple discussion with Misa, exchanging focal participant turns to answer questions in the textbook. When they finish the activity, Natsumi says "finished" and starts to pack away her pens and books as it is the end of the class. In packing away her student paraphernalia she is, in a way, packing away her student identity. She then initiates a conversation with Misa, discussing the exact same topics that they discussed in the focal participant talk, but this time for more
genuinely communicative reasons and with a focus on personal identities. This talk continued even as they left the classroom. Chie, however, did not make these connections between the talk that happened in the classroom and the social world outside of it.

6.6.11 Two learners: summary
In this section I have focused on two participants who took very different approaches to their classroom practices. While both of these participants were motivated to study and took leading roles in classroom interactions, they had quite different identities as English students that resulted in different classroom experiences.

Chie equated learning English with performing like a native speaker, and saw herself as a deficient communicator, struggling to achieve accurate native-like proficiency. She was concerned with being “correct”, not only in terms of grammar, but also in terms of performing in the "correct" way for an English speaker. This concern with being "correct", and also with being watched by the teacher, contributed to her inability to speak for genuine communicative reasons in English, and when she did perform personal talk it was performed as Japanese safe house talk.

The discrepancy between her actual self and her ideal L2 self was quite large, and the "overreacting " English-speaker model that she was aiming for was difficult for her to perform, which resulted in her play-acting in English. This also contributed to her inability to speak “naturally” in the classroom. She had not developed, and did not appear to be developing, a personal identity as an English-speaker, and she saw herself as someone who studied English, rather than as someone who spoke it. She saw controlled classroom activities as offering her a comfortable framework for practicing speaking in English. However, she negatively evaluated these “comfortable” focal participant interactions for not being “natural”.

Miki, on the other hand, equated learning English with learning about other people in meaningful interactions. She quite often performed personal talk in English without regard for the watching teacher. Further to this, Miki also occasionally turned pedagogic talk with the teacher into personal talk, by shifting the focus away from his identity as teacher and on
to more personal identities, such as father or foreigner. In doing so she was being agentive and creating discourse spaces where she could exercise more control over the talk and perform the more personal identities that she saw as being central to “real” English. Miki, and other students like her, such as Natsumi, made connections between the world outside of the classroom and the world inside it. For example, English conversations that they started in the classroom sometimes continued after the class had finished. The personal interactions that Miki (and others) engaged in in class gave them opportunities to practice performing a wider range of actions in English, while participating in more fluent and engaging talk.

However, while Miki was agentive in the classroom, she described herself as lacking agency outside of it. Although she wanted to travel, it was not safe, and while she might have been interested in an international marriage, she said her family would disapprove. Her interest in English was in the here-and-now of immediate social interactions with those around her, and although the promise of a broader social world appealed to her, she ultimately shrank from this. While Chie negatively evaluated her own classroom performances, as she shied away from personal talk in English, she was the student who went to Canada for a year to study English. She explained that in Canada she wanted to force herself to change to become a “natural” English speaker. One goal of language learning may be seen as transformation (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 33), and Chie made it clear that she wanted to travel and use English to transform who she is, and open up new possibilities for herself as a person.

Focal participant turns and role-playing did afford opportunities for Chie to participate actively in classroom interactions and to practice the target language. And, as she also commented that the role-playing was fun, it was in some way motivating and engaging for her. In this way, role-playing while taking a focal participant turn can be seen as enabling Chie’s participation in spoken English classroom activities.

However, while focal participant turn-taking provides opportunities for participation, many students negatively evaluated it for not being “natural”, and also for not being interesting. Miki, as we have seen, found focal participant talk restrictive and was not motivated to participate in it, as she did not find it relevant to her own life. This was not simply to do with the topic
of the talk, as *focal participant* talk was often on the same, or very similar, topics to *personal* talk. There are many instances in the data where students become much more animated when discussing a topic in a *personal* interaction that they had already spoke about in a *focal participant* interaction. It is the lack of engagement with one another, the minimized social dimension, which makes the *focal participant* talk less engaging.

Furthermore, those learners who were judged to be most successful on the course (both by themselves and the teachers) were those who also performed *personal* talk in the classroom, and these learners were also more likely to positively evaluate the course itself. Students who communicated in the here-and-now, for genuine *personal* reasons and without worrying about the watching teacher, were those who were evaluated to be most successful on this course. Those who did not move beyond *focal participant* interactions to find a *personal* voice in English, who concerned themselves with the watching teacher and hid *personal* talk in Japanese *safe houses*, were seen as less successful.
7. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate how participants in an EFL classroom produced identities in interactions, how these identities impacted upon teaching and learning practices, and what this tells us about interaction and learning conditions in the language classroom. In order to answer these questions, I analyzed the structure of classroom interactions using tools from CA and attempted to understand what identities participants could be observed performing. I found that, when performing small-group and pair interactions, the participants expectedly oriented to their identities as students, which in particular required them to take it in turns to perform the role of focal participant.

In doing so, I have offered support for Hauser's (2009) finding that Japanese university students in small-group discussions perform fairly monologic interactions, with one “primary speaker” at a time taking it in turns to talk. Hauser was unable to make any claims to generalizability due to his small sample size, and my study provides some evidence to support the wider applicability of his findings. I have also taken the analysis further than Hauser was able to in his chapter. I have analyzed much more interactional data (collected across an academic semester rather than on one day) and have looked at activities other than small-group discussions. This more longitudinal and varied data set has allowed me to show how changes occur across the semester and across activity types. I have also used methodologies other than CA to investigate a wider range of communicative modes and the participants’ consciousness, as well as involving the participants in the analysis through the use of video-playback sessions. Furthermore, I have attempted to discuss the implications for language learning, which are largely absent from Hauser's chapter, and I have investigated the identities of the participants and how these relate to these classroom practices.

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings, focussing first of all on the potential importance of personal conversations for language learning, before considering focal participant practices, participants’ identities, and methodological issues.
7.1 Personal talk

Although the participants most frequently foregrounded their student identities and took it in turns to be the focal participant and perform a turn for the watching teacher-superaddressee, as the semester progressed some of them began to perform personal talk in English. A finding that emerged in my analysis was that the off-task personal talk offered promise in terms of providing learning opportunities and language practice. The personal talk that I analyzed in my data is very much conversational, and as such may be thought of as a type of conversation. While previous studies have also suggested a positive role for conversation and off-task talk in language learning (e.g. van Lier and Matsuo, 2000; Wong and Waring, 2010), L2 conversation is a surprisingly under-researched area (Kasper and Kim, 2015), and much of the research that does exist focuses on learners interacting with L1 speakers rather than with each other. Furthermore, the studies that have examined learner-learner conversations have most often been conducted in ESL contexts rather than EFL contexts such as the one that I was investigating.

For example, several studies have investigated conversations-for-learning with an L1 speaker present, which are non-formal institutional interactions (Hauser, 2008) often occurring in ESL contexts outside of the classroom, such as conversation clubs or lounges (see Hosoda, 2000; Hauser, 2003; Shea, 1994; Siegal, 1994; Kivik, 2012). These studies have found that learning opportunities do arise in L2 conversations, providing some support for their continued use. However, as will be discussed below, the findings of these studies will not necessarily be generalizable to peer conversations in a monolingual EFL classroom context, such as the one that I have investigated.

There have been some studies of learner-learner conversations (i.e. without an L1 speaker present) in ESL contexts such as the US (Varonis and Gass, 1985; van Lier and Matsuo, 2000) that have also suggested conversations may be of some benefit to language learning, but that they are also in need of further research. Again, we cannot necessarily generalize from the findings of this research to a monolingual EFL classroom context. For example, the lack of a shared background among speakers, such as a common L1, and also the motivational profile of learners who are studying abroad (rather than taking compulsory English classes) will likely affect how the interactions are performed.
Further to this, this research has mostly investigated data especially collected outside of the classroom, rather than investigating naturally occurring small talk in the classroom (however, see Hellermann, 2008; Markee, 2000; Seedhouse, 2004 for studies of learner classroom interactions).

There are very few studies that have specifically looked at the kind of interactions that I have investigated (i.e. peer conversations occurring as off-task talk in an EFL classroom) in the way that I have investigated them. Those studies that have been undertaken into EFL learner conversations have mostly limited the discussion to examining turn-taking practices (e.g. Krug and Otsu, 2011; Otsu and Krug, 2013), rather than language-learning opportunities. This led Kasper and Kim (2015) to suggest that an area for future research should be how participants in L2 conversations without an L1 speaker present generate and treat opportunities for L2 learning. So, while I did not set out to investigate L2 conversations as such, one outcome of my study is that my findings have addressed this under-researched area. One possible reason for this area being under-researched is that its potential importance may have been overlooked, while another is that capturing spontaneously occurring conversations is more difficult than recording interactions that have been especially set-up for data collection. Either way, my data is significant in drawing attention to something that has previously received little consideration in the literature.

7.1.1 Negotiation of meaning in personal talk

As mentioned above, findings of research into conversations with L1 speakers present will not necessarily tell us much about how learning opportunities are treated in peer conversations in EFL classrooms, as the presence of an L1 speaker appears to be consequential for the way that the talk is organized. For example, L1 speakers have been found to dominate interactions (Kasper and Kim, 2015) and, as these L1 speakers often focus on achieving understanding and maintaining a smooth interaction, they frequently pass-up opportunities to address problems in learners’ speech (Kasper and Kim, 2007). This means that they often avoid performing repair (Varonis and Gass, 1985; Van Lier and Matuso, 2000) and language-learning opportunities are subsequently missed. This has led researchers to argue that conversations involving an L1 speaker are not effective at promoting negotiation of meaning.
Nao (2015, p. 211) observes that, despite being called "free conversation", the talk in a conversation lounge in a Japanese university takes on institutional characteristics with a unidirectional exchange of information from teacher to learners. Similarly, in a study of a Japanese university conversation lounge, Butterfield (2015, p. 106) notes how "the actions of the native speakers are indistinguishable from teachers", with the native speaker controlling turn taking. When the native speaker asked a question, he/she was unlikely to get a response unless he/she used embodied actions to nominate a specific student.

However, with no L1 speaker present, peer interactions are likely to be quite different. Varonis and Gass (1985) found that interactions amongst learners in an ESL context generated more negotiation and repair than interactions involving an L1 speaker, and I have similarly found that the participants in my study do generate and orient to learning opportunities in personal talk. Furthermore, unlike some conversations-for-learning, in which L1 speakers often focus on maintaining a smooth interaction at the expense of performing repair (Kasper and Kim, 2007), the participants in my study frequently performed repair even when understanding had already been achieved. For example, in line 27 of Excerpt 7:1 (on page 166), we saw how Hana repaired Chinami’s use of a Japanese word by translating it into English. Although all the participants had understood the Japanese word, repair was still performed, demonstrating that while they are engaged in meaningful off-task personal talk, the participants still orient to a need to speak in the L2, and they generate learning opportunities as they do so. They are foregrounding their personal identities, but still midgrounding their identities as language learners. Varonis and Gass (1985) do not report this practice (i.e. repair involving substitution of an L1 word with an L2 word) happening in their study, where participants did not always share an L1.

Another finding of research into conversation with an L1 speaker present is that the participants’ identities as novice and expert speakers are omnirelevant (Kasper and Kim, 2015). This means that, at any moment, participants may invoke an L1 speaker’s status as expert speaker, which is not the case in peer talk among speakers of a similar level. In peer interactions, rather than potentially turning to an expert speaker to solve language problems, the participants often work collaboratively to do so.

Varonis and Gass’ (1985) study, in which the participants were
strangers with a variety of L1s, found that interactants with less of a shared background, such as a shared L1, tended to engage in more negotiation. As such, conversations between learners in the ESL context that they studied often consisted of extended negotiation sequences that disrupted the flow of the conversation. In fact, nearly a quarter of what they call "non-understanding routines" were part of a larger routine, and these routines often occupied “the major portion of the conversational interaction at the expense of moving the conversation along” (p. 73). This indicates that non-understandings required a significant amount of interactional work to resolve, and that these conversations were dominated more by extended attempts to repair problems, rather than actual conversational talk.

This was not the case in the personal talk in my data, where participants could make use of their shared L1 and also their shared knowledge as friends to help resolve problems efficiently. For example, there was a higher incidence of co-completions in personal talk, as participants were more likely to know from the context and their shared understandings what word another speaker was searching for. It seems to be the case that friends interacting in an EFL classroom, while often needing to engage in repair to resolve language problems, will not need to spend as much effort on this negotiation as do strangers with different L1s in an ESL context.

Varonis and Gass (1985, p. 83) might see this as a problem, however, as they suggest that longer non-understanding routines evidence active involvement that facilitates language acquisition (Stevick, 1981). That is, longer negotiation sequences involve more engagement in thinking about language, and this can drive language learning. However, a number of researchers (Nakahama et al., 2001; Van Lier and Matsuo, 2000; Aston, 1986; Foster and Ohta, 2005; Bruton, 2005) are critical of this position, arguing that too much negotiation indicates that an interaction is somehow deficient. They further argue that performing repair may be demotivating and face-threatening for learners, which was indeed the case in the formal discussions in my data. On the other hand, Van Lier and Matsuo (2000) argue that interactions in which comprehension is sufficient, and repair is not needed so frequently, are more satisfying for learners, while still providing many learning opportunities.

Looking only at focal participant talk, my study provides some support for these criticisms of negotiation/repair as being face-threatening, as
participants were reluctant to perform other-repair when they focussed on their student identities. However, I have also found that higher levels of repair are not necessarily demotivating, as participants reported that the personal off-task talk, which featured the highest levels of other-repair in my data, was also the most engaging. In these interactions, participants were able to smoothly and efficiently perform repair while still maintaining the flow of the talk. And while Varonis and Gass’ study of L2 conversations in an ESL context found that much of the participants’ time was spent on resolving problems, rather than moving the discourse forward, I found that participants could engage in higher levels of negotiation without it distracting too much from the conversation. This is because they made use of their shared understandings to help them efficiently negotiate meaning.

7.1.2 Codeswitching

In the previous section, I discussed how participants in personal talk would sometimes perform other-repair that involved the substitution of an L1 word with an L2 word. This, I argue, demonstrates that while they are focussed primarily on meaning, the participants in these interactions still orient to learning and a need to speak in English. It was noticeable in general that, although these interactions predominantly occurred in English, there was more use of Japanese in personal talk than in focal participant talk. This use of Japanese occurred most often in repair and negotiation practices or else occasioned a repair sequence (as we saw, for example, in line 2 of Excerpt 10).

Cheng (2013, p. 882) has found that learners engaged in language-learning activities are more likely to activate a form-focussed frame in which hard boundaries between the L1 and L2 are established. In other words, when performing learning activities, the participants are more likely to attempt to speak only in the L2. In contrast, Cheng (2013) found that when focussed on meaning, rather than performing a form-focussed activity, they established soft boundaries between the languages, which allowed for the use of both the L1 and the L2. I believe that we see something very similar in my data. In focal participant interactions, the participants are orienting to a form-focussed frame in which the performance of accurate sentences is of more concern than meaningful communication, and in these interactions relatively hard boundaries are established between the languages. When engaged in personal talk, on the
other hand, they are engaged in a meaning-focussed event in which the boundaries are softer, and they are more likely to use the L1 when needed.

The use of L1 in the language classroom is an emotive issue, and we may question the value of learner talk that makes excessive use of the home language. It is therefore worth repeating that, when the participants engaged in personal talk did make use of Japanese, it was most often as a repair initiation (of the "how do I say this in English?" type), or else the L2 use was treated as repairable and subsequently translated into English. This codeswitching, or translanguaging, therefore provides for learning potentials. It allows for work in the ZPD to occur, in which participants help each other to say things that they were previously unable to say (through the "how do I say this?" type of self-initiated repair, or the word substitution repair), or else leads to a focus on language, particularly individual lexical items. By making links between the L1 and the L2, the participants are able to work together to co-construct meaningful learning opportunities for one another.

In contrast, the comparatively monolingual approach of the focal participant talk, while providing opportunities for students to work hard to perform interactions in English (and thus providing many opportunities for output in the target language), may be seen as constraining certain learning opportunities. Specifically, participants did not so often make use of their Japanese language resources in exchanges with a focus on learning.

7.1.2 Tasks vs. conversation

The patterns of interaction that I observed in personal talk stand in contrast to the patterns observed in focal participant talk, such as the formal discussions and information exchange tasks. Previous research has investigated differences between conversations (i.e. personal talk) and task-based talk (such as information exchange tasks), often focussing on how these different kinds of talk provide for different kinds of repair and negotiation of meaning.

A consistent finding of this research has been that conversation compares unfavourably to task-based talk in promoting negotiation and repair. In fact, Long (1996, p. 448) goes as far as to write that “free conversation is notoriously poor as a context for driving interlanguage development”. He claims that tasks are superior in promoting negotiation of meaning and therefore, following the Interaction Hypothesis, language learning. According to this
argument, controlled task interactions are more likely to produce communication breakdowns that lead to repair negotiations and interactional modifications, which can ultimately push language development. In more open-ended conversational talk, it is argued that interlocutors can drop problematic topics or side-step interactional difficulties rather than try to resolve them (see also Doughty, 2000 and Pica, 1992), as is the case in conversations-for-learning with an L1 speaker present (Kasper and Kin, 2007).

Many studies have provided support for these claims, such as Gass and Varonis (1989) and Nakahama et al. (2001), who found that tasks such as a picture description task and an information gap activity (both of which were used in the communication course that I have studied for this project) produced more negotiation than conversation activities. Similarly, van Lier and Matsuo (2000) have claimed that “negotiation in the repairing sense does not seem to play a major role in conversational interaction in the way that it appears to do in pedagogical tasks” (p. 284). However, in my study, I have found the opposite; participants were most likely to perform repair and negotiate for meaning in personal talk.

7.1.3 Why is there more repair/negotiation in personal talk?

In thinking about why this might be the case, it should be noted that there has been a “relative lack of classroom-based studies” into tasks (Samuda and Bygate, 2008, p. 190), with most studies of task interactions investigating learners in a setting especially set-up for data collection, sometimes in interactions with L1 speakers rather than other learners (e.g. Nakahama, et al., 2001; Pica at al., 1996; Ushimura, 1992; Gass and Varonis, 1989, Yuan and Ellis, 2003). My study, on the other hand, is of peer interactions in the classroom. This difference could be crucial, and Foster (1998, p. 19) has suggested that participants in experimental contexts may be more conscious of their language and therefore attempt to perform tasks better. In other words, a task will be performed differently in a classroom with peers than in experimental conditions (and with a stranger). Foster (1998) made this claim after finding that information exchange tasks in classroom settings in her study were not necessarily effective at producing negotiated interaction. In finding that information exchange activities did not necessarily produce more negotiation, my study provides some
support for Foster, who recommends that language teachers be cautious of claims that are made based on studies undertaken in laboratory conditions.

However, my findings also contradict Foster’s assertion that “negotiation for meaning is not a strategy that language learners are predisposed to employ” (p. 1), as the participants in my study frequently performed repair and negotiated meaning when engaged in off-task personal talk. One reason for this, given by the participants, was that they felt more comfortable offering repair to friends. As the semester progressed and students developed relationships with one another, many of them began to participate in personal interactions in which they focussed on their identities as friends, and as they focussed more on these identities they also began to perform more other-repair.

Participants saw repair in focal participant interactions as being more face-threatening than repair in personal talk. Of course, as shown in the analysis section, participants did perform some other-repair and negotiation of meaning when engaged in focal participant talk during tasks and activities, such as the information exchange activities, where they negotiated meaning through word searches or confirmation checks. Mostly, this repair was either sought by the speaker, or else was non-face-threatening as it sought to confirm through repetition something that had already been understood. When foregrounding their student identities, participants were less likely to attempt to provide or initiate potentially face-threatening other-repair that focussed on errors or misunderstandings. For example, in an information exchange activity, one participant used the word “feisty” to which her partner replied “I see”, although she had not understood this word at all. And in a picture description activity, a participant drew an element of a picture in the wrong place, which was seen by the speaker who did not attempt to correct this misunderstanding.

As participants claimed that they felt more comfortable offering repair to friends, they also claimed that they were less comfortable performing other-repair in focal participant interactions. They felt that, while performing a learning activity, this repair may be face-threatening to other learners. They also felt that displaying a lack of knowledge or understanding may cause them to lose face themselves, as they felt some responsibility to understand what their partner was saying. Especially in what they perceived to be more formal classroom activities, such as the formal discussions, the participants were more
likely to see their performances as being potentially assessed by the teacher-superaddressee, and this assessment (as they perceived it) favoured unproblematic “accurate” interactions, with misunderstandings being seen as something to be avoided. As discussed above, a number of researchers (van Lier and Matsuo, 2000; Nakahama et al., 2001; Foster and Ohta, 2005; Aston, 1986) have argued that repair emphasizes a lack of success, and as the students believed that the success of their performances was being assessed, repair of another learner’s turn was seen as reflecting badly on that student’s performance and possibly her assessment by the watching teacher. Further, attempts to correct their own misunderstandings could reflect negatively on themselves and negatively affect assessment by the teacher.

As well as this, in focal participant talk, many of the participants claimed to be less engaged by the interaction, as they did not see it as being connected to their lives, and they subsequently felt less inclined to attempt to resolve misunderstandings when they arose. The focal participant interactions demonstrate a focus on product rather than process. That is, the participants are not focused on a process of discussion, but rather on producing a language display for the teacher. In interviews, all participants commented that, during focal participant interactions, they were more concerned about assessment by the teacher than about understanding and being understood by the other members of their group. When engaged in personal talk with friends, however, they were often socially motivated to push the interaction forward as they genuinely wanted to interact with the other members of their group and learn about them, so rather than dropping interactional problems they tried hard to make sense of their conversational partners. When they reached a problem, they attempted to quickly resolve it so that they could continue the talk.

Although participants were more likely to perform repair when engaged in personal interactions, at times their identities as friends were actually a hindrance to repair when they were engaged in focal participant talk. In an attempt to make classroom talk more relevant to the learners’ lives, a number of activities asked them to talk about what they did outside of the classroom. However, when these interactions occurred between participants who were friends outside of the classroom, much of this information was already known in advance. For example, an activity asked learners to exchange information about their plans for the upcoming weekend and to write their partner’s answers in a
table in the textbook. However, many of the learners had plans to do things together at the weekend, which meant that they did not need to exchange any information. This meant that learners could write the information in the tables in their textbooks without asking each other questions or otherwise negotiating meaning. In this way, friend identities sometimes closed down focal participant interactions.

This is, of course, partly a consequence of the artificiality of the task, and it calls into question the use of such activities with learners who are friendly with one another. Some activities that attempted to help students develop relationships and make the classroom relevant to learners' lives outside of the classroom, suffered when the participants already had relationships and connections outside of the classroom. The learners could have chosen to focus on practicing the language even though they already knew the answers to the questions (and some participants did this), but this would have defeated some of the rationale for using such activities to promote meaningful interaction. Focal participant interactions that required participants to share personal information or opinions frequently suffered from this problem when the participants were friends. If these activities had been performed by relative strangers, who had less knowledge of one another, then we might assume that they could have been performed more successfully.

So, in personal talk participants felt more comfortable and motivated to attempt to provide repair to one another, whereas in more institutional classroom activities they often felt disinclined to offer repair due to a perceived threat to face, negative evaluation by the teacher (despite the textbook teaching repair practices), or else due to a lack of engagement in the interaction. However, there were times when friend identities inhibited negotiation in classroom tasks and activities. The topic of identities will be returned to later in the chapter.

7.1.4 L1 use in the classroom

In the preceding section, I suggested that focal participant interactions demonstrate a focus on product, rather than process, while in Section 7.1.2, I noted that there were softer boundaries between languages in meaning-focussed personal talk than in the classroom activities. Kunitz (2013) has observed that students use the L2 in teacher-specified tasks as the product
of a prior process of planning, which happens in the L1. That is, tasks are products that are performed in English, whereas the L1 is used to engage in the processes that prepare for that product. This, I believe, is commensurate with the understanding of focal participant interactions as products, as well as other examples in my data of activities being performed largely in Japanese. I observed in my data, for example, that students writing texts together mostly spoke in the L1 (while the product, or text, was in the L2), and potential problems in an upcoming task or activity were sometimes repaired in Japanese prior to the actual beginning of the task (as the participants understood it). And in formal discussions, non-focal participants could frequently be seen using dictionaries to translate their thoughts prior to speaking. In interviews, participants said that they often used their time when not speaking to formulate their ideas in Japanese, and then translate them into English. That is, L1 was used for processes of thinking, preparation, and resolving misunderstandings, whereas the actual tasks and activity interactions were English performances (or products) that could be evaluated. As such, the focal participant (on-task) talk was often seen as a product to be performed in the L2, while process-based interactions were more often performed in the L1.

Student use of the L1 in EFL classrooms is argued to be common and inevitable (Manara, 2007; Markee and Kunitz, 2015; Leeming, 2011). While some researchers and teachers argue that L1 use can play an important role in the classroom (e.g. Anderson, 2017), some have argued that too much L1 may undermine the rationale for using group work and tasks (e.g. Skehan, 1998b), as "the use of L1 seems paradoxical with the pedagogical argument for using tasks to increase L2 practice" (Bao and Du, 2015, p. 12). It has been shown that students will often engage in off-task interpersonal talk in the L1 (Swain and Lapkin, 2000). For example, the majority of participants in Levine’s (2003) study of L1 use in the classroom reported that, as soon as an activity was completed, they switched into L1 interaction most of the time. This led Levine to conclude that, for the “strong majority” of students, the L1 was “the unmarked code for “off-record” communication” (p. 350). And Y. Sato (2014) found that, in her study of Japanese learners, L1 was most frequently used for social purposes, often in “task-unrelated” interaction. As can be seen from these studies, EFL learners do engage in off-task talk, and for most learners this talk is in the L1.

In my study, personal talk at the start of the semester most often
occurred in Japanese. But, as the semester progressed, personal talk was increasingly performed in English, as well as Japanese. We might expect to see extensive L2 use in conversations-for-learning, where the institutional purpose of the interaction is to practice the target language, especially as an L1 speaker is most often present. And in ESL contexts, where learners do not always share an L1, we might expect them to use the L2 as a lingua franca when interacting with each other. This is especially likely to be the case in studies that set up interactions specifically for data collection, as learners are aware that they are being studied and may as a result attempt to perform the interactions “better” (Foster, 1998). However, this cannot be assumed to be the case in off-task talk in a foreign language classroom, and L1 use is a concern for teachers in monolingual EFL classrooms that make use of small-group activities (Carless, 2008; Swain and Lapkin, 2000; Bruton, 2005; Willis and Willis, 2007, p. 220-1).

This has led to many teachers avoiding small-group and task-based work, as it is likely to lead to off-task talk, especially in the L1, which from an interactionist perspective is not likely to not facilitate language learning (Bao and Du, 2015). This is argued particularly to be the case with lower-level learners, such as the participants in my study. However, I have found that the participants in my study were not only able to, but frequently did perform conversations together in English, without an L1 speaker present. And as discussed above, it was also clear that, far from being problematic, the manner in which the participants oriented to L1 use in personal talk provided learning opportunities. I would therefore argue that off-task personal talk can play an important role in the classroom, and that L1 use in personal talk is not in itself problematic and that it should not necessarily be discouraged.

Further, off-task talk that occurred entirely in Japanese could also be argued to have its benefits. Chie, for example, often used Japanese off-task talk to reflect on her performance in tasks, to extend or clarify meanings and conversations that had arisen in an activity, or to focus on a particular language point. Both the use of English and Japanese in off-task talk can be seen to have potential benefits. Markee and Kunitz (2015, p. 433) argue that teachers need to make important decisions about L1 use in the classroom, and the issue of L1 policies will be briefly discussed in the Conclusion.
7.1.5 The potential importance of authentic off-task talk

Assuming that authentic talk should be encouraged, Wong and Waring (2010) have similarly argued a case for off-task talk, which they suggest is the most authentic interaction found in the classroom. However, the studies that they cite do not necessarily make a case for off-task *personal* talk. One of the two examples of off-task talk that they cite to support their argument is actually an example of task-related talk (specifically, pre-task planning) (Mori, 2002), and as such is not an example of a *personal* conversation. The other example is from Markee’s (2005) study. Markee did specifically study L2 off-task interpersonal talk between peers, arguing that it may be “just as valuable as on-task interaction” (p. 212). However, this claim was not really supported in his chapter, which focussed more on the sequential achievement of this talk. Furthermore, his study was not of a classroom in which all learners share a L1, and so provides no evidence that lower-level EFL learners in a monolingual context might engage in off-task talk in English. However, what his study does show is that, in an ESL context at least, students will engage in off-task talk in the L2.

Waring (2013), who writes that little attention has been paid to off-task talk in the classroom, also argues for its importance. In her study, she shows how moments of playful language use between teachers and learners in an adult ESL class in the US offer learners opportunities to experiment with a wider range of voices, implement a wider range of language functions, and provide opportunities to 'do conversations'. Similarly, in a study of rapport-building between teachers and students in Korean language courses at an American university, Park (2016) argues that informal conversation should not be dismissed, as it provides opportunities for spontaneous output that helps prepare students for interactions outside the classroom. And in another recent publication, Illes and Akcan (2017), who studied classrooms in Hungary and Turkey, also argue that teachers should encourage off-task talk in the classroom, rather than penalize or ignore it. Like Waring (2003), they also focussed on moments of humour, particularly in interactions involving the teacher, and found that humorous language play allowed learners to experiment and find their own voices in English.

These studies, which focus more on language play and rapport-building between learners and teachers, all argue for the importance of off-task talk in the
classroom. While I did not specifically analyze humorous language play or rapport-building with the teacher (although these did occur), I did find that there may be many reasons for encouraging off-task personal conversations in the classroom. I have found that off-task personal talk can be and is performed in English in an EFL classroom, and that it provides important language practice. As discussed above, I have found personal talk to produce moments of negotiation/repair in my data, and it was also more fluent, dialogic, and engaging for participants. Based on my findings, I would argue that personal off-task talk provided the participants in my study with important learning opportunities. Wong and Waring (2010) tentatively suggested that “we might need to think twice about our policy towards off-task talk” (p. 277). My study, I believe, provides strong evidence in support of this statement. In fact, I would argue more strongly that we should definitely rethink policies towards off-task talk. In short, off-task talk, occurring mostly in the L2 once other work has been completed or in time especially set aside for this talk, should be encouraged. (Of course, terminologically, we can no longer call this “off-task” talk if we especially set time aside for it, and so I would rather use my term personal talk).

7.1.6 Personal talk: summary

Varonis and Gass (1985), Nakahama et al. (2001, p. 401), and Kasper and Kim (2015) have all suggested that peer conversations are worthy of future research, but this research is still thin on the ground. My study, therefore, provides important insights into peer conversations in a low-intermediate EFL classroom, which is clearly an area in need of further study. I have found that lower-level learners in a compulsory English course can and do perform personal interactions in English. The personal interactions that I analyzed provided learners with opportunities to engage in more dialogic, fluent, challenging, and engaging talk that presented more opportunities to efficiently negotiate meaning than the other types of talk that I analyzed. I therefore argue that personal talk between peers in the classroom should play an important role in any course, similar to the course under investigation, that aims to develop learners’ ability to interact in English. Peer conversation should not be considered trivial, or as something to be avoided as being off-task, but should rather be encouraged.
7.2 Formal discussions

*Formal discussions* were an important part of the communication course in this study and were used a number of times in the two classes, making up about 90 minutes of the video data. Although many English communication courses at Japanese universities include a focus on similar group discussions, Fujimoto (2010) argues that, despite their wide use in language classrooms, they are relatively under-researched and need to better understood. My study can therefore contribute to our understanding of small-group discussions in lower-level EFL classes in a Japanese university context, and it seems important to discuss them here.

Fujimoto (2010), Watanabe (1993), and Hauser (2009) have all found that Japanese learners engaged in small-group discussions tend to be concerned with procedural matters, such as the order in which turns are taken. All of these researchers have found, for example, that Japanese participants tend to spend time negotiating who speaks first, as well as the subsequent order of turn-taking, which was something that the American participants in Watanabe’s (1993) study did not do. According to Watanabe, who actually looked at Japanese-language discussions, turn-taking followed a hierarchical pattern (females first, followed by younger males and then older males). However, I did not observe this hierarchical turn-taking in the *formal discussions* in my data, where all the participants were female and of approximately the same age.

I did, however, observe a similar concern with procedural matters, with turns being passed almost literally around the table in much the same way that Hauser (2009) described. Hauser, in his study of small-group discussions in a lower-level EFL class in a Japanese university, analysed only four learners performing 38 minutes of interaction. As such, he refrained from making any claims about his findings being a general feature of student discussions. Although Hauser was rightly cautious, I have found strong support for the generalizability of his findings to the similar discussions seen in my study.

Studies by the Politeness Research Group of JACET (Japan Association of College English Teachers) (Shigemitsu, 2009) also found similar turn-taking behaviour in Japanese language conversations, which were set up and recorded especially for analysis (rather than occurring 'naturally'). In these
studies, participants were put into groups of three and asked to have a
discussion on any topics that they liked for 30 minutes. Shigemitsu (2009, p. 7)
concludes that Japanese participants performed interactions that consist of a
"round-table" style of "monologue type or duet type" talk, which differs from the
more interactive organization of conversations performed by American
participants in the study. It is claimed that Japanese participants did not
exchange information interactively and speakers' turns often contain a complete
story, the end of which is signalled by termination cues. Other participants wait
for completion of the story without asking questions, and a new speaker only
starts to talk once it has been confirmed that they can begin. These descriptions
of Japanese language interactions seem similar to those that both Hauser
(2011) and myself have described. Shigemitsu (2009) claims that these features
are conversational norms that are shared by Japanese speakers, and that they
are "different from other languages" (p. 7). However, I would be very wary of
claiming that these practices are norms in all Japanese conversations, or that
they are necessarily different from other languages. I have seen, for example, in
my own data that off-task talk is performed very differently.

While we need to be careful in generalizing from studies that
investigate small numbers of participants, there is growing evidence to support
the finding that Japanese participants engaged in small-group discussions in
what might be seen as more formal situations (i.e. classroom discussions and
conversations that are being recorded for research purposes) are concerned
with turn-taking. It may be the case that the extended turns as primary speaker
that Hauser (2011), Shigemitsu (2009), and myself have all observed may
commonly occur in discussions amongst speakers worldwide, or this may only
occur in discussions amongst Japanese speakers. Further research would help
to clarify this. Liang (2016), for example, has described how the members of one
of the groups in her study of ELF interactions at a Taiwanese university "propose
their ideas independently or in an orderly manner, similar to a 'one-at-a-time type
of floor' (Edelsky, 1982, p. 384) or a 'single person floor' (Hayashi, 1996, p. 71)"
How similar or not this is to the practices described in my thesis is not, however,
entirely clear. These practices may occur in all sorts of situations, or only in very
particular situations. They may be a common feature of particular types of
interaction in Japan, or they may be relatively uncommon. Further research
would be necessarily to make any claims about if, when, or how often these
practices can be observed.

7.2.1 *Formal discussions: not meeting course aims*

In both Hauser’s and my study, the learners focus on taking turns as the *focal participant* more than on engaging in dialogic talk with one another. In *formal discussions*, learners orient to a need to use English while delivering an opinion, and more often than not they are giving this opinion with the watching teacher in mind, rather than the other members of their group. Their ideas are rarely supported, challenged, or otherwise co-developed through interaction with other group members. This meant that, while performing *formal discussions*, and indeed other *focal participant* interactions, the participants in my study were often not engaging with the aims of the course. The *formal discussions* had been chosen for use in the classroom as a vehicle to promote dialogic talk amongst participants, in order to give them opportunities to practice the language and strategies taught in the textbook. For example, the course had aimed to develop discussion practices such as agreeing, disagreeing, using English backchannels, asking follow-up questions, developing a topic, and so on.

While participants did occasionally use phrases such as “I agree with you” at the beginning of a *focal participant* turn, they were not usually engaging with the content of the previous speaker’s turn meaningfully (i.e. by developing the topic or supporting a particular point). Rather, they were demonstrating that their response to the teacher’s question (which was often pre-planned to some degree) was, broadly-speaking, from the same position as the previous’ speakers. For example, when a previous speaker had disagreed with a statement in the teacher’s question, the next *focal participant* indicated that they too were going to disagree with this statement by saying “I agree with you” (without actually agreeing with or developing any particular point made by the previous speaker).

Previous studies have reported that non-Japanese English teachers may be sometimes frustrated with Japanese EFL students’ perceived passiveness in discussions, and Fujimoto (2010) argues that, as non-Japanese teachers and Japanese students may have different ideas about how a group discussion should be performed, it is important for teachers to articulate expected participation behaviours. Similarly, Hayashi and Cherry (2004) suggest
that we need to “let Japanese students know that they are expected to express their opinions actively in English classrooms” and to “teach the students ways in which to do this” (p. 7). They argue that English teachers should teach strategies such as starting conversations, expressing opinions, and taking turns, so that “Japanese students would learn, in a sense, the communicative template in which to place the language they are learning” (Hayashi and Cherry, 2004, p. 7).

However, articulating expected behaviour, and even explicitly teaching discussion strategies over a 15-week semester, did not result in the participants in my study using these strategies often in formal discussions. Although this may have been a problem with the teaching methodology (it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate this), it was not because the participants were unaware of, or did not understand, the course aims. This could be seen, for example, in self-evaluation rubrics that I asked the students to make prior to performing formal discussions. In order to confirm that the participants had understood what was taught on the course, and how their performances in the formal discussions would be assessed, I asked them to make their own evaluation rubrics that explicitly stated the kinds of actions that they were expected to take in the discussions. I then checked and discussed these rubrics on the whiteboard. All of the students included items such as “use backchannels”, “ask questions”, “disagree”, and so on in their rubrics, including example utterances that they could use to perform these actions. This evidenced their understanding of what the course aimed to teach. Furthermore, in video-playback sessions, most participants negatively evaluated their own performances for not meeting the items on the rubric. Many students, such as Chie, expressed a desire to “talk more” and “ask more questions”, which was very much in line with the course aims.

So, although the participants in this study clearly understood the teachers’ ideas about group discussion, and although many participants reported that they would have liked to perform the discussions in this way, they ultimately performed focal participant interactions that did not meet the course aims. This seems to have been because of how they expected to behave in the classroom, and the practices that they had been used to following.
7.3 The focal participant role

I have found that the participants in this study are not only concerned with passing turns around the table in *formal discussions*, but that this concern is prevalent across all the interactions in the data that are performed in English, with the exception of *personal* talk. That is, when the participants in my study were performing activities in English and foregrounding their *student* identities, they followed *focal participant* turn-taking practices (which may be characterised as a kind of 'round-robin' approach to turn-taking) and placed some importance on procedural matters.

As discussed in Section 3.8.7, recent approaches to multimodality have transformed our understandings of the linear sequential organization of action, and have highlighted how interactions consist of multiple simultaneous sequentialities (Mondada, 2016, p. 341). Multimodal views of interaction have also called into question the idea of a turn being the accomplishment of a single participant. In face-to-face interaction, recipients play an active role in the production of the ongoing speaker's turn, through their bodily and verbal responses, and there has been a greater focus on analysing the contributions of non-speaking participants (Deppermann, 2013b; Hayashi, 2005). From this perspective interactions are multi-party processes, and participants orient to each other and assemble simultaneous and sequential actions utilising a range of semiotic materials (Goodwin, 2013, p. 8). This may seem contrary to my description of *focal participant* turn-taking practices, in which each participant has her turn as the *focal participant*, turns are passed around the table one-at-a-time, and talk is somewhat 'monologic'. I have characterised the *focal participant* as being of central importance in performing actions that move the task towards completion, but does this mean that the *non-focal participants* are passive and not contributing? Does my analysis run counter to recent multimodal approaches to conversation analysis?

It may be useful to look at another recent multimodal study of peer interaction in an English class. In her study of how learners distribute primary speakership in small-group discussions, Lee (2016) takes a multimodal approach that focusses on the embodied conduct of non-talking recipients. She shows how non-primary speakers' nonvocal behaviour projects changing participation frameworks and achieves coordination of speaker nomination. In doing so, she demonstrates that "without consideration of the 'non-talking'
participants' multimodal displays, the processes in which speakership is negotiated in group discussion can be left under-analyzed" (Lee, 2016, p. 671-2). Describing how students engage in multimodal preparation (Depperman, 2013b) to establish incipient speakership, she suggests that, "in line with recent CA research that conceptualizes institutional conversations as multi-modal, joint achievements, this study provides evidence that both speakers and hearers are involved in moment-by-moment monitoring of their own and each other's behaviors in academic peer group discussions. Participants deploy multimodal resources to coordinate the launching of primary speakership, and in doing so, they embody and orient to their respective participant roles" (Lee, 2016, p. 688).

I have similarly observed the use of multimodal resources in the launch of primary speakership and focal participant turns, and how the non-focal participants use nods, backchannels, gaze, and so on, in order to co-construct turns and focus on different identities. Lee (2016) describes, for example, how one participant in her study prepares for an upcoming turn by moving her hand and fingers, opening her mouth, gazing towards a mid-point, and shifting her posture, signalling a change in her participation status, all of which appears to be similar to the actions that I described Miki performing prior to taking her turn as focal participant on pages 154-6. As in Lee's (2016) study, I have seen how participants in peer group discussions negotiate turns multimodally, monitoring the interaction and projecting upcoming actions through their embodied conduct.

However, Lee does not describe the focal participant turn-taking practices that I describe. From her analysis, it appears to be the case that students self-select when an opportunity arises, rather than passing turns around the table in a pre-determined direction. However, although I have described a pre-determined direction of turns in my data, this does not mean that multimodal negotiation of upcoming turns does not occur. Rather, in ways similar to those described by Lee (2016), the non-focal participants often monitor the interaction to project when they will be able to take their pre-determined turns, and engage in embodied negotiation to launch these turns as focal participant.

Not only this, but throughout focal participant turns the non-focal participants are involved actively in the interaction, even when they are silent (and absent from the transcript of spoken language). For example, in the interaction represented in Excerpt 1 (p. 133-5), I saw how non-focal participants' gaze and performance of nods and non-lexical backchannels allowed the focal
participant to keep speaking. I have also seen how non-focal participants’ silent embodied disalignment with repair initiation attempts (e.g. see pages 181-2) pushes focal participants to produce spoken turns individually (rather than seeing this silence as simply being passive, we can see it as active participation that results from an ideology that focusses on individual assessment).

It is important to stress that focal participant turns are not simply the accomplishment of one student working unilaterally, but are collaboratively performed by all participants working together, and non-focal participants play an important role. I chose this term to highlight that, although they may not be seen as primarily responsible for the current work being done, they are still participants nonetheless, and they play an active part in constructing the focal participant turn. That is, it is the focal participant and non-focal participant(s) working together as co-participants who perform each focal participant turn together. The importance of non-focal participants can clearly be seen in informal discussions in which they sometimes do the majority of the speaking.

Also, as will be discussed further below, when a student was reluctant to be focal participant, the non-focal participants held her accountable to produce a turn. And when a focal participant is seen as not having produced an adequate turn, non-focal participants perform repair work (such as asking "why?" when she has not given a required explanation). However, this works both ways, as non-focal participants often have duties that are important for the successful completion of the task, and if they do not perform them the focal participant may initiate repair. For example, in the interaction in which Chie, as the focal participant, says that she wants to visit Australia (see pages 196-8), she does not immediately explain why. She then, in Japanese, tells the other group members to "hurry and ask me why". It is only once another group member says "why?" that she then provides her reasons. She had not seen it as her responsibility to give a reason until she had been asked to give one, and understood it to be the non-focal participants’ duty to ask "why?" in this task (the reason for this appears to be that, in setting up the task, I had attempted to encourage more interactive talk, and had said to the class, "ask for reasons, ask each other why", and Chie took this instruction quite literally).

So, even when an analysis of the talk might make them seem relatively passive, non-focal participants are actively doing interactional work to collaboratively produce the focal participant’s turn. As Goodwin (2007) and Lee
(2016) observe, from a multimodal perspective non-speakers are co-participants in the unfolding interactional event, and they display this participation. And while a participant may be silent, they may be participating actively, as "actions, and responses to actions, can be implemented verbally but they might also be silently embodied" (Mondada, 2016, p. 346).

**Focal participant** turns should therefore be seen as co-produced by all participants for the watching teacher-superaddressee. Although the order of turns is largely predictable, and although there are usually clear claims/means that indicate the end of a turn, non-focal participants still carefully attend to the ongoing talk, participate in its co-construction, and project upcoming turns. Through the performance of series of simultaneous embodied actions, the launching of, performance, and conclusion of each focal participant turn is co-constructed by all of the participants in a group, who continuously monitor one another's behaviour and orient to their respective roles. So, while the talk may not always be very 'dialogic' (in the sense discussed in Section 5.2), the interactions are always co-constructed by all of the participants working together to coordinate their actions. In this sense, I feel that the description of focal participant practices in this thesis is somewhat compatible with recent understandings in multimodal theory.

I should note here that Mondada (2016, p. 361) raises the importance of transcription practices in a multimodal analysis. She argues that analysis depends heavily on detailed transcription that allows precise interpretation of qualities, temporalities, and trajectories of actions. I have strived in this study to produce and analyze very detailed transcripts (see Appendix 6 for an example). However, it is important to remember that no transcript can capture every detail, and that our transcripts affect what we can and cannot see in our analysis. While I believe that I have performed a thorough analysis that describes the multimodal ways in which the participants in this study performed interactions together, and that my findings appear to be at least partly consistent with other studies adopting a multimodal approach (e.g. Lee, 2016), it is possible that my transcription methods have left something unseen, and therefore unanalyzed. A different approach to transcription may amplify and reveal some hidden nuance in the video data. It is beyond the scope of this study to re-analyze the data using a different transcription system, but a future study may be able to triangulate the findings that I report (or not).
I briefly outlined why I settled on the term *focal participant* on page 131, and here I would like to return to this discussion of terminology. Mondada (2016, 2017) shows how members of a group use series of multimodal actions to open up a space in which turn-taking is suspended for a moment so that one member may take an extended turn to address the rest of the group. In the extended turns we see in *formal discussions*, there is a similar suspension of conversational turn-taking. In her discussion of this, Mondada uses the terms *performer* and *audience* (the performer is lecturing and the audience listens to the lecture), and in this thesis I have described *focal participant* turns as being a kind of performance. However, the performance is more for the teacher than for the other members of the group. I have discussed this already in Section 6.3, but more evidence can be seen in the way *focal participant* turns are recipient-designed. For example, in some interactions *non-focal participants* prepare their turn as *focal participant* in advance, sometimes consulting their dictionaries. In some cases, this leads to them using words and expressions that other group members are unlikely to understand (e.g. “feisty” is used in one video). Although these participants were aware that the other group members would probably not know these words, they used them without explanation (and often repair was not other-initiated). This evidences that the perceived audience for these turns was the teacher (or the *teacher-superaddressee*), who was expected to be able to understand these words. So, rather than the *focal participant* performing for the *non-focal participants*, all participants are *co-performers* and the teacher, or the *teacher-superaddressee*, is the audience.

Following the metaphor of performance, or acting, another term I briefly considered was *director*, especially in relation to the *informal discussions*. However, this implies that the focal participant is in some way in charge of the interaction, whereas she doesn't necessarily, if ever, direct and lead the interaction. What determines what happens in a *focal participant* interaction are the group members' collective understandings of what the task is, and the *focal participant* turn-taking practices, which are collaboratively accomplished. Once the first turns in an activity have been negotiated and co-constructed, and so the direction of turn-taking is established, it is very rare that one participant will have any particular individual control over this aspect of the interaction.

Mondada (2016, p. 360) has also used the terms *doers* and *recipients* to describe the roles participants take in interactions. While we may be able to
see the extended turns in formal discussions, or the questions asked in informal discussions, as involving a doer who performs some action and a recipient who receives it, this does not seem to capture the focal participant and non-focal participant roles in all of the interactions. One reason for this is that, as shown in the analysis, the non-focal participants are at times 'doing' as much or more than the focal participant, and at times the recipient may in fact be the teacher. This is not to deny that there are moments when a focal participant may ask a question of which a non-focal participant is the recipient, but that this relationship does not capture all of the instances of focal participant talk in the data. For example, there are moments when the non-focal participants ask questions of which the focal participant is the recipient. In short, focal participants and non-focal participants take on a variety of interactional roles and relationships depending on the activity and the actions that they are performing. Using terms such as doer, recipient, performer, audience, and so on might capture particular moments in the interactions, but would not provide a useful cover term for the practices more generally.

I originally used the term focal participant when analyzing a particular sequence that was performed during a writing a text task. In this task, the students were asked to work together to make a quiz on any topic they liked (they were offered example topics, such as musicians, movies, history, geography, and so on). Other members of the class would later take the quiz. In the particular interaction I was analyzing, each participant takes a turn to think of a multiple-choice question on a topic of their own choosing, which is written down and recorded by a member of the group. One of the participants, Kotona, however, twice fails to make a question when it is her turn to do so. The first time, she is silent for 20 seconds before another member of the group attempts to provide help by suggesting a topic (Kotona is holding a pen with a picture of a Pikachu character on it, and the other member points to this while saying "Pikachu" with rising intonation). However, Kotona fails to make a question, and 60 seconds later the group-member sat to her left self-selects as the next focal participant and makes a question.

The turns are passed around the table again, and when Kotona becomes focal participant for a second time, the previous focal participant laughs, points at her, and says "your question". Kotona then stares at the desk for 14 seconds before saying "nothing" while laughing. Following this, all the
group members laugh and shift postures, and then the other two group members work together to make a question about Kotona (the final question is "What is Kotona's favourite character?"). Although they had been asked to work together to make questions, they clearly understood the nature of the task to require each of them to make her own question, and they organized the talk in such a way as to allow each member, one-by-one, to do so. When Kotona failed to make her question, the others repaired this by making a question about which Kotona was the subject. So, although Kotona did not make her own question, and therefore did not fulfill her duties to the group, she did contribute to the group work by being in the contents of the written work. It was clear that, as the other group members worked together to make a question about her, Kotona was the focus of the group work at that moment.

I have noticed that this is essentially what is happening in all of the on-task English interactions that I recorded. Participants organize the talk in such a way that each member has her turn to contribute as the focal member of the group. This does not, however, mean that the focal participant is necessarily the dominant member of the group. The focal participant has a number of different roles, depending on the nature of the task. She may be a primary speaker, a questioner, a describer, and so on. In some of these roles she may seem more dominant, however in other interactions she may do less speaking, such as when she is questioner. She is the focal participant in that it is her turn to take a central role in the co-performance of a series of actions that help to complete the task, and non-focal participants are important in performing actions that help her to do this.

7.4 Why did participants orient to focal participant practices?

The participants in my study oriented to focal participant practices as normal and expected classroom practices. When the expected focal participant practices were not followed, such as when a participant was nominated to take a turn out of the expected sequence or else was asked to perform an unexpected action (such as repair), the participants marked these deviations by reacting with surprise, or else did not perform the requested action (e.g. they did not perform repair, even when attempts were made to initiate it). This suggests that, for all of the participants in this study, the focal participant practices are considered
normal for small-group or pair work. In other words, these practices are constituted in the homologous habitus (Scollon, 2001). This would suggest that previous educational experiences play a part in establishing focal participant practices, as they do not appear to have been formed in the particular classroom under study, but were rather brought to the classroom by the students.

The finding that learners in small groups will not necessarily participate in collaborative or dialogic discussions is not new. For example, in a recent study, Chen (2016, p. 338) has found that Chinese learners of English "may not necessarily actively interact with each other in pair work and thus they may not achieve the goal for such activities". Anderson and Weninger (2012) found, in a digital story-telling workshop that aimed to promote collaboration and joint authorship among primary school students in Singapore, that the participants focussed instead on individual performance and assessment. Cordon (2001) also notes that simply putting students into groups does not necessarily lead to collaborative discussion.

This is argued to be a result of students' ideologies of learning, which focus on individual assessment and the end-product of learning, rather than the process (Anderson and Weninger, 2012; Cordon, 2001). Similarly, in this study it appears to be students' educational ideologies and their expectations about classroom practice that constrain the development of more dialogic talk. The focal participant practices that I have observed require a shared activity or task that all members of the group are equally responsible for performing. But the practices organize talk in such a way that, rather than developing or negotiating ideas together, each participant will get her own turn to perform the required action(s). These practices are a multimodal ensemble involving all participants at all times, so the interaction is indeed co-constructed. However, the interaction is co-constructed in such a way as to allow for a site of engagement to be opened for each participant in turn to perform her duties, supported by the others, and focal participant turns are treated more as form-focussed language displays for the teacher. So, although the course focussed on collaborative talk, the students themselves focussed more on individual performance and assessment.

Small-group and pair work are argued to be rare in Japanese classrooms (Nelson, 1995), while teacher-fronted classrooms, in which the teacher controls turn-taking by nominating students to speak, are common (Taguchi, 2005). Harumi (2011) has argued that Japanese students actually
prefer the teacher to allocate turns and that some learners think they should only speak when nominated to do so. This appears to be what is happening in focal participant interactions, where learners negotiate the order of turns in advance and only really speak in their nominated slot as focal participant. These participants are used to the teacher controlling this aspect of classroom life, and focal participant turns, negotiated collaboratively by the group, are a kind of turn-allocation device that replaces, almost by proxy, the teacher’s control of the interaction, while avoiding the need for individual students to take responsibility for organizing an interaction. That is, focal participant interactions can be seen as locally-organized attempts by students to recreate the kind of classroom turn-taking practices with which they are comfortable and familiar. These practices centre on having one participant at a time nominated to perform an action relevant to the task.

In interviews and video-playback sessions, participants confirmed that they were concerned with the order in which they should speak. Only one participant in the study had had previous experience of an English communication course, and all of the participants were most familiar with teacher-fronted classrooms. They had all expressed surprise at being asked to interact in small groups, and said that they had been unsure of how to organize these interactions. So, when asked to speak in English, the learners were not only shy and lacking in confidence, but were also concerned with the pragmatics of how to take turns.

Chie commented, when watching a video of herself performing a formal discussion, that it was important “to decide who should speak first”. She also commented that she did not feel confident taking part in English conversations, as she was worried about “who should speak and when”. For Chie, and other participants, a major problem when engaging in English discussions was the order of turn-taking, and as much as worrying about what she would say, she was also concerned about when she would say it. As she had had little experience of English-language discussions and conversations, as well as small-group classroom discussions in any language, Chie did not feel comfortable with free turn-taking practices. As such, she felt more comfortable with the predictable focal participant turn-taking.
7.4.1 Student identities constrained dialogic talk

In order to encourage the kind of discussions that were an aim of the course, I would argue that we do not just need to teach conversation strategies, or explain what is expected in the classroom, but as Johnson (1989, p. 43) has argued, we also need to change students’ attitudes to English study. Johnson was referring to the need to direct students away from seeing language as the study of text, with correct answers, to seeing language as “communicative meaning”. This involved, he suggested, teaching language as “open-ended exchanges of information” and involving students in discussing topics that are debatable, with no correct answer (p. 44).

I believe that Johnson is right to suggest that we need to change students’ attitudes if we wish formal discussions (for example) to actually resemble the types of discussions that the teacher intends them to be. And like Hayashi and Cherry (2004), I also believe that we need to teach students appropriate language and strategies to help them do this. However, involving learners in discussing debatable topics and teaching discussion strategies were not so effective for changing how the lower-level learners in the classrooms under investigation performed formal discussions and focal participant interactions more generally. I would argue that we need to change the way that students understand their roles as students, or else to encourage them to focus more on personal identities.

It is important to note that many of the participants in my study could do many of the things being taught on the course when they were focussed on personal identities. That is, when they shifted focus away from their institutional identities as students, and instead foregrounded their identities as friends, they began to engage in the practices being taught in the textbook. They did this seemingly unaware. In video-playback sessions, participants such as Miki and Natsumi, who were the participants most likely to engage in personal talk, were initially surprised when I praised their personal interactions. However, once I had highlighted certain features of the talk, and how they met the course aims and practiced many of the skills taught in the textbook, they were able to understand my positive evaluation of this talk. They had not initially noticed that these personal conversations actually practiced much of what was being taught in class, and had not necessarily seen this value of this type of talk.
Part of the reason for their surprise was that it was unusual for them to hear a teacher praising them for engaging in off-task conversation. They were concerned with properly doing the classwork (but not necessarily the classwork that I had assigned, as they were orienting more to their own ideas of what was expected in the classroom). Miki understood and positively evaluated the course aims, which included specific aims that focussed on agreeing, disagreeing, backchannelling, and so on. As the teacher, I had emphasized that the course aimed to focus on the students speaking together with one another. However, when watching herself perform a formal discussion in a video-playback session she commented that, “answering the question in English is the classwork”. That is, she saw the primary focus of her performance as a student in a classroom discussion as being to respond to the teacher and answer his question, rather than interact with the other members of her group.

When watching herself perform a personal interaction in the same video, she commented that, “this is not the classwork”. She did not see the personal interaction as “classwork”, and as she was not doing the classwork and was not foregrounding her identity as a student, the focal participant practices did not apply and she could focus on engaging in more dialogic talk.

Taylor (2013, p. 117) notes that, for learners, there are two relational contexts in the classroom: student and classmate. These contexts are related to a distinction that learners make between English-as-subject (part of their professional lives at school) and English-as-communication tool (part of their personal lives) (Taylor, 2013, p. 93). One duty of the student identity is, for example, caring about one’s marks, and assessment, both perceived and real, plays an important role in the participants’ performances as students. This is partly what leads to Chie ignoring another learner’s repair initiation attempt in a formal discussion. Her understanding of the situation leads her to see this action as a display of lack of competence to the teacher, rather than a genuinely repairable trouble source. The focal participant interactions in my study are part of the students’ professional lives that are potentially evaluated by the teacher, while the personal interactions are focussed on personally relevant communication with friends. If learners see English classwork, or student work, as being separate from their personal identities, then it is understandable that a shift in identity focus needs to take place for meaningful “authentic” interaction to occur.
I would also argue that, in focal participant interactions, there is a focus on the spoken utterance as a kind of product, with each focal participant turn produced as a product for the teacher to evaluate. As just discussed, Miki said that “answering the question in English is the classwork”, and so identified her English-language answer to the teacher’s question as the “work” that she needed to produce. There has been a distinction in the teaching of writing between a product approach, which focusses on the structure of language and the imitation of model texts, and a process approach, which focusses more on ideas and creative processes (e.g. Badger and White, 2000; Kamimura, 2000). A parallel can be drawn here, as focal participant interactions are, in many ways, focussed on producing accurate models of language for the teacher to assess, rather than focussed on the creative process of engaging in open-ended discussions with others.

Rather than engaging in meaningful talk, even when they sometimes wanted to, the participants were most often concerned with producing utterances for assessment by the teacher. This was partly because of how they expected to behave as students, and also because many learners found “safety” and comfort in the possibility of a correct answer, and reassurance in being “correct”. Participants, such as Chie, reported that it was satisfying to master a form and then produce it successfully. Creative meaning-making offers less structure, is harder to evaluate (as there may be no correct answer), and is accordingly more threatening. If there is no “correct” answer, many students become concerned about exactly what they should do to receive the highest evaluation. A more dialogic understanding of the classroom can be unsettling to learners, who are concerned about being incorrect or doing something wrong.

In this way, it was often the participants’ classroom identities as students that prevented them from interacting in a more discussion-like way, even when they understood and even claimed to value the behaviour expected by the teacher, rather than an inability to do so. Although these were lower-level students, they demonstrated that they could engage in sometimes quite challenging talk with one another when performing personal identities. In order to engage in more dialogic talk, in which they corrected, questioned, and challenged one another, these participants needed to perform a change in focus from foregrounding their student identities to foregrounding their personal identities. It was only once they had performed a means and affected this
change that they truly spoke to one another. Therefore, for the participants in this study to engage in more dialogic discussions, they do not only need to change their understandings of what makes a good discussion, or learn English phrases for engaging in discussions, but they also need to reimagine what it means to be a student engaged in classroom work. As long as they see the student identity defined principally in relationship with the teacher, then they will perform actions as a student primarily in relationship with the teacher, rather than with one another.

So, I would argue that focal participant interactions do not consist of authentic and personally-relevant talk, but are rather institutional practices that have been inculcated through repeated experiences in classrooms. Teachers and schools favour and reward a certain kind of student performance, which is internalised by participants as they become students. This does not mean that the participants do not necessarily value these practices, as they have helped them to make sense of and (mostly for the learners in this study) be successful in their academic careers. Focal participant talk is performed partly to please the teacher-superaddressee, and it is also performed to display a sense of competence and belonging to the classroom community.

However, students are not only shaped by the classroom, but they also shape it. We have seen in this study how it is the participants, through their joint understandings of the situation, who ultimately determine what the classroom interactions look like. They do so with reference to previous classroom experiences that help them make sense of the current situation. When confronted with an unfamiliar activity, such as a small-group discussion, the participants are active in familiarizing the activity by drawing on shared, or similar, histories of experiences in classrooms. This means that students’ agency may be seen as a kind of “citational” practice (Iedema and Carroll, 2014), whereby they perform habituated social practices according to perceived norms. Ultimately, students’ agency in the classroom is bound to a common-sense understanding of what they believe students should and should not do, and one thing that students do not do in the classroom, at least not legitimately, is to engage in personal talk. What we see instead in classroom discussions are inauthentic, almost staged, performances of what the participants believe a student discussion should look like.
Taylor (2013, p. 126) has argued that learners need to integrate language learning into their private selves. This happened to an extent in my study, as a number of the participants began to perform personal identities in English while off-task. However, when focussed on performing classroom activities this was not the case, and participants who did not perform personal identities did not engage in meaningful, authentic communication in English. Classroom activities and tasks simply did not promote this kind of talk. This brings us back to what Wong and Waring (2010, p. 262) call the “paradox of task authenticity”. That is, the most authentic language in the classroom is most likely to be off-task. If we accept that for language learning to be truly successful we need to involve English in learners’ personal identities, then we need to consider, as I will do in the Conclusion chapter, how we can encourage off-task personal talk in English.

However, a problem persists in convincing learners of the importance of interacting with one another for learning purposes, and many participants in this study reported that they did not initially believe that they could learn much from each other. As Sato (2007) has argued, across Asia “native speakers” are considered the most important resource for language learners, while educational cultures such as Japan’s are argued to be teacher-centred (Jin and Cortazzi, 1998). This means that learners are likely to place greater value on what the teacher says, especially if that teacher is a “native speaker”. If learners see their interactions primarily in relationship with the teacher, and if they place greater value on “native speaker” utterances, they are less likely to value the learning potentials in their peers’ contributions, engage meaningfully with one another, and perform the kinds of interactional work that are thought to drive language learning. Therefore, as well as teaching learners how to take part in discussions, and explaining the behaviours expected of them in group work, educators also need to place some importance on demonstrating to learners how their interactions with each other can be beneficial to language learning, and how they should see language as a personally relevant tool for communication.

### 7.5 Importance of personal identities

Previous studies have called for teachers to focus on and value learners’ personal identities. For example, Taylor (2013), who found that few students in
her study felt valued for who they were in their English classes, highlights the importance of learners seeing language as a personally relevant communication tool (p. 44), arguing that it is important to allow them to be themselves in the classroom. This means that we need to encourage what she calls “genuine discoursal exchanges” (p. 127). Similarly, K. Richards (2006) argues for bringing what he calls “transportable” identities into the classroom, arguing that it is perverse to assume that the self be left at the classroom door.

However, both Taylor and K. Richards were focussed on student-teacher talk. While personal identities do allow for more equal participation between the teacher and students, as well as more involvement (seen for example in latched turns, interruptions, other-repair, etc.), putting the participants into groups and asking them to discuss personal topics did not necessarily lead to personal interactions in my study. This was particularly the case at the beginning of the semester. Taylor argues that learners should be “allowed to be themselves” (p. 126), but the participants in my study did not always take opportunities to perform personal identities, and in fact tended to gravitate towards focal participant interactions where they performed institutional identities. This does not mean that they did not want to be themselves, but rather that they did not always feel comfortable or able to be themselves while engaged in English-language classroom activities, as they were attempting to perform their duties as students. So, it does not seem to be a case of allowing learners to be themselves, as this suggests that they are simply waiting to engage in personal talk in English, which is not necessarily the case in a lower-level compulsory university course in Japan. Rather, I would argue that teachers need to be proactive in encouraging learners to be themselves, and, as argued above, this most likely involves learners coming to new understandings of the classroom and their roles in it.

As already discussed, certain participants did begin to shift the focus away from their student identities to perform personal identities, and it was these participants who were able to experience the type of genuine exchanges that Taylor writes about. In the conclusion I intend to discuss how we might promote personal talk, but for the moment I would argue that there are multiple benefits of learners engaging in classroom conversations in which they focus on personal identities. As well as offering increased opportunities to perform a greater variety of actions in English, learners are able to speak on topics of personal relevance,
gain experience of the kind of real-world talk that occurs outside of the classroom, form and consolidate identities as English language speakers, develop relationships with others through the English language, feel engaged while studying, help their teachers and classmates learn about them as people, and so on. These participants were also the most likely to have enjoyed the course and be successful on it (in terms of grades). However, achieving a balance where personal identities do not distract from classwork would likely be an important issue for many teachers, as well as learners. And encouraging some learners to even begin to engage in this personal talk in the first place may be challenging.

7.6 The case for non-standard English

In considering learners’ identities in the EFL classroom and their relationships to the English language, we need to turn our attention to the ways in which English and English speakers are represented in the classroom, and the wider society. Miyagi et al (2009) have argued that, although English is increasingly seen as an international language, “standard English maintains a stranglehold” (p. 262) in Japan, and Tsuda (1990) has warned that Japanese EFL learners are mentally colonized by the dominance of Anglo-centric language and culture. The Douglas Fir Group (2016, p. 34-5) also suggest that an ideal standard form of English shapes teaching and learning practices, and that certain English varieties are treated as more correct and prestigious. This means that the monolingual native speaker’s idealized competence is often held up as the benchmark for learning.

Language learners are ideological beings, and these ideologies will affect their choices for approaching language learning (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). Learners, such as Chie in my study, may be negatively affected by an ideology of deficit that sees communication failure as being due to their own linguistic shortcomings, whereas others may see communication (both success and failure) as a shared enterprise (Subtirelu, 2014). In the classroom, I believe, we should be encouraging students to think in ways that will most allow them to communicate confidently in the world outside of the classroom.

Miyagi et al. (2009) call for a broadening of ELT practices in Japan, and more specifically suggest that non-standard English models (i.e. non-Anglo-centric Englishes) are introduced into Japanese EFL classrooms.
They suggest that one benefit of this would be an increase in learners’ confidence when interacting with other “non-native speakers” (NNS), which is important because NNS-NNS interactions are now more common than interactions between learners and L1 speakers (Miyagi et al., p. 266), and also to help them value learner-learner classroom talk. They also argue that this would challenge Western-centric worldviews that marginalize regional cultures.

In suggesting that a variety of non-standard English models be used in the classroom, Miyagi et al. (2009, p. 269) warn that teachers should be careful not to encourage learners to be judgmental towards unfamiliar accents. They touch here on an important point. In bringing other cultures and varieties of English into the classroom, we need to be careful about how they are presented and represented. We need to be wary of presenting exotic and stereotypical images of “others” that, rather than making different varieties of English more familiar, instead essentialize or misrepresent other people and cultures in the classroom. I know from experience of playing audio of non-standard English speakers in Japanese classrooms that students will often laugh at what they consider to be unusual or even incorrect English. The question of how we make choices about what voices to bring into the classroom and how we present them is, therefore, of great importance.

Dewey (2012, p. 163) notes that ELF communication is typified by a fluidity of relations, diversity of cultures and first languages, and highly creative use of linguistic resources. Traditional approaches to the classroom that focus on Standard English do not reflect this ELF reality. Rather than simply learning the Standard varieties, Dewey argues, we should be focussing on the great varieties of Englishes and English speaking practices that exist. We should be exploring their similarities and differences, how they are intelligible, how they involve identities, and so on. Basic constructs such as native-speakerism and standard language ideologies have dominated English language teaching (Lin (2013, p. 522-3), and we should move away from these to focus instead on the hybrid nature of language practices and emergent grammars (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 233).

While they argue for non-standard Englishes in the classroom, Miyagi, et al. (2009, p. 269) also argue that it is “essential” that they do not replace standard English as a means to evaluate students. ELT in Japan is heavily test-driven, and Miyagi et al. suggest that non-standard varieties should be used
to complement this model, rather than replace it. However, as they themselves observe (2009, p. 264), this test-driven culture reinforces the domination of standard English. Many universities and companies use tests such as TOEIC as gatekeepers, and Blommaert (2016, p. 2) writes that these tests are “register testing”, rather than language testing per se. That is, they test a particular register of English proficiency that does “not indicate a general socioculturally adequate competence in English” (p. 2). It has been noted that university entrance exams which focus on grammatical knowledge of standard English may be one reason for the lack of uptake of a communicative approach to teaching English in Japanese schools (Inomori, 2012). Equally, as many learners and teachers will be concerned with passing important gatekeeping tests, which may unlock doors to future successes (perceived or real), it seems highly likely that the use of standard English as a means of testing will constrain the use of non-standard Englishes in classrooms. I would counter Miyagi et al.’s strong assertion that it is essential to test only standard English, and suggest that we may want to consider having a discussion about how non-standard Englishes might play some role in testing, if we are really serious about challenging the dominance of standard English.

7.7 Achievable future English identities

Representations in classroom materials, as well as the media, create powerful images of others, particularly in EFL contexts where learners have few opportunities to meet those others in real life. I have seen in this study how learners can form stereotypical images of English-speakers that affect their learning aims. Chie, for example, repeatedly said that her goal was to become like an “overreacting native speaker”, and she did not see learning English as involving just the learning of the language, but also as learning to be a certain kind of person. That is, the future that Chie imagined for herself included her behaving like an “overreacting” English speaker.

Motivation researchers have argued that learners who are not immersed in a second-language environment need to envisage themselves using the L2 in imagined communities (Yashima, 2013) in much the way that Chie did. These possible selves are thought to be potentially powerful motivators that can help to guide current actions and can lead to learners developing
L2-mediated identities (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011). This would mean that teachers need to give careful consideration to learners’ L2 identities, and the future trajectories (Haneda, 2005) that seem possible to them.

Chie said that her image of English-speakers as “overreactors” largely came from the media, as well as from generally held stereotypes about foreigners being more expressive than Japanese people. English-speakers and foreigners in general are often shown in the media in Japan as being outgoing, and it is easy to find many Japanese-language websites that feature articles and blog posts with titles such as "Why do foreigners overreact?" (Gaikokujin wa doushite oobaariakushon na no ka?, 2012) and "Do fluent speakers naturally overreact when they speak English?" (Ryuuchouna hito ga eigo wo shaberu toki wa jizen ni oobaariakushon ni natte shimau no ka? Waza to?, 2013). After analyzing the data for this study, I became aware that the teaching materials used in the classes (including audio recordings which were, indeed, over-acted) reinforced Chie’s idea of English speakers as “overreactors”, and offered specific language input and performances that she could try to use and emulate in class.

Chie was influenced by media representations of English speakers, and Kubota (1998) and Tanaka (1995) have noted that media discourses in Japan reflect and glamourize Anglo-centric culture. Chie equated English proficiency with a certain kind of Western native speaker identity that involved “overreacting”, and she imagined a future self who would live in Canada and “overreact”. Despite this future self being highly motivational, with a clear goal and ways of potentially achieving it, the discrepancies between her current self and her imagined future self were too great for this to be a realistic goal for her. Lake (2013, p. 228) has suggested that this kind of discrepancy may ultimately have negative effects on motivation and lead to withdrawal. In attempting to emulate this native speaker model, Chie found that she was unable to speak “naturally” in the classroom, and was often disappointed with her performances. This meant that she did not necessarily enjoy speaking English in the classroom.

I would argue, therefore, that it is important for language educators to not only consider linguistic features when choosing materials, but to also give careful consideration to the identities that materials represent, and also how learners might interact with these identities. For example, classroom materials should not only present “overreacting” native speakers, whose identities may be
unachievable for some learners. This may involve a much greater presence of non-native speakers and non-standard Englishes. One possible benefit of bringing non-standard Englishes into the classroom, not mentioned by Miyagi et al. (2009), is that they could provide a greater range of identity models which learners could use to help imagine their own future selves. As Jenkins (2015, p. 50) argues, learners should not be expected to meet native speaker norms, and the classroom can be a space in which learners are introduced to a wider variety of English-speaker models, including Japanese speakers of English. A more considered selection of materials may have introduced Chie to different kinds of proficient English speaker identities, and this may have provided her with more realistic or appropriate role models.

7.7.1 Effect of future identities on classroom practices

Miki and Chie’s differing classroom practices can be seen as relating to the different futures selves that they imagined. Chie saw her future in an imagined community of “overreacting native-speakers” in Canada, and saw her goal as being able to perform this “overreacting” L2 identity. This meant that she preferred to learn from “native speakers” where possible, but at the same time she felt uncomfortable interacting with these “native speakers” as she felt that her English was inferior to theirs. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the “overreacting” identity and her actual self was so great that this often led to her choosing not to speak in English in the classroom, because she did not feel capable of performing it successfully. On top of this, she saw little value, in terms of learning, in speaking English to other learners in the classroom. Although she was highly motivated to achieve her goal, she was unable to perform her desired identity in the classroom, and felt little motivation to speak English to her classmates, and so became frustrated with her own performances in activities. Ultimately, despite a desire to be “natural”, she felt most comfortable performing focal participant interactions.

Miki, on the other hand, imagined a future where she would be participating in an international community of travellers. This community was not necessarily centred on “native speakers”, but included (for example) international students such as the non-Japanese students that she could see on campus, and she began attending international parties where she could
socialize with these students. Miki was not aiming to speak like a “native speaker”, but rather aimed to participate in this international community that included members from different nationalities who spoke English as a lingua franca, and she sought opportunities to speak in English with anyone, including her classmates. As such, over the course of the semester, Miki sought out opportunities to engage in personal talk in the classroom.

7.8 Mediated discourse analysis

I would now like to turn my attention to my methodology and some issues that arose during the study. I started out from a mediated discourse perspective, which is intended to include a mixture of methodologies, as well as being an exploratory data-driven approach. My initial questions were intentionally quite open, which I hoped would allow me to be open to points of interest and importance in the data that more tightly-focused questions may have prevented me from seeing.

This is, I believe, a strength of the approach that I took. The research is driven by the data, and through the use of interviews and video playback sessions the participants can have a say in the study. By allowing me to use a range of methods to collect and analyze data, I was able to come to rich understandings of classroom interactions. A CA analysis alone would have provided a rich description of turn-taking practices, but by also adopting a MIA framework I was able to come to understandings about the participants that would otherwise have remain hidden. This was important, for instance, in coming to the understanding that participants in focal participant talk were often not foregrounding their interactions with one another, but were rather focussed on performing utterances for the teacher. MIA was also important in allowing me to understand that participants performed shifts to focus on personal identities before engaging in conversational talk in English. This allowed me to see how student and personal interactions, with their different interaction patterns, were clearly demarked and separate from one another. The video playback sessions and interviews were important in allowing the participants a voice, and helped me to come to new understandings of how they saw what was happening in the classroom. Without these, I would not have discovered, for example, the extent to which Miki was concerned with learning about others socially, her desire to
travel, and how she saw the classroom materials as constraining her participation. Nor would I have understood that Chie was planning to go to Canada to learn to “overreact” like a “native speaker”. The video sessions also provided an important means of communication between me and my students, which I will discuss further in the Conclusion chapter.

### 7.8.1 MDA as a bridge between CA-for-SLA and identity studies

A MDA approach may be useful in helping to bring together different approaches to the study of language learning. There is a mismatch between MDA and mainstream SLA, which has traditionally been seen as a cognitive discipline. However, we are currently seeing something of a challenge to traditional approaches to SLA (see Atkinson’s (2011a) edited volume) as researchers begin to focus more on language learning as a social, rather than cognitive, phenomenon. These more social approaches have included an identity approach (e.g. Norton, 2013), as well as CA-for-SLA (e.g. Firth and Wagner, 1997). MDA offers a way in which the more social analysis of identity studies may be brought into closer contact with the interactional studies of CA, which is something that researchers have argued for (Block, 2007b; Wagner, 2004).

CA studies do analyze how identities are performed, but the analysis is independent of “background factors” unless participants specifically mention identity categories in their talk (Sharrock and Anderson, 1987, p. 316). And while identity studies offer rich descriptions of language learners, they often lack close analysis of detailed interaction data. I would argue that MDA (and MIA) offer an under-explored potential for the study of language learning from a social perspective. By analyzing mediated actions, rather than language, the focus is on how the person, the action, and the means of performing the action (e.g. language) are bound together. This means that MDA allows the researcher to investigate how wider social practices and identity issues may be involved in specific instances of language learning behaviour. CA-for-SLA has been useful in explicating how learners “do learning”, while identity approaches have placed learners at the centre of analysis in what was once an “asocial” field (Norton and McKinney, 2011, p. 86), and MDA can bring these two approaches together.

By drawing on CA methodology, MDA is well-placed to describe how learners do learning, as well as documenting how practices change across time,
which is precisely what Scollon (2001) was investigating when he developed MDA. In my study, for example, I saw how learners use repair sequences to focus on language learning in different ways depending on the type of interaction they are engaged in (in making sentences interactions self-initiated other-repair was used to focus on syntax and word searches, whereas in information exchange activities it focused on confirmation checks). I also observed how certain participants’ membership of the class changed over the semester to include more personal identity practices performed in English, which meant that their use of language changed. Repair practices performed in personal interactions included more other repair.

In collecting longitudinal data and performing an interaction analysis on it, I did hope to be able to track learning and development over time. However, I was not sure at the outset that I would be able to do this, as I did not set out to systematically focus on one particular interactional practice or learner. I have not been able, for example, to find instances of a lexical item or grammatical construct being learned in one interaction, and then subsequently used in a later interaction by the same learner. However, Pekarek Doehler and Fasel Lauzon (2015, p. 421) suggest that "more analysis is needed that explores developing cultures of communication in the classroom, processes of classroom socialization over time, and the learning of things other than language or interaction (i.e. not just interactional competence)". I feel that I have been able to track changes in classroom practices over time. As just discussed, certain participants began to engage in personal talk in English, and these same participants also began to perform a greater variety of actions in their focal participant discussions (such as paraphrasing, asking follow-up questions, different types of backchannel, and using new phrases such as "I see what you mean").

A good example of changing practices can be seen in Excerpt 8, in which Miki and Rumi were performing a focal participant interaction together. Early in the semester, the same two participants performed a very similar activity (involving reading a text together) in which they spoke almost entirely in Japanese, and took turns more freely. Towards the end of the semester, they performed this activity almost entirely in English, and followed focal participant turn-taking practices. This, I believe, provides evidence that these two participants had developed different practices for participation in this classroom.
The focus on actions and practices, rather than language, is also useful as it allows teachers and researchers to move away from native speaker linguistic norms, and to focus more on how language is used socially to do things. It also allows us to incorporate the full range of communicative modes in our analysis. Brown (2003) has called for a greater focus on nonverbal behaviour in language teaching as a means to widening the range of communication tools available to learners, so that they can improve their pragmatic skills and fluency. To become socially competent language-users, learners need to know about and be able to effectively use proxemics (i.e. the distance one takes up from one’s interlocutor), posture, eye movements, facial expressions, and so on, as well as language. Research into how learners use and develop nonverbal modes of communication can help us to better understand their development as communicators, and their learning needs.

Non-verbal behaviour is important for how interactions are organized, and can give learners with limited language resources more agency in an interaction. For example, in my study I saw how Miki often used gaze, eye movements, and posture to claim turns at talk and affect a change in the identity being focussed on. In one particular video, through her use of nonverbal behaviour, she was able to expertly take a turn from the teacher. Showing this to Miki in a video playback session allowed her to see just how successful a communicator she could be with her limited language resources, something that she had evidently not been consciously aware of. Being aware of how nonverbal actions can be, and are, used to structure interactions can be a useful resource for learners with limited language resources, and also for teachers who hope to develop learners’ interaction skills. While CA analysts do study nonverbal behaviour, a MDA approach allows us to bring that behaviour more sharply into focus.

As with identity approaches to SLA, MDA may reveal something of the ways in which learners are situated in the wider social world. As well as tracing the ongoing series of actions that are performed in an interaction, as CA does, an MDA approach allows us to look up from the interactional data to perform a more social analysis through which we can see how wider social discourses figure in the performance of identities. This allows us to bring learners’ motivations and past and future selves into the analysis, which is not something that CA can do by itself, unless participants make these topics relevant in the
talk itself. In this study, I could see how Chie’s different identities (e.g. her identity as a student, her identity as a low-level speaker, her identity as someone who does not overreact, and her imagined future identity as an overreacting English speaker) played a part in inhibiting her ability to speak English “naturally” in the classroom.

I have been able to build up a detailed description of the interaction practices in the classrooms under study, while also coming to insights about the participants’ identities that affect their participation and learning opportunities in the classroom. While Hauser’s (2009) CA study was excellent in uncovering interaction practices, we are left wondering why the interactions were performed in the way they were and what this might have to tell us about opportunities for language learning. In my study, starting from an MDA perspective, I have been able to discuss this.

7.9 CAF: a discussion

The choice of any methodology limits what we can analyze, and can also bring problems as well as benefits. Certainly, the approach that I took was involved, laborious, and tiring. At times, it was possible to get lost in the data, especially without more focused research questions to guide me. And, while Scollon (2001) developed his ideas through the study of the ontogenesis of a practice in the habitus of a young child (and, therefore, was documenting a sort of learning), MDA was not developed to analyze language learning.

As already discussed in the Literature Review and Methodology chapters, applying both sociocultural and cognitive perspectives to the same data can enrich our understanding of what is happening (Foster and Ohta, 2005), and I decided to complement my sociocultural approach with methods associated with a cognitive approach. While this is not unheard of, it is a somewhat distinctive feature of my project. In part, this involved using the measures of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) to provide an extra layer to my analysis of the transcripts of the spoken language. I chose CAF as they are well-established (if problematic) measures used in a large number of SLA studies to analyze transcripts of spoken data (Pallotti, 2009, p. 590). They were therefore easy to apply to my data set (which included a large number of spoken transcripts), and allowed me to make comparisons between my findings and the
findings of many previous studies.

I found CAF useful as a form of descriptive statistics that allowed me to quantify my more qualitative analysis of the data and to make easy comparisons between different types of interaction. For example, while my conversation analysis showed that turns in formal discussions were generally quite long and complex, the measure of *complexity* afforded me a way in which I could quantify this and easily make comparisons with other types of interaction. This new layer of analysis served as a kind of triangulation that gave me more confidence in my claims, and also allowed me to compare my findings with those of other studies. It also allowed me to notice things that I might otherwise have not noticed, such as the relative accuracy of the students’ language use in informal discussions.

However, I did find problems adopting these measures in my study. Although I could measure fluency while still making use concepts familiar to CA (that is, fluency was measured using silences, false starts, and so on), I found that I could not analyze accuracy and complexity so well using CA tools, and instead decided to re-analyze the data making use of more grammatical units. As well as this, the theoretical perspective underpinning CAF sees language learners as deficient communicators who are moving towards more native-like performances. More sociocultural SLA researchers, such as conversation analysts, focus more on participation and how learners “do” learning together, rather than how they conform to target-like standards. This conflict caused theoretical, as well as methodological problems.

Central to these problems is the way in which we define the measures. Housen and Kuiken (2009, p. 462) note that “in spite of the long research interest in CAF, none of these three constructs is uncontroversial and many questions remain, including such fundamental questions as how complexity, accuracy and fluency should be defined as constructs” (Housen and Kuiken, 2009, p. 462). Larsen-Freeman (2009, p. 580) has also claimed that a lack of suitable measures remains a problem in SLA, while Norris and Ortega (2009) suggest that researchers have not thought carefully enough about what they are measuring. Definitions of constructs are important in affecting how we analyze the effectiveness of an activity, assess learners’ performances, monitor learners’ development, and so on, and also give important indications of how we see success in language learning and task performance. As course developers and
teachers may often rely on the results of studies to inform practice, this can have important ramifications for the classroom.

CAF are usually seen as objective measures that reflect the underlying L2 system, and changes in complexity and grammar are seen as the incorporation of new elements into a more target-language interlanguage, whereas fluency involves the consolidation of L2 knowledge so that it can be accessed and operationalized more smoothly (Housen, et al. 2012). Researchers conceptualize the goal of language-learners as being to "master all three CAF subcomponents" (Vercellotti, 2017, p. 90). However, I would argue that we need to rethink this. How can we tell, for example, when a subcomponent has been mastered, and could the focus on mastery perhaps inhibit learners' participation in classroom interactions?

While the measures are mainly used to attempt to understand individual cognitive attributes (the automaticity of speech production, for example), current understandings of the nature of interaction emphasize how it is embodied and used by people to do things together, so that we cannot understand the individual alone. I believe that we would benefit from an approach to the CAF measures that recognizes this. This is not to deny the importance of the measures as they are currently used, but rather to argue for a more nuanced approach. Here, I would like to argue that CAF measures could be enhanced by more social and contextually-sensitive understandings.

### Accuracy

In the following, I would like to argue that researchers be more explicit in explaining how they determine what is considered an error, that our understandings of grammar in spoken language be based on studies of actual use in authentic contexts, that we consider more options of what might be considered correct including non-native speaker uses, that we consider applying what Dewey (2012) calls a post-normative approach, and also that we may wish to focus on how learners' use of specific forms is appropriate to the interactional context when thinking about accuracy.

Pallotti (2009, p. 592) claims that accuracy is "perhaps the simplest and most internally coherent construct" within CAF, as it refers to the degree of conformity to the norms of the target-language, and recent studies that make use of CAF measure accuracy in terms of errors, which are seen as "deviations
from native-speaker norms” (e.g. Leonard and Shea, 2017, p. 180). In their study, Revesz et al. (2016, p. 835) give examples of what these errors in grammar ("I am not agree with you") and lexis ("pass the course with a great note") look like, and they state that they used specific rather than general measures of accuracy, such as the correct use of subject-verb agreement, modal verbs, connectors, and so on. However, other authors, especially when measuring accuracy as a general feature, are less explicit about how errors are determined, often simply stating, for example, that "accuracy was measured as percentage of error-free clauses" (Vercellotti, 2017, p. 96). It is often not clear whether the analysis is intuitive, or is perhaps performed with reference to a grammar reference book. It may be useful for these articles to provide greater clarity about how errors are determined.

This is because, although the concept of accuracy may at first seem straightforward, there is in fact a thorny issue surrounding how we determine what an "error" actually is. One reason for this is that studies of English as it is used in interaction reveal that the Standard English of written grammars may not always apply, and data of advanced and native speakers has been important in challenging standard grammars. Sanell (2007), for example, has shown how advanced learners of French use the form “je vais pas”, which is not standard French but is common in everyday speech, whereas intermediate learners use the standard form. This demonstrates that adherence to the norms of the standard language does not necessarily indicate a higher level of proficiency, as in this case the use of non-standard forms indicates greater sociolinguistic competence.

McCarthy and Carter (1995) use their analysis of native speaker language use to show how the grammar of spoken language is different to that of written language, and Carter and McCarthy (2017, p. 9) argue that we should look to grammar that has been "captured in authentic contexts of use rather than ones in which the grammar is invented, contrived and derived solely from written forms or from the memory of schooled grammatical prescriptions". Pallotti (2009) similarly argues that native speaker norms are crucial as baseline data, because native speakers do not necessarily produce extremely complex, accurate and smooth speech, but frequently pause and make 'mistakes'. McCarthy and Carter (1995) found that ellipsis is pervasive in particular genres of spoken English, and that this is a different sort of ellipsis to that described in standard grammars (e.g.
“don’t have to” rather than “you don’t have to”). And while standard grammars describe ellipsis as being of minor importance, McCarthy and Carter describe it as being of major significance in spoken English (p. 209). They also show how grammar varies by the type of interaction (narratives make use of ellipsis differently to conversations, for example). By looking at what native speakers do, we can offer learners more realistic models of what spoken language actually is, and avoid being overly critical of their ‘mistakes’. In this way, studies of native speaker language use can be important in challenging conventional ideas of correctness.

This should cause us to consider exactly what is 'correct' when referring to spoken English. This does not mean that we should necessarily completely reject Standard English, but rather that we need to offer more choices about what might be considered correct, and that these choices should be based on descriptions of how language is actually used. And, as researchers, we need to carefully consider how we analyze the accuracy of spoken language. From a pedagogical perspective, we need to consider exactly what we are teaching and what learners’ aims are. Is it our aim for learners to speak Standard English based on written grammar? Or do we wish to teach English that is more appropriate for spoken registers?

Housen and Kuiken (2009, p. 463) have raised the question of whether or not the criteria we use to judge accuracy should be based on standard norms (“as embodied by an ideal native speaker of the target language”), or to non-standard and non-native usages. Carter and McCarthy (2017) have also suggested that our understandings of accuracy in spoken interactions need to incorporate work on language variation, incorporating non-standard Englishes. I, too, would argue that we can, and should, widen our understanding of accuracy to include non-native usages. In a complex, hybrid, and multimodal communicative and interactive environment, where variety rather than standardization seems to be the norm, we need to seriously consider what we mean by accurate language use. From an ELF perspective, language may be seen less as a fixed set of codified forms and more as a dynamic system of communication that is characterized by a high degree of diversity (Dewey, 2012). Given this variability there seems to be a problem in specifying a fixed set of norms that apply to all communicative situations.
By asking learners to conform to native speaker norms, we are also asking them to behave like native speakers. However, most learners will only have limited contact with native speakers, and native speaker norms are unrealistic for lower-level Japanese students. English has been undergoing a “major demographic transformation” (Jenkins and Leung, 2014) and is now an international language that does not belong exclusively to people from traditionally English-speaking countries. Today, there are argued to be more nonnative speakers of English than native speakers, and this number is growing rapidly (Kaur, 2014). Looking forward, as English becomes an increasingly more global language, it seems as though we may need to rethink the role of the native speaker and what we consider to be the global 'standard' for spoken English. I agree with Jenkins and Leung (2014, p. 8) when they argue that language testers need to move away from a narrow focus on native-like correctness, and would argue that SLA researchers should also consider how competent non-native speakers use the language when measuring accuracy in learners’ speech.

This does not mean that I think we should not look to native-speaker data, but rather that we should consider it alongside other varieties. Dewey (2012) similarly believes that we need to move beyond the singularity of Standard English norms and try to encapsulate the diversity of English in the classroom, arguing for what he calls a post-normative approach. This, he suggests, is an approach to pedagogy in which we move beyond normativity and try to generate more specific classroom-oriented models of language. This could take the form of a framework of choices that are available to teachers "when deciding whether/to what extent/which (if any) language norms are relevant to their immediate teaching contexts" (Dewey, 2012, p. 166). He suggests that this would involve asking questions about what conditions of language use learners require, whether a normative approach is suitable for the context, what English models and norms are most relevant and appropriate, and so on.

While Dewey is arguing for a particular approach to pedagogy, I believe that taking a similar approach to some CAF studies may be of benefit. While we may be able to use Standard English norms to measure accuracy in classrooms such as those under investigation in this project, we need to consider whether these norms offer the most appropriate measurement for these particular groups in the particular interactions that they are performing. That is, rather than simply
assuming that Standard English norms offer our best model for assessing accuracy, we should first consider the particular students, the context of communication, and so on. Choosing models or norms that are appropriate to the individuals and situations under investigation may allow us to take a more context-sensitive and flexible approach and consider the diversity of communication in our analysis. And, of course, there will be times when the norms of Standard English are entirely appropriate.

So, 'accuracy' implies norms, but I believe that we should take our norms for what is 'accurate' from data-driven studies of language that are not limited to native speakers, and should focus on how expert members of English-speaking communities (which may include lingua franca interactions) use language in a diverse range of contexts. We should then choose the most appropriate norms or models, if indeed any are appropriate, when evaluating how accurate a particular interaction might be.

I would also like to briefly consider the contributions that research into Interactional Competence (IC) can make. While CAF research has largely looked for development in linguistically complex and accurate speech, IC research has shown that what changes over time for advanced learners is not the availability of a given form, but rather the use of new interactional purposes that form is used to fulfill (Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 18-19). Certain grammatical forms are used to perform certain actions, and learners develop their use of these forms to suit the interactional task (e.g. a learner who develops the use of "but", rather than "and then", to evidence that a current story will diverge from what has come before). When thinking about accuracy, we might want to think not only about the formal properties of the utterances, but also whether the use of forms is appropriate for the job at hand.

Fluency
"Fluency refers to the temporal characteristics of speech" (Leonard and Shea, 2017, p. 180) and from a narrow definition it can be seen as the production of smooth or automatic speech (e.g. Huensch and Tracy-Ventura, 2017; Tavakoli et al., 2016). I believe that, while these may indeed be features of fluent speech, we should move away from equating fluency simply with smoothness and speed. While the focus on smoothness makes fluency relatively easy to measure, it also has the problem of conceptualizing fluency as simply being the production of
smooth stretches of speech delivered relatively quickly. According to this measure, a string of words produced without pausing, regardless of how appropriately used or meaningful they are, would be considered more fluent than a turn that made careful and appropriate use of pauses to tactfully make a point. This is problematic, as pauses can serve important communicative functions, rather than just indicating communicative failure (McCarthy, 2010, p. 3; Pallotti, 2009, p. 597). We need, I believe, more nuanced approaches to measuring fluency.

This has already been discussed in the literature. For example, Skehan (2009) argues that it is important to consider where in a turn a pause occurs to determine if it represents a breakdown or not, while Liyanage and Gardner (2013, p. 39) note that "many silences, hesitations and repairs can indicate high interactional competence". They argue that we differentiate between disfluency features that are communicatively effective and those that are not. They also note that "fluency practices that are regularly found in L1 speech or talk" are treated as signs of problems in learners' speech (2013, p. 38). When using disfluency measures, such as pausing, to measure fluency, I believe that we need to closely analyse the data to determine whether or not the pause can be seen as indicating a breakdown or problem.

This would also involve considering fluency as a multimodal construct, which involves the use of gestures, gaze, posture, and so on. Learners can improve their fluency by making use of nonverbal modes of communication (Brown, 2003), for example by performing nonverbal actions to add meaning when language resources are missing. So, although a transcript of spoken language might show a pause, this does not necessarily mean that there has been a communicative breakdown, as the participant may be making appropriate use of gesture.

The focus on disfluencies (such as pausing) means that, rather than taking a positive approach to measuring fluency (in terms of what learners are able to achieve in an interaction), we are often measuring it negatively in terms of what they cannot do. Previously, researchers (not engaged in CAF studies) have defined fluency as including creative, appropriate, and natural language use. Fillmore (1979), for example, proposed that, as well as including the ability to talk without awkward pauses, fluency includes the ability to be creative and speak appropriately. Brumfit (1984, p. 56) regarded fluency as "natural language
use”, while Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985, p. 108) described fluency as "being natural and normal".

Like these researchers, I believe that fluent language use must be meaningful and responsive, not just smooth (and potentially meaningless). Whereas research into CAF has tended more often to use monologic spoken data, often collected in experimental conditions (e.g. Di Silvio et al., 2016; Revesz et al. 2016; Tavakoli et al., 2016; Vercellotti, 2017), McCarthy (2010) argues for seeing fluency as a co-created achievement that we look for in the ways in which the flow of an interaction is maintained across turns (for example, in the use of turn-openers that link to the previous speaker’s turn and backchannels). Others authors, such as Kern and Ohlus (2017) have also seen fluency as something that is essentially interactive. As M. Sato (2014, p. 790) notes, interactional fluency is a joint performance, as "temporal aspects (e.g., pauses) and interaction-specific features (e.g., turn-taking) [are] interwoven". So, he argues, while the majority of SLA research on fluency has focussed on individualized tasks, performance is a reflection not only of a learner’s L2 knowledge but also of the context and so we need to examine interactional data to evaluate learners’ L2 ability. Fluency measures should, then, include an ability to link one’s talk with the talk of one’s co-interactants, and so be more dialogic.

The concept of pragmatic fluency (e.g. Baron and Celaya, 2010) also looks to a more expanded understanding of fluency. As well as including a focus on the smoothness of the talk, pragmatic fluency can be measured through the use of gambits (e.g. ok, well, you know) and speech acts (e.g. routine greetings). However, while this represents a richer understanding of fluency than counting pauses or words per minute, it is still measured by counting particular items, possibly assuming that more is better. We might want to consider if repeated and extensive use of well, for example, indicates more or less fluent talk.

As discussed, fluency is often theorized as the speaker’s speed of processing, but another method of measuring fluency has been to rely on intuitive judgments or ask raters to evaluate a speaker's performance (known as perceived fluency) (e.g. Liyanage and Gardner, 2013; M. Sato, 2014; Segalowitz, 2010). In his study, M. Sato (2014) created fluency scales based on the perceptions of raters involved in a language test. As a result of this, as well as temporal aspects and pauses, two more concepts, turn-taking and scaffolding, were integrated into his oral fluency measures.
Earlier, I proposed that we look to non-native English-speakers and communities for our understandings of what might be accurate, rather than only looking to standard grammars or native speakers. I also believe that we should look at fluency in the same way. If we see fluency as understanding the resources that are “relevant to enacting and recognizing … membership [of a given group]” (Rowe, 2005, p. 128), we can see fluent language use as appropriate participation in particular interactions. That is, fluency would include the degree to which learners are able to participate appropriately in particular interactions. While accuracy would measure the degree to which the use of language structures was appropriate for the situation, fluency would measure how far the participant is able to make appropriate use of pauses, discourse markers, and actions more generally (e.g. performing expected actions at relevant times) to demonstrate understanding of the communicative resources relevant to the situation. One way of measuring this might be to somehow involve members of a particular community, or experts in a particular practice, in the development of fluency criteria, as M. Sato (2014) did in his study.

This would allow a more nuanced understanding of how fluent learners’ performances are. For example, from this perspective we might be able to see certain aspects of the focal participant interactions in my study as actually representing fluent performances of the student involved in a small-group discussion role, as the participants themselves understood it. This is because the participants were able to quickly and smoothly orient to the focal participant practices that they expected to perform in a manner that suggested they were experts at this. However, by viewing these interactions from the teacher’s perspective, who was imagining a community of students who engaged in more dialogic discussions, we can see these same aspects of the interactions as lacking fluency.

Seeing fluency in terms of group membership requires looking at what kind of members’ resources an English-speaking community might see as being important for fluent performance in a particular communicative situation. This requires seeing fluency as context-sensitive, rather than as a universal concept. Norris and Ortega (2009, p. 575) have touched upon this when they argued that CAF should not be seen as applying equally across all contexts, as they are always used with different aims in mind. As well as considering our aims in measuring CAF, and how these affect how we see language learning, we also
need to carefully consider what actions are appropriate to the situation when determining what a fluent action is. When there is a pause, we need to consider whether pausing at that particular moment, in that particular situation, could be considered as a fluent or dysfluent action.

**Complexity**

Although the concepts of fluency and accuracy are complicated, complexity is probably the most difficult of the three measures to determine. As Housen and Kuiken (2009) remark, "as befits the term, complexity is the most complex, ambiguous and least understood dimension of the CAF triad" (p. 4). I do not have space here to attempt a thorough discussion of the concept, but as with my thoughts regarding fluency and accuracy, I believe that we need a more interactive and contextually aware understanding of complexity to complement the more linguistic understandings, which often focus on syntactic or grammatical complexity (as I did in this study). First of all, we need to see complexity as an interactive phenomenon. Carter and McCarthy (2017, p. 8) have found "plentiful evidence of coordinated clauses and combinations of main and subordinated clauses created by more than one speaker". That is, clauses occur across turns and speakers, and complexity should, like fluency, be thought of as interactive phenomena.

I would also argue that complexity should not be seen only as a linguistic phenomenon, but also as a more social phenomenon. That is, we should look not just at the words used, but also at the actions performed. Research into Interactional Competence (see pages 14-5) has found that development over time involves a diversification of techniques or methods for performing certain discursive practices (Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016). For example, research has shown how learners’ storytelling practices get more complex as learners develop (beginning with simple delivery of informational content, then the use of adverbials and tense to facilitate the launching of a story, and at higher-levels more subtle tailoring of story-openings [Pekarek Doehler and Berger, 2016, p. 21]). This line of research may be able to inform, or complement, linguistic understandings of complexity in CAF studies.

**CAF: A summary**

I believe that we need more nuanced understandings of complexity, accuracy,
and fluency, and I have advocated moving away from Standard English and native speaker norms. However, in judging how accurate, fluent, or complex an interaction is, it is difficult to avoid norms of some kind. The Douglas Fir Group (2016, p. 26) argue that both norm and choice are important constructs. "It is communities or, as appropriate, social networks that give rise to always-changing but nevertheless operational norms of language use, form, and function, together with exploitable potentials for novel meaning-making through language choice". They argue that, if a learner wishes to legitimately participate and position themselves in a desirable way in particular types of discourse, then he or she needs to learn both the norms and choices that are recognized by a given community of users.

I think it is reasonable to assume that the goal of many learners is to be able to perform in ways appropriate to the situation they are in, and I believe that we would be doing a disservice to learners if we did not help them develop an ability to take part in interactions appropriately. This means that we do need some 'standards' against which to judge. What is it appropriate to do and say when ordering a coffee, when having a chat with a new acquaintance, or when taking a job interview? What do expert speakers normally do and expect others to do in particular discursive practices, such as storytelling? Scollon (2001) described his entry into what he calls the 'designer coffee shop' nexus of practice (he seems to be referring here to the typical chain coffee stores, serving lattes and capuccinos, that we see in cities all over the world), from his position as a novice to an expert in the nexus. This involved learning and performing a set of varied and multimodal practices, including queuing, handing, ordering, familiarity with particular naming practices, seating, having discussions, and so on. I believe that language learners face similar challenges in developing language proficiency, and we should help equip them with the skills that they need to perform a variety of different practices. In doing so, we should look to what is considered normal, and also what choices they have, when performing that particular practice in a particular context. I believe that rather than simply opting for Standard English norms every time, we also look to various contexts of language use as appropriate to the learners and the situation we are teaching in or investigating (and, of course, Standard English norms may at times be perfectly desirable). As Dewey (2012) advocates, we should look to develop a post-normative approach.
8. CONCLUSION

This project was, for me, a massive undertaking that required me to scrutinize the practices in my classroom in the kind of detail that I had never done before. While this was time and energy consuming, I feel that it also brought me great benefits that completely justified this expenditure, not least of which is a new way of looking at my classrooms and the people in them. I feel changed as a teacher, and also as a person, as a direct result of the years that I spent working hard on this research project. My contributions to knowledge can be found in the many details, which are summarized below, that came to light in my analysis of classroom interaction and identity performance. In particular, I have highlighted how some participants’ interaction practices changed across one university semester as they began to perform personal identities in English in the classroom, as well as the more expected student identities. For the participants themselves, this represented a type of learning (learning to see the classroom and the role of interaction and identities in it differently). This personal off-task talk, performed in English, is a potentially important site for language learning in the classroom that has been under-researched.

I have also developed Hauser’s (2009) findings about turn-taking practices in small-group discussions, advancing the notion of the focal participant as being central to the small-group and pair classroom activities that are performed in English. In part, this was possible due to my use of CA’s fine-tuned focus on turn-taking. The analysis revealed how these practices can cause problems in a course that aimed to develop dialogic talk. However, I also found that these practices were not necessarily the result of participants’ inability or reluctance to engage in dialogic talk (as many participants engaged in dialogic talk when foregrounding their personal identities), but rather that participants were orienting to expectations about their roles as students. Further research would be needed to investigate whether these are general features of EFL classroom interactions in Japan, or whether they are oriented to by certain kinds of learners in certain kinds of classrooms. Further research would also be needed to investigate whether or not the learning opportunities that present themselves in personal talk in the classroom do actually lead to long-term language learning.
8.1 The research questions

Here I would like to revisit my initial research questions and discuss how my project was able to address them.

1. How do participants negotiate and produce different identities and relationships in multimodal interactions as they attempt to teach and learn in the EFL classroom?

Through a close analysis of the interaction data, I have found that, rather than focussing on only one identity, participants perform different identities at different moments in classroom interactions. One of the identities that was of particular importance was the student identity, and the related focal participant role that was performed when participants attempted to speak English together in classroom activities. Developing Hauser’s (2009) findings, I examined focal participant turn-taking practices in different types of classroom activity, and showed how an orientation to focal participant practices was negotiated by participants, often through the use of nonverbal behaviour, such as gaze, posture, nods, and so on.

I also demonstrated how certain members of the groups began to co-produce personal identities in English in the classroom. In any particular interaction, when participants changed from foregrounding their student identities to foregrounding their personal identities, this shift was always affected by at least one participant who performed some pronounced nonverbal actions, such as a postural shift or gesture. Once these nonverbal actions, or means (Norris, 2004, 2011), were performed then other members of the group joined the first participant in focussing on personal identities. As well as finding that certain participants performed personal identities in English interactions, I also discovered how aspects of their personal identities, such as their imagined future selves, related to their classroom practices. For example, I have argued that discrepancies between an imagined future self and an actual identity can play a role in inhibiting a participant’s ability to perform personal identities in English in the classroom.

2. How do the identities and relationships that participants produce in the classroom affect one another and impact upon teaching and learning
practices?
The close interaction analysis revealed that once a participant foregrounded her personal identity, which was signalled to the other participants through the performance of pronounced nonverbal actions, then the other participants would also foreground their personal identities. In this way, the identity performance of one participant affected that of the others, as a focus on personal identities was reciprocated. As the participants developed closer social relationships, they began to perform these personal identities more often in the classroom. An important finding of the study was that it was when focussed on these personal identities, and engaged in off-task talk, that the participants were most likely to perform the kinds of interaction and learning practices that the course and teacher had been aiming for.

When foregrounding their student identities and performing classroom activities in English, the participants oriented to the focal participant role. Focal participant turns were often performed more for an absent teacher-superaddressee rather than with other members of the group. Although the learners had a relationship with the classroom teacher (i.e. me), once they were engaged in classroom activities they were often performing more in relationship with this teacher-superaddressee, who valued quite different behaviour to myself. This meant that, during small-group activities, participants were not following the classroom practices expected by the classroom teacher, so much as following practices with which they were already familiar. Performances for the teacher-superaddressee gave the interactions a monologic character that was at odds with the aims of the course, which had hoped to promote more dialogic discussions. While focal participant practices have possible pedagogical benefits, as they provide opportunities for each participant to speak equally, they also inhibit learners’ ability to engage in dialogic interactions or negotiate meaning with one another, which meant that frequently learners were not actually doing the things they had been asked to do by the teacher. The role of the focal participant in interactions in English communication courses in Japan needs careful consideration by teachers, and problematizing the focal participant may affect the ways in which students relate to and interact with each other in classroom activities, affecting teaching and learning practices.
3. What does this tell us about interaction, and conditions for learning, in the EFL classroom?

When engaged in a localized study of a particular group of learners, we should always be cautious about generalizing our findings to other groups. It is possible that my findings only hold for lower-level first year university students in Japan, or it is possible that they are a more general feature of EFL classrooms. Other studies, such as Hauser’s (2009), suggest that we can probably generalize at least some of my findings to other Japanese university EFL classes, but we should not assume that this is the case. With this caveat firmly in mind, I would like to address my third research question, which concerns what my study can tell us about interaction and learning in the EFL classroom more generally.

Firstly, my analysis demonstrates that EFL learners will organize their interactions locally, according to familiar practices that help them to make sense of what are often unfamiliar teaching practices. This means that the way in which learners perform activities may not resemble the way in which the teacher had imagined them. Accordingly, among the most important factors that EFL teachers must work with in the classroom are the expectations and previous experiences of learners who have their own ideas about how classroom interactions and learning should be conducted.

One issue that arose from this was that students performing classroom activities in English engaged in comparatively little negotiation, where they questioned one another, clarified meanings, or otherwise attempted to resolve language problems. Markee (2005, p. 212) has argued that “it is surely important to stretch learners with challenging topics that go beyond the intellectually vacuous language games that are the habitual fare of task-based instruction”. In a university context, it is difficult not to agree with this. However, “intellectually vacuous” interactions may be an important site in which to encourage the development of skills, practices, and confidence that underpin the performance of more intellectually challenging discussions. The formal discussions in this course were partly an attempt engage the students in more challenging talk, and they were partly successful in achieving that aim, as participants were challenged to produce more complex language on more difficult topics. However, this was done without learners engaging in the more dialogic talk that the teachers of the course had seen as being central to the course aims (and that might be seen as central in defining what a “discussion” is in the first place), and
without engaging in the kind of negotiation of meaning that may lead to language development. Group discussions of this type are popular in Japanese university EFL classes (Fujimoto, 2010). My findings suggest that teachers need to give careful consideration to what they hope to achieve by asking students to perform them. If the goal is to promote negotiation of meaning, for example, then teaching practices may need to problematize the focal participant role and focus on fundamentally changing how learners see their roles as students in these discussions.

Assuming that negotiation of meaning is important for language development, previous studies into foreign language learning have analyzed how learners perform this negotiation, particularly with respect to repair practices. As I adopted a CA approach, I was well placed to investigate repair practices in this project. I found that conversations produced more other repair and negotiated interaction than other types of classroom interaction (such as tasks) where participants focussed on their student identities, and may therefore have potential to play an important role in promoting learning opportunities and language development in the classroom. Those participants who performed personal talk also found it to be more engaging than regular classroom activities, which they often felt were inauthentic and not connected to their lives outside of the classroom.

If we accept that learners who are engaged in more authentic talk are engaging in a wider range of interactional practices, which are possibly more interesting for them, and that these interactions provide important learning opportunities which may help to develop language proficiency, then I would argue that my findings demonstrate that teachers need to think carefully about classroom management policies. In short, rather than discouraging personal off-task talk, we should be encouraging it (providing that it happens in English). This could have important implications for how teachers and students view the classroom space, and the types of behaviour that are appropriate in it.

However, it is important to note that I do not believe my findings support only focussing on personal talk, and it is worth highlighting that focal participant talk is not without its benefits. Studies have found that Japanese participants in formal discussions are less likely to self-select than American participants, and that English learners in study abroad contexts have difficulties gaining speakership (Evnitskaya and Berger, 2017; Lee, 2016). The practices seen in
this study ensure that all participants have a chance to speak.

Therefore, I argue that we should encourage a range of different types of interaction in the classroom, which provide for a variety of different types of language practice, learning opportunities, and for the performance of different identities. The different types of what I have called focal participant interactions provided different kinds of language practice, and therefore may be used in the classroom for different purposes (as may the personal talk).

*Informal discussions* on simple and mostly personal topics were relatively easy for the learners in my study, and pushed greater accuracy. This may allow learners to gain a sense of confidence from their ability to successfully and accurately speak English. Also, *informal discussions* featured a certain amount of self-initiated other-repair, which allowed learners to co-construct meaning and work in the ZPD. These interactions may be seen as stepping-stones to more challenging talk.

*Formal discussions* allow, or even force, learners to build up longer turns with more complex language use, which does not happen in the other types of interaction in my data. However, this may make them more suitable for use in a ‘Presentation’ course that aims to develop learners’ ability to produce more complex language in extended monologues, rather than a communication course focussed on dialogic talk (assuming that these discussions are performed in the way the participants in both Hauser’s (2009) study and my study performed them).

*Making sentences* activities featured a certain amount of self-initiated other-repair, and often included longer sequences of talk that were taken up with word searches. This meant that participants displayed high levels of engagement in thinking about the language. Furthermore, this was the one activity (other than the *writing a text* activities) in which participants attempted to repair syntactic as well as lexical problems.

In short, by carefully encouraging a balance of different types of interaction, including more personal and off-task talk, teachers can provide learners with a rich learning environment for developing their spoken proficiency. However, while we can look to use the potential benefits of focal participant talk, it is also clear that it constrains learners’ participation and can prevent them from meeting the aims of a ‘Communication’ course. As argued above, we may need to problematize it if we wish to see learners performing different classroom
practices (e.g. more dialogic discussions). We may want to consider how we treat focal participant practices in the classroom, and how we can move learners away from them. However, we would need to be careful in how we do this. While some learners will seek to move away from the constraints of the textbook and focal participant talk, for others the familiarity of the focal participant practices offers a safe space in which to participate, and sudden attempts to remove this safe space may have negative consequences.

This raises the question of how much English language teachers should challenge students’ beliefs, especially in an EFL (rather than an ESL) context. Most of the students in a compulsory Japanese university EFL class will never go abroad for more than a short vacation, and familiar classroom practices can facilitate participation and encourage all learners to speak. It is more than likely not only difficult to challenge long held beliefs about educational practice, but possibly also counter-productive as learners may feel unsettled, alienated, and demotivated by practices that seem unusual, or that even run in direct contradiction with long-held beliefs about good educational practice.

If we do decide to challenge focal participant practices, it may also be important to look critically at our classroom instructions and the way in which we set up activities. For example, despite the fact the textbook used in the course in this study focussed on developing learners’ ability to participate in conversations, a number of the activities actually promoted focal participant turn-taking by asking students to “take it in turns” to do something, rather than asking them to talk together. This type of instruction actively encourages focal participant practices.

My study also illustrated how learners who focus too much on unrealistic native speaker models can find their classroom participation negatively affected, while those who focus more on English as a lingua franca may be more likely to be comfortable performing personal talk in English. This has implications for how we treat identity issues in the classroom, and the sort of English-speaker identities that we present in classroom materials. I believe that it would be better to present language learners with a wider range of identities, including more non-native speakers of English, and to encourage learners not to uncritically aim for the native speaker model, but to find their own English voices. Rather than only presenting native speakers with a ‘perfect’ command of the language and who speak in ways that may seem somewhat exotic to EFL learners, it may be
better to offer examples of speakers whose proficiency is at a higher level than our learners, and who perhaps speak in ways more compatible with our learners’ identities, so that they can have more realistic models to aim for. (This is not to argue that we do not present native speaker models, but that we do not focus exclusively on them).

8.2 Should we encourage personal talk, and if so how should we do it?

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan has for many years been attempting to develop English courses that push learners to become better communicators, especially with the upcoming Tokyo Olympic games that will see an influx of foreigners into Japan in 2020. In official literature, MEXT (2014) has focussed on the active use of English and the development of high school students’ abilities to enhance their communication skills in discussions and debates. They have also stressed that the development of oral communication abilities should be the primary concern of English courses in high schools (Butler and Iino, 2005).

However, local contingencies have made this difficult to put into practice (Riley, 2008). These problems include university entrance exams that focus on grammatical knowledge, and teachers who lack training or confidence to teach communicative classes. Another problem is the cultural appropriacy of a communicative approach in the Japanese education system. It has been argued that collectivist cultures, such as Japan’s, see the role of the learner as being passive (Jin and Cortazzi, 1998), which does not resonate well with a communicative or task-based approach that requires learners to be active and often autonomous. On pages 216-8 and 236, I discussed how students in formal discussions may be focussing on language as a product, rather than a process, and Ellis (1996) reports that the focus on process common to communicative language teaching may make it unsuitable in an East Asian context (where content is seen as more important than process).

In the previous section, I raised the issue of whether EFL teachers should attempt to challenge students’ beliefs about good educational practice. If our aim is to develop communication skills, particularly discussion skills, I would argue that one important possibility is to explore the potential of personal talk. As discussed on pages 220-1, a growing number of studies have recently argued
for the importance of off-task talk in the classroom, and I would like to add extra weight to those calls here. This talk is not necessarily trivial, but provides learners with opportunities to experiment with a wider range of voices and functions (Waring, 2013). Off-task talk may be more creative (Illes and Akcan, 2017), and this is argued to be of particular importance for learners as ELF interactions are characterized by different forms of linguistic creativity (Pitzl, 2012). And while some studies, such as Fujimoto (2012, p. 66) and Jakonen (2016), have found that off-task talk in small groups tends to happen quietly in the L1 and that students tend towards using the L1 when the teacher is not watching, this is it not always the case in my study. However, in off-task talk boundaries between the L1 and L2 are softer, and this allows for learners to perform codeswitching or translanguaging practices that provide learning opportunities. This involves some L1 use, but often with an orientation to speaking primarily in English, and the L1 use is at times important in providing moments in a conversation where learning can be focussed on.

The participants in my study who were more likely to perform personal talk reported that they had learned to see the classroom differently. That is, they had come to see personal talk in English as an acceptable classroom practice, and an effective learning tool. However, for most learners, this did not substantially affect the ways in which they performed classroom activities and so did not challenge their ideas of what they should do as students engaged in classwork, but rather how they performed off-task talk. The challenge, at least with regards to the participants in this study, is how much we can or should attempt to change the performances of on-task interactions, and how much we should encourage off-task personal interactions in the classroom. Is it better, for example, to keep a divide between the personal interactions and the focal participant interactions? This would allow learners to participate in classroom activities without necessarily challenging their ideas about how these activities should be performed, but would also give them opportunities to engage in dialogic talk. Or can personal talk be integrated into classroom activities somehow, and perhaps change the way in which learners view their roles as students in EFL classroom activities?

If we accept that personal off-task conversations that are performed in English in the classroom may be beneficial for language learning, this leaves us with the question of how to encourage this talk. How is it possible, in a formal
classroom setting, to provide learners with regular opportunities to engage in the kind of naturally-occurring *personal* talk that is more common outside of the classroom? Furthermore, how do we encourage learners to do this talk in English? This study was not set up to answer these questions, and a future study may address the issue better. However, the data provides some insights into why certain learners engaged in personal talk, while others did not. These insights may prove useful when considering how to encourage learners in other classrooms to engage in similar interaction practices.

Firstly, it was clear at the beginning of the semester that all of the participants in this study believed that off-task talk needed to be hidden from the teacher. When off-task talk was engaged in, it was done so as a type of “safe house” (Canagarajah, 2004) talk, which was performed quietly so that the teacher would be less likely to hear it. It was also performed in Japanese. As the teacher had asked for activities to be performed in English, the switch to Japanese marked this as an illicit type of interaction. So, at the start of the semester, off-task talk was performed in Japanese and treated as inappropriate for the classroom. We can say with some confidence that this was the default setting for all of the participants at the beginning of this study, and that some change was needed before participants felt able to perform off-task personal identities in English.

By the end of the semester some change had occurred, as many participants were regularly performing off-task talk quite openly and in English. A major reason that participants gave for this change was that they had, over the course of the semester, come to new understandings of what counts as good, or accepted, classroom practice. But it is important to note that this did not affect their *focal participant* interactions, which they engaged in until the very last day, and so they did not appear to change how they saw their duties as students engaged in a classroom activity. It did, however, affect what they did when not performing tasks or activities. In particular, they had, in the words of one participant, “learned to enjoy English conversation in the classroom”. They did not see this *personal* talk as language study, but more as an enjoyable social activity to engage in in the classroom when they were not doing the regular classwork, and as an activity that was teacher-sanctioned.

And this is, I would argue, an important point. By focussing my analysis on groups of learners, I had intended to minimize my own presence in the study
as my interest was primarily in them. Of course, this was not possible in practice as the teacher plays an extremely important role in the classroom, and the identity category of a student in the classroom requires the presence of a teacher. The participants who performed personal identities in English highlighted the important role that the teacher played in encouraging them to do so. To give an example, two participants noted a time early on in the semester when they were engaged in off-task talk in Japanese and I approached them. They had attempted to hide this talk, and expected me to scold them for not doing their work. However, they were surprised when, rather than scolding them, I told them that they could talk about whatever they liked if they had finished the activity, as long as they tried to do so in English. Other participants made similar comments, with one saying in a video playback session that, “I learned that as long as I speak English it is okay”. In follow-up interviews one year after the end of the course, every participant commented that one of her main memories was the teacher repeatedly reminding them to speak in English.

I would argue that creating a supportive environment in which learners feel comfortable to talk to one another and express their personal identities in English is of great importance if we wish for them to engage in off-task English personal talk. But not only this, they should not only feel comfortable to speak in English, but should feel actively encouraged, and should see the value, and potential enjoyment, that they can get from this type of talk. This means that the teacher needs to be enthusiastic and persistent in encouraging English-speaking practices. If one classroom norm is that interaction will be predominantly in English, and if learners are actively encouraged to engage in off-task talk as long as it is in English, then I believe we are more likely to see personal talk in English. As one participant commented to me, “you say use English, so I think this is practice for me to use English”. Although I would like to stress here that I am not advocating an English-only policy, as there may be times when use of Japanese can serve important functions. What I am arguing for is a mostly English classroom.

However, even though all participants understood that the teacher encouraged them to speak in English, not every learner performed personal off-task talk in English, and for some participants (including some who were motivated to learn to speak English proficiently) off-task talk was only ever performed quietly in Japanese. The main reason given for not performing
personal talk in English was a lack of confidence. This lack of confidence was most often associated with a desire to speak English accurately, or put another way, a fear of making mistakes. That is, these participants were concerned with being correct and were worried about negative assessment (invoking the teacher-superaddressee) whenever they spoke English. Another reason, already discussed, is that these participants may not have had realistic future English-speaking selves to motivate them. And there were some students who were simply not motivated enough.

Possible ways to address these issues may include practices such as de-emphasizing negative assessment of performances, encouraging learners to be more comfortable with their current language abilities, introducing activities that are designed to develop confidence, and offering a range of more realistic English-speaker identities in the classroom. However, how to implement these practices and whether or not they could be successful in promoting more personal talk would need further research.

It is also instructive to look at how personal talk is initiated. Markee (2005) observes that shifts from performing a classroom activity to engaging in off-task talk need to be achieved by the participants. That is, they do not just happen. I noted this, as shifts to more personal talk are always accompanied by the performance of pronounced actions (i.e. means), such as posture shifts, which indicate that the participants must initiate and perform the shift themselves. They also tend to be performed at particular times, most often in liminal spaces or at boundaries when the interaction structure changes, such as the end of an activity (i.e. once every group member had completed her duty as focal participant) or when a new member joined a group. Hauser (2009, p. 238) noted that “participants appear to treat their responsibilities as students engaged in a student discussion as at least partially fulfilled once they have each been the primary speaker one time”, and this helps to explain why it is only once each student has been focal participant that they then feel able to perform personal identities. This shows that learners prioritize orienting to their duties as students, over engaging in personal talk. Knowing this can help the teacher to encourage learners to engage in off-task English talk more often.

Illes and Akcan (2017) have suggested that teachers should not plan lessons with tight schedules, but should leave time for unplanned interactions. I completely agree with this. For example, when setting up an activity the teacher
can in his or her instructions encourage learners who finish early to have English conversations, and can be openly supportive of such conversations should they occur. However, this does raise questions about what we should do with learners who do not feel comfortable with personal talk in English. If one group of learners is happily having a personal conversation in English, while another group has also finished the activity but does not wish to engage in this kind of talk, it seems problematic to force the second group to have a conversation, while it also seems a shame to curtail the first group's conversation. One option, in a situation such as this, could be to ask the members of the second group to perform the task again, or perhaps have a reflective discussion about the activity that they have just completed using either the L1 or the L2. Taking a translanguaging approach, Carroll and Morales (2016) discuss how they asked students in a class to have discussions and write written reflections about course readings in the L1, the L2, or both. This flexible language policy, they argue, allows students more opportunities, as they can make use of their full linguistic repertoire, and allows them to focus on comprehension without limiting their answers because of language proficiency. Perhaps a similar approach to post-activity reflective discussions would provide learners in a communicative course such as the one investigated in my study with important opportunities to reflect on the work they have done.

It is also noticeable that certain topics in classroom discussions are more likely to lead to personal off-task talk than others. For example, during the formal discussions no group focussed on personal identities after discussing the prompt, "Women should stay at home and look after children while men go to work. Do you agree?", even though every group personalized this topic by talking about their own family situations. On the other hand, four out of eight groups did shift focus to personal identities while discussing the prompt, "Which is more important: friends or family?" More personal topics appear to be more likely to lead to personal talk, and if we wish to promote personal talk, then these topics may be of more use. Again, further research would be necessary to determine exactly what type of question leads to more personal off-task talk in English.

My study shows that even lower-level EFL learners in compulsory English classes can and do take part in spontaneous L2 conversations, encountering learning opportunities without direct supervision or input from an
L1 speaker, and that engaging in personal, off-task talk in the classroom does not necessarily mean lapsing into the L1. However, teachers cannot make learners do this. What we can do is foster an environment where L2 conversations, in which learners focus more on their personal identities rather than their institutional identities, are more likely to occur. My study offers some ideas as to how this might be achieved, but further research is needed to establish what the most effective teaching practices are for promoting personal talk in the classroom.

8.3 Learners' identities

My analysis raises important issues about identity and language learning and teaching. Language teachers need to take an approach that is sensitive to learners’ identities, and allows them the possibility to focus on realistic and motivating future selves. Learners need to be able to envisage their own possible participation in communities of English speakers, in ways that respect their actual selves and are achievable for them. To be successful language learners, they need to be able to balance their competing identity positions (e.g. traveller, student, daughter, Japanese, and so on) in ways that allow them to develop an English-speaker identity that makes sense to them. For example, one participant in this study was concerned that in learning English she might “lose” her Japanese identity. It is important for learners to be able to see how, first of all, it is possible to express their already existing identities in English, but also how they do not need to see new identities as subtracting from older identities. For example, it is perfectly possible to be both Japanese and an English-speaker. As Norton and McKinney argue (2011, p. 85), these identity issues are not distracting from learning, but are the very fabric of learning.

Learners also need to be invested in classroom practices, such as peer-interactions, in a way that allows them to perform L2 identities in the here-and-now, and not just in a future imagined community. In this way, classroom practices may allow them to engage in identity work in English, and develop their identities as English speakers. This means moving beyond inauthentic activities and tasks, and encouraging more genuine interactions. This is another reason for encouraging off-task personal talk.

As already discussed, we also need to give thought to how learners are
positioned in relation to the identities of the people or characters that they encounter in classroom materials. Are they positioned outside of the community of English speakers that classroom materials present, or are they positioned as belonging to (or potentially belonging to) that community? From a mediated discourse perspective, learning includes the development of an identity as a member of particular communities of practice (Scollon, 1998, p. 3-5), and following this we need to help learners envisage what communities they are or might be gaining membership of. We may need to, for example, provide learners with an image of an international community of English speakers, with a variety of identities and cultural backgrounds, that our learners could be ready to enter, rather than a world of native English speakers that may seem alien and intimidating.

8.4 L1 Policies and Standard English
As well as reconsidering policies to off-task talk (see page 221), we may also want to reconsider policies to L1 use. Taylor and Snoddon (2013, p. 439) note that "from a practitioner's perspective, the idea of including a learner’s L1 in the classroom is still viewed cautiously", and overuse of the L1 in off-task talk can be a real problem in the classroom. However, I have observed in this study how L1 use in personal talk allows for smooth communication and opportunities for language learning (including other-repair word substitutions that speakers incorporate into their talk, and work in the ZPD that helps learners to produce English phrases that they had been unsure of), while still focussing on speaking primarily in English. The participants were able to draw on their L1 language resources, while still engaging in English conversation, which did not happen so often in on-task talk, where there were harder boundaries between the languages.

I believe that it is most likely useful for learners to experience the challenge of trying to communicate without recourse to the L1. L2-only interaction presents unique challenges, and calls for learners to be resourceful and inventive in how they meet these challenges (by, for example, making use of embodied actions and being tolerant of ambiguities). Experiences of engaging in L2-only interactions are likely to help develop important skills, and learners who engage in multicultural interactions will most likely find themselves speaking with people who do not understand their L1 in the future.
However, the L1 can play an important role in the classroom, and it should be utilised. Lin (2013, p. 521) writes that in recent years there have been signs of shifting methodologies in TESOL towards more flexibility in classroom language practices. The word *flexibility* is, I think, key. There should be a range of different types of activity and language practice in the classroom; some that require using only the L2, some that require using only the L1, some that use both, and some that let the students decide (although, ultimately, it will always be the students who decide what language they speak). I do believe that the balance should be in favour of speaking in English, as learners in Japan have very few opportunities to do so outside of the classroom. However, some use of the L1 would appear to be important. Anderson (2017), for example, argues for the concept of *translingual competence* and giving learners agency in their choice of linguistic resources. Following this, classroom instruction could focus on when the choice to use different languages may be negotiable and when it is not (this could even begin with pointing out to students how they themselves do this - e.g. by not mixing languages so much in tasks, but mixing them in off-task talk, and doing task preparation in the L1 but performance in the L2).

I discussed in Section 7.9 how we should move away from a focus on Standard Englishes and the traditional notion of native speaker accuracy, and bring a variety of Englishes into the classroom. As a start, this should include emphasizing to students that not all deviations from native-speaker norms are mistakes (Swan, 2017, p. 4). But it should go further than this. As well as de-emphasizing correctness according to the native-speaker model, we should provide a range of other models to our learners. A practice-based approach would allow us to focus on how different speakers perform the same practice (such as storytelling) in different ways. By focussing on what different people do differently, and also what they do in similar ways, we can provide learners with a variety of language models to choose from. In bringing in this range of English styles, we should discuss how and when they might be used, who uses them and for what purposes, and what effects they may have.

One approach may be to include a focus on learners' development of repertoires that include an ever-expanding range of resources. Pennycook and Otsuji (2014; 2015) have suggested the term *spatial repertoires*, which refer to "the linguistic resources at people's disposal in a given place" (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2014, p. 162), and include particular terms that make sense in particular
locations, and scripts that are expected in specific locations and linked to specific people. It is possible to encourage learners to focus on particular spatial repertoires, and how these may be incorporated into their own individual repertoires. This would allow us to bridge the gap between school and the language of everyday life outside of it (Pennycook and Otsuji, 2015). This approach should include engaging learners in practices that emphasize learning as opportunities to make use of various resources for particular reasons, rather than just being the acquisition of particular language items (Lin, 2013, p. 524).

Learners such as Miki and Natsumi claimed to have learned to see the classroom differently, and enjoyed learning as a process of communication. However, it is clear that learners like Chie are concerned about being correct, and find some comfort in the idea that a question has a correct answer. For Chie, the Standard English norms were something that she wanted to learn. Chie also had some anxieties about the openness of free conversation, as she lacked the confidence to know what to say and when to say it. Some learners clearly need certainties, and challenging their deeply-held beliefs may be disconcerting for them.

As such, taking approaches that deemphasize correctness and native-speaker norms may be liberating for some students, but problematic for others. Furthermore, while recent approaches to language and ELT have started to emphasize ELF and multilingualism, most of the students in the classes under study in this thesis claimed that they led largely monolingual lives, and some who were interested in English claimed to value the study of Standard English. Many participants in this study claimed to have not had much previous contact with non-Japanese people, or much experience of using languages other than Japanese, prior to coming to the university. Just as we should think carefully about expecting these learners to meet native-speaker norms, I also believe that, for certain learners, we should think carefully about how we present them with multicultural, plurilingual practices that may seem somewhat alien to them (perhaps as alien as the worlds of Native English speakers), as they may not yet see themselves as being multicultural or plurilingual (and they may not desire to be so).

In short, the way that such approaches are implemented in a compulsory university EFL class, to sometimes reluctant students, would need to be highly considerate of learner beliefs and expectations, and responsive to
local contingencies. It may be that, rather than completely abandoning more traditional approaches, these are complemented by other approaches such as those described above. Of course, it may also be the case that completely abandoning traditional approaches is liberating for most learners. Teachers need to demonstrate flexibility and sensitivity when making these decisions in the classroom.

8.5 Video-playback sessions

I have suggested that MDA may be a promising theoretical approach to study language learning. I would also argue that video playback sessions may prove to be a useful pedagogic tool. There is at present much interest in using video to improve educational practice (e.g. Lefstein and Snell, 2014). Video has, for example, been used to provide teachers with feedback (see Tripp and Rich, 2012), which often comes from other teachers and administrators. However, this use of video often excludes student voices.

Video playback sessions offer a way to promote a dialogue between the teacher and students that varies from the usual classroom discourse. I found that in the video playback sessions, with my researcher’s cap on, I could speak to my participants very differently, compared to how I usually spoke to them in class. The videos allowed us to step outside our usual classroom-bound identities and to see the practices recorded in the data from a different perspective. I was not using the videos as a learning tool, in that I was not focussing on the language (I was not using the videos to teach or correct English use). Rather, I was trying to learn about the participants in my study by taking my interpretations to them and trying to find out how they understood their participation in the classroom.

This allowed me to discover things about my students that would have remained hidden. Watching the videos together allowed me to get a deeper understanding of what the participants were thinking as they tried to perform activities together, including the things that concerned them, surprised them, and what they liked. They could make their motivations and desires known, in a way that was hard to achieve in a regular class. But, just as importantly, it allowed the participants to better understand me, their teacher. This included understanding me as a real human being, but also understanding what I was
trying to achieve in the classroom and why. This was important in helping me and my students achieve mutual understandings that helped us to better organize our classroom practices. And the participants were also able to understand their own practices better, as I highlighted aspects of their behaviour that they had apparently been unaware of, or had not given much consideration to.

Not only this, but as the video playback sessions were conducted in English they were an opportunity for the participants to take part in the sort of genuine discoursal exchanges that Taylor (2013) argues for. That is, the participants were engaged in genuinely meaningful interactions, rather than inauthentic and contrived classroom activities that are performed principally for language practice. So, even though I did not use the video sessions as a language-teaching tool, they provided many benefits to this class. Taylor (2013) has argued that students should be allowed to be themselves and to express themselves freely about what is important for them as learners, and that they should do this in English so that they can get practice of real-life discourse in the foreign language. Video-playback sessions are an important site where this kind of talk can be facilitated.

However, there may be issues concerning the practicality of practicing teachers regularly recording and watching videos with students. The process is time-consuming and may cause issues both inside the classroom and outside of it. Not every learner will wish to participate, and teachers would need to get permission before recording. Practical decisions would also need to be made about how to record groups, whether to record all groups or just some, when and where to watch the videos, and so on. However, should these issues be resolved, then I believe that the benefits for both teachers and students could be great, as being able to reflect on practice offers many new learning opportunities.

**8.6 Limitations**

This investigation has illuminated important issues in the particular classroom under study. While some of my findings provide support for the generalisability of the findings of other studies (e.g. Hauser, 2009), I am cautious in making claims about the generalisability of my findings to other classrooms. Markee
(2017) has called for "comparative re-production" research applying CA in the language classroom, and such research may be needed in order to begin making stronger claims for generalisability.

However, this was always intended to be a study of a local situation, rather than an attempt to characterize all language classrooms and learner behaviour. I hope that any researcher/practitioner coming to this study is able to take away thoughts and insights that will cause them to consider what is happening in their own classroom or research context in a new light. They may find similar issues, and this may cause them to consider why this is the case, and to use these considerations to think about their future practice. Or they may find differences, and again may wonder why this is the case. Either way, this can lead to changes in future teaching practice, or may provide the starting point for a new research project. It is not my aim to reach conclusions for best practice, but to offer a thoughtful and informed discussion of situated classroom behaviour that may cause others to think more carefully about their own classrooms. Detailed studies such as this one can, I believe, be powerful in promoting reflective practice and improving our understanding of what actually happens in our classrooms.

I should also note that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a comprehensive account of the different types of interactions that are found in language classrooms. When I discuss different types of interaction, I am discussing the types of interaction that I found in my data. It is also beyond the scope of this project to evidence that learning has definitely occurred. When I discuss learning in this thesis, I am discussing opportunities for learning and interactional practices that are assumed to provide important language practice that may lead to learning.

8.7 My reflections

This project has been a very large undertaking, and has involved a considerable amount of time and effort. I came into the project as a somewhat naïve researcher, and leave it a little less naïve. I have grown in confidence about my abilities as a researcher, and have also come to better understand my weaknesses. I feel tired, exhausted even, after spending countless hours reading journals and books, attempting to make sense of the many ideas I came
across, how they fit together or conflicted with one another, and how my developing ideas also fit into all of this. After spending hours and hours micro-analyzing video-recorded interactions, I can recite whole conversations from the data in my head, and as a result I am probably starting to speak a little more like an 18-year-old Japanese female than I should. However, I come out of the project excited about my future as a researcher and a teacher. I have found that I am able to apply my newly developed analytical skills to almost every interaction that I find myself in, both in the classroom and out of it, as I now notice very little things that would not seem important, or that I would not even have seen, had I not spent so long analyzing interactions. I feel a developing maturity, both as a theoretician and a practitioner that gives me confidence to go out and do more research and make greater contributions to the field.

Prior to this project, I had considered myself to be a thoughtful, reflective practitioner. However, like many other teachers, I had been frustrated by ‘silent’ classrooms and unsuccessful discussions, and was often quicker than I should have been to make recourse to stereotypes of passive Japanese students to help explain these problems. Through this study, I feel that I have uncovered something to help explain my students’ classroom practices. The focal participant fits in with the often-repeated claims that Japanese people value group harmony (e.g. Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994), but it is something more concrete to think with. I have found a set of recurring practices that structure participation in classroom activities when learners are focussed on institutional identities. However, I have also found that these practices and identities are not omnipresent, and that bringing personal identities to the foreground allows for a different kind of participation. These understandings have helped me to feel less frustrated in the classroom, and instead to try and find ways to work with the focal participant practices in order to promote outcomes more in line with what I hope to see. Also, while I have always encouraged learners to speak in English (as can be seen in my data), I am currently spending much more time and effort in trying to find more ways to encourage personal talk. I am now also framing my thinking about what I do in the classroom in terms of identity, and how I can encourage learners to develop identities as English-speakers, no matter what their proficiency level.

There are no definitive answers to many of the issues raised in this thesis, but that was never the aim of this study. The questions raised may be just
as important as the answers, and if I am honest, I would be suspicious of anyone who claimed to have found absolute answers to any problem in teaching. I believe that the questions that arise from this study should concern most language teachers in Japan, and possibly beyond. If established interaction practices, such as the focal participant, and the gaze of the teacher-superaddressee are so powerful, what can we as teachers do to promote genuinely dialogic and meaningful talk, and should we even try to? If we believe that it is beneficial for language learning, how do we encourage naturally-occurring L2 personal talk within the constraints of the classroom? What is the best approach to developing learners' English-speaker identities, what sort of identities should we present in classroom materials, and should we reject the native speaker model in EFL contexts? Attempting to answer questions of this sort is what makes language education the exciting profession it is, and it is in trying to answer questions like these that we change and learn. This project has certainly changed me, and I hope that what I have learned has changed me for the better.
APPENDIX 1: Ethics approval

Certificate of ethical research approval

MSc, PhD, Taught Doctoral theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications and view the School’s Policy online.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND

Your name: Paul Stone
Your student no: 560028703
Return address for this certificate: 903 High Lark Maizuru, Maizuru 1-3-31, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka, Japan, 810-0073
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Project Supervisor(s): Judith Kleine-Staarman, Susan Jones
Your email address: stone.paul.david@gmail.com
Tel: +81 (0)90-9141-0142

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed: .................................................. Date: 18th July 2014
Certificate of ethical research approval

**TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:**
An investigation into multimodal identity construction in the EFL classroom – a social and cultural viewpoint

1. **Brief description of your research project:**
In this project I aim to describe the multimodal ways in which EFL learners in a Japanese university co-construct their identities and relationships in interactions, and the impact this has upon opportunities for learning.

2. **Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):**
The participants are 18-19 year-old Japanese female university students, who make-up the class that I am currently teaching.

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

3. **informed consent:** Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents. Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. A blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: Each consent form MUST be personalised with your contact details.
I will inform all students that I intend to audio/video record them and explain clearly how data will be used (and how it won’t be used). I will inform the participants that I intend to make multimodal (including video stills) transcriptions of the video and audio data and use these transcriptions to analyse the interactions that take place in the classroom. I will inform participants that I intend to ask colleagues and some of the participants to view the transcripts and the video/audio data and to offer their own interpretations (I will also inform the participants that they are, of course, free to decline to participate in this post-hoc reflection on the data). These post-hoc reflections will take the form of semi-structured interviews conducted on the university campus. I will use some of the data in academic presentations and in articles written for academic journals. I will not reveal participants’ identities to anyone when discussing or presenting the research. I will assure the participants that anything they say in class will not be revealed to others in a way that may in any way compromise them (which is something that I would usually explain to students anyway about anything that they tell me in class). I will explain the reasons for doing the project verbally and in writing in both English and Japanese, and I will encourage the participants to ask me questions about the research. I will explain to the students that they do not have to agree to be involved in the project and if they do agree that I will protect their identities. I will show students a consent form, which I will also explain to them verbally, and will explain that they are able to decide if they wish to sign or not sign this form.

4. **anonymity and confidentiality**
I will use pseudonyms for all participants, and will not name the university in any reports I write or presentations that I give. I will not disclose any sensitive information that might be recorded in my data, unless students give express permission for me to do so. In any publications or presentations that draw from this data I may use transcriptions (including images and transcripts of what was said). In this event, all quotations will be anonymised and any images will be pixelated so that participants’ faces are not recognizable.
5. **Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:**

I will be audio- and video-recording classes that I teach, as well as making field notes (including information such as seating patterns). I will also collect online diaries and written materials produced in class and some students will be interviewed. As teacher of the class I am particularly concerned that I do not let my research project interfere with the learning that should be happening in class and with my relationship to the students as their teacher. Cameras will be placed in unobtrusive positions and students will be able to request that I turn them off. Any student will be able to opt out of the project at any point should they wish to do so. Video recording discussions for students to watch and reflect on is actually a regular part of my classroom practice, so the data produced for this project is something that would have been produced whether or not I was undertaking this project. I intend to conduct interviews primarily in English, but will encourage participants to use Japanese should they feel that it is easier to express themselves this way. I am able to speak and understand some Japanese, but if I am unable to fully understand something a participant says in Japanese I will ask colleagues to help me translate, and I will inform participants of this and allow them to decide who (if anyone) will help with the translating.

Given my joint role of teacher and researcher, I am eager that students see me primarily as a teacher and that the teacher-student relationship is not compromised by my research activities. I will explain clearly to the participants my role as a teacher and researcher. I will explain that my research is intended to help improve my own (and others’) teaching practices by illuminating issues that are not easy to see while teaching. I will explain that while my research and teaching are very much interlinked, while I am in the classroom I am first and foremost a teacher and the research will not affect grades or any other administrative issues. I will explain that, if a student is unwilling to participate it will not affect how I treat them in class and that I will be in no way upset or offended (I also explained that I would be more upset if students agreed to participate when they didn’t really want to). I will explain that the research is intended to affect the way that I behave in the classroom, and not (directly) the students. I will ask students who have any concerns to speak to me in class or to come and see me or email me privately, and I will also use opportunities when I have speak to students one-on-one to offer them a chance to opt out of the project if they so wish. Whenever I set up a camera or audio recorder up in class I will remind students of the reasons for my study (and also the pedagogic reasons for recording interactions) and explain that the equipment can be turned off at any time (or not turned on at all). I will also allow students to operate the equipment and suggest that they could turn it off themselves whenever they wanted to.

6. **Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.**

Should students discuss personal problems, including relationship issues or problems with other members of staff/the university, while I am recording them then I would need to be especially careful in how I store my data and report my findings.

The video and audio data will be recorded on my own digital equipment and stored my personal PC, which is password protected and not used by anyone else. Any software that I use to analyze the data will also be password protected. Ethnographic notes and other data that I will collect will be stored in the same locked drawer and will use pseudonyms rather than students’ real names.
7. Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

N/A

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first

and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School’s Research Support Office for the Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: 01/07/2014
until: submission of thesis

By (above mentioned supervisor’s signature):

[Signature]

date: 07/07/2014

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

GSE unique approval reference: [Signature]

Signed: [Signature] Date: [Signature]

Chair of the School’s Ethics Committee
APPENDIX 2: Explanation of project

Explanation of research project

As a university lecturer it is important that I teach classes, but it is also important that I do some kind of research to help improve the way we teach. Over the course of this semester I will be audio and video recording interactions in this class. This is a normal part of what we do in CS1 classes to help you learn English. However, I would also like to use these recordings in a research project that I am undertaking with the aim of better understanding what students do in English classes. I would like to watch the videos and carefully analyse what is happening in them, so that I can understand what you actually do when you are trying to learn English. The ultimate aim of this project is to improve how classes are taught. I will not use this data to assess your English skills or decide your grades. I will use the data to try and improve how I teach you (and hopefully how other teachers also teach).

To help me understand the data better I might ask you if you would like to take part in informal interviews. These will be very much like conversations. In the interviews I might ask you to watch videos of yourself and tell me what you think is happening in the video, or to explain something that I cannot understand. I might also want to ask you some more personal questions about your experiences of learning English and your experiences related to learning English (for example, travel experiences, your future goals, other classes that you take, etc.). You do not have to take part in these interviews if you do not want to. If you do take part in an interview I would like to audio and/or video record it. However, if you are not comfortable with this I can make notes by hand.

I might also sometimes make observational notes in class. For example, if I notice something interesting that happens but is not being recorded I might want to write it down so that I don’t forget it. I would also like to use these notes in my study.

Sometimes, I might need to talk about my research project to other academics (for example, in a conference), or write about the research project in academic publications (this is so I can tell other teachers and researchers about what I find, so that they might learn from the project too). If I do this, I will protect your identity by not using your name and not giving any information that could reveal who you are.

If you do not wish to be a part of this project, then you do not need to do so. It is your decision to be in the project or not, and if you decide not to participate I will be in no way offended and it will in no way affect what happens to you in class. You can also decide how you would like to participate. For example, if you are happy for me to use the video recordings that we make in class as part of my study, but are not happy for me to use the observational notes that I make, you can indicate this on the consent form.

If you have any questions for me, or would like to discuss my project in more detail, please speak to me or email me at the address below. I am happy to talk to you about it. If you want to know about the results of my study, please ask me and I will be able to send them to you.

Paul Stone
stone.paul.david@gmail.com
090-9141-0142
大学の教師で英語を教える上に授業を改修するために研究をするのは大切です。この学期にはオーディオとビデオでこのクラスの中の対話を録画しています。学生の行動をよく分かって授業を改修する為の研究プロジェクトです。録音したデータはあなたの成績に関係ありません。私はこのデータを解析して私の教え方を改修する積もりです。

時々このプロジェクトについて他の教師と話すことになると（例えば、学会で）、または学術掲載誌（例えば、大学の紀要など）でこのプロジェクトについて論文を書くことになる可能性があります。もし、そういうことになったらあなたの氏名を使いません。もし、録音したビデオを他の人に見せたらあなたの顔を隠せます。

このプロジェクトに参加するのは義務的なことじゃありません。あなたの決定です。参加しなかったら、私は不愉快しないし、あなたの授業の経験は障りません。

もしこのプロジェクトについて質問があったらやこのプロジェクトはどうちょっと知りたかったら、ぜひ私と話してください。または、下に書いたメールアドレスまで電子メールを送ってください。

以上
ポール・ストーン

stone.paul.david@gmail.com
Tel. 09091410142
APPENDIX 3: Letter of consent

LETTER OF CONSENT

If you agree to participate in this study I will make audio and/or video recordings of you while you participate in class. I may also ask if you would like to participate in informal interviews, which I would also like to audio and/or video record. I would also like to keep a record of things you say or do in the classroom in a notebook of classroom observations. I would like you to indicate below what uses, if any, of these records you are willing to consent to. I would also like you to indicate if you are happy to participate in the project. This is completely up to you. I will only use the records in ways that you agree to. In any use of these records your name will not be identified.

1. The records can be made and studied by the researcher for use in research projects.
   Audio _______________ Video _______________ Notebook _______________
   [Please use initials]

2. The records can be used for scientific publications.
   Audio _______________ Video _______________ Notebook _______________
   [Please use initials]

3. The records can be shown at meetings of academics.
   Audio _______________ Video _______________ Notebook _______________
   [Please use initials]

I have read the above description and would like to participate in this project. I give my consent for the use of the records as indicated above.

Date _________________________________

Signature ______________________________________________________

Project Title: An investigation into multimodal identity construction in the EFL classroom: a social and cultural viewpoint

Paul Stone, 903 High Lark Maizuru, Maizuru 1-3-31, Chuo-ku, Fukuoka, Japan, 810-0073
APPENDIX 4: Initial analysis

This is a sample page taken from one of the notebooks I used when performing my initial, rough analysis of the video data. I identified part of this data as of interest for further analysis (specifically, the part identified as being “off-task”), and Appendix 5 and Appendix 6 show my more detailed analysis of the same data.
APPENDIX 5: More detailed analysis

THEMES: MIKI’S ‘INTERNATIONAL’ IDENTITY / GOING OFF-TASK
Video: 25/4(a)
Time: 4:15 – 4:25  Participants: Rumi, Miki, Teacher

Teacher is telling a short story with a pedagogic focus to contextualize the language in
the book into a real-life (i.e. non-classroom) setting.

The teacher makes claims to be a 'language learner' and makes relevant non-teacher identitites (e.g. 'husband').

Teacher gazes left and right at the students, who both gaze at him.

Rumi maintains elements of her 'writing' posture, but with her head upright and gaze directed at the teacher. This suggests that the 'writing' action is not too far backgrounded and she is still somewhat focused on the task.

Miki is sat more upright and has torqued her body slightly towards the teacher.

Just after the teacher utters the word 'wife' Miki smiles and licks her lips. This could be a means – there is an upcoming change in focus to go off-task.

MIKI USES NVB TO CLAIM A TURN, THEN GOES OFF-TASK: Miki points (repeatedly) at her finger, looks down at her finger, and smiles. Rumi then gazes in quick succession at Miki’s finger, Miki’s face, and the teacher’s face, and laughs. The teacher nods and finishes his turn with decreasing volume and a sustained gaze at Miki. This shows that the teacher has finished and allows Miki to take the floor.

Miki is no longer focused on the classwork and is no longer focused on me as a 'teacher'. She is focussed on me as a 'husband' (to a Japanese woman, which is clear in a minute). Miki is, I think, now focused at least partly on her 'international' identity.

Around 4:23, Miki gazes down at her finger as she continues to point at it. This communicates the focus of her attention (her ring finger). She pauses for about one-second and points vigorously at her finger

The teacher also gazes down at his wedding ring, which he raises slightly, making it more visible and highlighting the topic of conversation. Although Miki has not said what she is talking about, it is clear that through her gaze and pointing that she is talking about his wedding ring (which makes relevant identities: husband, wife).

Tchr: so I might ask my wife. (. ) can you tell me what THIS means. can you tell me what. ( . ) mm means.

Miki: I think your ring is kekkon yubiwa tte nani?
APPENDIX 6: Detailed transcript – A multimodal table

Each column shows Miki’s actions performed in a different mode. The change in colour to blue shows where I identified a change in focus to her personal identity, and the bold underlined text indicates that these actions are a means.

Video: 25/4(a)

MIKI’S ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Gaze</th>
<th>Spkn Lang</th>
<th>Posture</th>
<th>Layout</th>
<th>Hands</th>
<th>Objects</th>
<th>Prox</th>
<th>Print</th>
<th>Head</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>04:08</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td><em>In fw</em></td>
<td>Book,</td>
<td>Pen, bk</td>
<td>Write</td>
<td>V</td>
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<td>04:18</td>
<td>Hand</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Ln to T</td>
<td>Point finger</td>
<td>SAGI^v</td>
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<td>Hand</td>
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<td>04:25</td>
<td>Rumi</td>
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<td>L-Ha-hair</td>
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</table>
APPENDIX 7: Transcription conventions for spoken language

Adapted from Seedhouse (2004, p. 267-269).

[ ] Point of overlap onset

] ] Point of overlap termination

= Indicates that there is no gap between utterances

(3.2) Interval between utterances (in seconds)

( . ) Very short untimed pause

::: Lengthening of the preceding sound

? Rising intonation, not necessarily a question

CAPITALS Louder sounds relative to surrounding talk

< > Talk surrounded by angle brackets is produced slowly and deliberately

> < Talk surrounded by reversed angle brackets is produced more quickly than neighbouring talk

. Falling (final) intonation

(() ) Nonverbal actions or researcher’s comments

- Abrupt cutoff

** ** Utterances between these signs are noticeable quieter than surrounding talk. In the case of actions, the action is performed with less emphasis than normal (e.g. a very slight head nod)
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