

THE ABILITY OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS TO MODIFY
THEIR INTERLANGUAGE UTTERANCES TOWARDS
COMPREHENSIBILITY AND/OR TARGET -LIKE USE
DURING TASK-BASED INTERACTION

By

Yinager Tekle Sellassie

Adviser

Dr Nuru Mohammed

A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
Addis Ababa University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

June, 2003

Addis Ababa

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRDUATE STUDIES

The Ability of Grade 12 Students to Modify Their Interlanguage Utterances towards Comprehensibility and/or Target- like Use during Task- based Interaction

By

Yinager Tekle Sellassie

APPROVED BY

Adviser

Examiner

Examiner

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Yinager Tekle Sellassie

Signature: _____

Place: Institute of Language Studies, Addis Ababa University

Date of Submission: _____

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my adviser, Dr Nuru Mohammed, for his invaluable comments which assisted me greatly in producing my paper in its present form.

I am also grateful to my wife, Amsale Arefaine, whose love and moral support sustained me throughout my studies.

I am enormously indebted to my friend, Yonas Chekol, for his material support and the affection he has shown to me during my stay with him. And finally, a special thank you to Daniel Eressa for the enjoyable times we spent together.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
List of Tables	ii
Abstract	iii
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statement of the problem	1
1.2 Objectives of the study	4
1.3 Significance of the study.....	6
1.4 Limitations of the study	6
1.5 Organisation of the thesis	6
<i>II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....</i>	<i>7</i>
2.1 Conditions for SLA	7
2.1.1 Learner-oriented conditions	7
2.1.2 Language-oriented conditions	10
2.2 Negotiation of meaning	12
2.3 Studies on negotiation as an aid to comprehensible input and output	14
2.3.1 Comprehensible input	14
2.3.2 Comprehensible output.....	16
2.4 Negotiation, comprehension and access to form	19
2.5 Negotiation as a source of feedback to learners and a context for their modification of output	21

2.6	Modified comprehensible output and L2 learning	23
2.7	A model for interlanguage modification towards comprehensibility	28
III.	DESIGN OF THE STUDY	32
3.1	Participants	32
3.2	Database	33
3.3	Procedure	34
3.3.1	Selection of participants	34
3.3.2	Recording of interactions	36
3.3.3	Data transcription	37
3.3.4	Coding of data	37
IV.	ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA	39
4.1	Resolving comprehension difficulty	40
4.2	Modification of trigger utterance towards comprehensibility and/or target- like use	47
4.2.1	Semantic modification	48
4.2.2	Syntactic modification	52
4.3	Signal types and their effect on modification of IL utterance	57
4.3.1	Trigger repetition signal	58
4.3.2	Explicitly marked signal	61
4.3.3	Trigger modification signal	62
V.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	70
5.1	Conclusions	70
5.2	Recommendations.....	71
	References	
	Appendix A	
	Appendix B	
	Appendix C	
	Appendix D	
	Appendix E	
	Appendix F	
	Appendix G	
	Appendix H	

List of Tables

- Table 1 : Frequency and percentage of trigger utterances vs other-initiated clarification requests
- Table 2 : Frequency and percentage of negotiated interactions
- Table 3 : Frequency and percentage of modification types in one-signal negotiated interaction
- Table 4 : Frequency, proportion and percentage of modified comprehensible output (MCO) towards target-like use in one- signal negotiated interaction
- Table 5: Frequency, proportion and percentage of modified comprehensible output towards target-like use in extended negotiated interaction
- Table 6: Frequency and percentage of IL modification in response to the trigger repetition signal
- Table 7: Frequency, proportion and percentage of signal types used by the participants in one- signal negotiated interaction
- Table 8: Frequency, proportion and percentage of modified comprehensible output in response to signal types

Key Words

- Modification
- Compressibility
- Interlanguage utterances
- Target-like use

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether students modified their interlanguage utterances towards comprehensibility and/or target -like use when they experienced difficulty in message comprehensibility during task- based interaction which involved only students. To this end, twelve students of Grade 12 at Enjibara Comprehensive, Preparatory and Technic School were selected and participated in the study. These students were paired up and made to interact using a picture-dictation task. Their interactions were tape- recorded, transcribed and analysed.

The results of the analyses indicated that the participants were able to successfully negotiate for comprehensibility by modifying their trigger utterances in 30(63%) instances of the one-signal negotiated interactions. The findings of the study also revealed that when the participants generated modifications of initial utterances, they made use of target-like forms in 70% of the cases. However, when the rate of frequency of these modifications which exhibited the use of target-like forms was compared with the total number of responses made to clarification requests, it was found minimum, i.e. 44%.

Furthermore, the investigation made to see why the participants did not engage in the modification of their trigger utterances more often than they did resulted in the knowledge that a particular type of incomprehension signal called trigger repetition signal was responsible for this situation. This signal type was found less effective in

prompting the participants to modify their trigger utterances. Of the 48 incomprehension signals made in the one-signal negotiated interactions, 23(48%) of them were trigger repetition signals. However, only 11(36%) modified comprehensible output instances were made in response to this signal type. The majority number of responses (64%) were made in reply to either trigger modification signals or explicitly marked signals which accounted for 25% (12) and 27% (13) of the total number of incomprehension signals, respectively.

Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study and suggestions were made for future research on the area.

CHAPTER ONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

Until very recently, most syllabus designers started out by drawing up lists of grammatical, phonological and vocabulary items which were then graded according to difficulty and usefulness (Nunan, 1988). Richards and Rogers (1986:49) comment that "learning a language, it was assumed, entails mastering the elements or building blocks of the language and learning the rules by which these elements are combined...." Later, however, it was perceived that language-centred approaches failed to help L2 learners become both grammatically accurate and communicatively fluent (Johnson and Morrow, 1981:1).

This discontent with language-centred approaches led to the advent of learner-centred approaches (Kumaravadivelu, 1993). According to Kumaravadivelu (1993), learner-centred approaches are those approaches, such as communicative approaches, which seek to provide opportunities for learners to practise preselected, presequenced notions and functions through communication-focused activities, assuming that the learners can make use of them to fulfil their communicative needs outside the classroom. As a result, the communicative task has become the heart of the lesson in communicative language teaching and most modern courses of English as a foreign or second language contain suggestions for information – gap activities, role plays, simulations, language games of various kinds and so on (Howatt, 1984: 279; Nunan, 1989:12).

Notwithstanding this tide of change in language pedagogy, seen in other parts of the world since the 1970's, it was relatively recently that a significant change in materials and syllabus design has been made in line with communicative approaches in this country. Consequently, it was in the mid –1990's that English courses called Junior and Senior Secondary English courses were written based on the principles of the communicative approach to language teaching. These two English courses are currently in use in this country to teach English to secondary school students.

The writers of these English course materials explain that the materials were prepared based on the syllabuses for the two cycles of secondary education. The first cycle refers to Grades 9-10; the second refers to Grades 11-12. The syllabuses recognise two main needs for the students insofar as the English language is concerned. One of these needs is that the students will need to achieve sufficient mastery of the language to enable them to communicate effectively in English socially and in the workplace whenever the use of English is necessary. To this end, the syllabuses specify certain functions which the students should be able to understand and express appropriately in a variety of everyday or social situations. The syllabuses also specify certain academic functions which the students need to master in order to be successful in a learning situation where English is used as the medium of instruction.

Therefore, based on this need of the students and being convinced that it is only through the provision of frequent opportunities to use the language appropriately in different situations that the students will be able to master the syllabuses objectives for

oral English, the course writers make note of the fact that the courses provide a large number and variety of oral communication activities. The activities are claimed by the courses writers to be not only communicative and meaningful but also topic-related and task-based. The writers also point out that the aim of employing these activities is to improve the fluency and confidence of every student. Therefore, based on these claims of the courses writers, one can assume that the students in their Junior and Senior Secondary English courses are provided with a lot of language tasks which engage them in some kind of interaction in the EFL classroom.

Interestingly enough, the first batch of secondary school students who for the first time started using the two courses, i.e. the Junior and Senior Secondary English courses given consecutively in the two cycles of secondary education, will have completed their secondary education by the end of the academic year 2002/2003. These students are assumed to have been provided with a lot of language tasks in the English classroom with the aim of improving their fluency. So, at the end of their secondary education, what does the spoken language of these students look like when they are engaged in communicative activities?

In fact, there are local studies which have been carried out to look into the type of language produced during classroom interaction. These studies, some done prior to the advent of the new curriculum (Abdulkader, 1983) and others more recent (Sisay, 1999), focused on how students and teachers interacted in the classroom. Still other local studies on classroom interaction investigated the types of strategies students

employed when they encountered communication problems in situations where the talking was done only by the learner without an interlocutor (Fassil, 1992). Fassil's (1992) study indicated that students used different communication strategies such as reduction and achievement strategies when faced with communication problems.

A survey of the local literature on classroom interaction reveals that there is an apparent lack of empirical evidence which can indicate what students actually do when they are involved in learner/learner interactions and faced with communication problems. My study, therefore, sets out to fill the gap in the local literature by investigating how Grade 12 students modify their interlanguage utterances towards comprehensibility and/or accuracy when they encounter a communication problem during task-based interactions involving only students.

There are a few strong theoretical arguments, which have indeed been supported by some evidence from practical studies, and which claim that when L2 learners are pushed towards adjusting their interlanguage towards comprehensibility or accuracy during interaction, the process in which they are involved to do so may represent the internalisation of new linguistic knowledge or the consolidation of earlier existing knowledge. These theories and practical studies are summarised in the review of related literature.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The general objective of my study is to find out whether students modify their interlanguage utterances towards comprehensibility and /or target-like use when they

experience difficulty in message comprehensibility during task-based interaction which involves only students.

This study also seeks answers to the following more specific research questions:

1. Do the students resolve a comprehension difficulty encountered during task-based interaction?
2. Do the students modify their initial interlanguage utterances in their attempt to resolve a comprehension difficulty?
3. What types of modifications of interlanguage utterances do the students make?
4. Do the modifications made exhibit any movement towards target-like use?
5. What types of signals for incomprehension are employed by the students?
6. Do various types of signals for non- understanding initiate different responses from the students?

Similar research questions like the ones above may have been asked and researched overseas. The purpose of this research is not to replicate these studies here in our context but to inquire into our students' ability to resolve comprehension difficulties by extending their linguistic repertoire and to compare results found as such with those found abroad and help make the overall picture of the local literature on the oral proficiency of our students become more complete.

1.3 Significance of the study

The findings of this study which will look into the ways in which students work together towards comprehensibility through the negotiation of meaning may convince teachers to have more confidence in students' ability to learn from each other. As a result, teachers could be encouraged to provide students with more opportunities for classroom interaction. Moreover, the results of this study may help teachers become aware of and work intensively on common and persistent sources of trouble for students which create misunderstandings during conversations.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The study focuses on verbal strategies. Therefore, non-verbal means which could be made use of by the subjects to resolve communication problems will not be analysed in this study.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised as follows. Following this chapter, a review of related literature appears in Chapter Two. To achieve the objectives already set, the research procedure is outlined in the third chapter. Chapter Four presents the analysis and discussion of the results. The conclusions arrived at and the recommendations forwarded are presented in the fifth and final chapter of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter first briefly discusses some theoretical perspectives on conditions for SLA. It then presents the pros and cons of the theoretical arguments about and the studies done on the role of negotiation of meaning both in the provision of comprehensible input and in the production of comprehensible output during task-based interactions.

2.1 Conditions for SLA

Pica (1994:500) points out that there are six theoretical perspectives on conditions for SLA and that these fall into two broad categories. She notes that three related to what learners need to do to learn a language and three are more focused on what needs to be done with the L2 for it to be learned. Even if each will be addressed separately in this section, it should be noted that the various conditions are highly interrelated, both within and across their respective categories (Pica, 1994).

2.1.1 Learner- oriented conditions

The first learner-oriented condition which is most widely discussed is that comprehension of message meaning is necessary if learners are to internalise L2 forms and structures that encode the message (Krashen, 1987; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Krashen and Terrell (1983) argue that exposure to L2 input is not sufficient for learners to be able to access and internalise the L2 rules, forms and features. This input must be made comprehensible if it is to assist acquisition process (Krashen, 1987:20-

21). Krashen's Input Hypothesis which proposes a condition for SLA is thus summarised as follows:

... a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i [current competence] to stage $i+1$ [the next level] is that the acquirer understand input that contains $i+1$, where " understand" means that the acquirer is focused on the meaning and not the form of the message (Krashen, 1987:21).

The second learner-oriented condition for SLA states that learner production of modified output is also necessary for L2 mastery. Swain (1985:249) who proposed the " comprehensible output hypothesis" argues that comprehensible input is not sufficient for successful second language acquisition, but that opportunities for non-native speakers (NNSs) to produce comprehensible output are also necessary. She based her conclusions on findings from studies she conducted on immersion students in Canada. She found that although immersion students were provided with a rich source of comprehensible input, their spoken production lagged behind their listening comprehension. Swain proposed, therefore, that they might need to be given opportunities to produce comprehensible output; that is, to organise and restructure their output syntactically. Swain argues that comprehensible output aids SLA in many ways:

Its role is, at minimum, to produce opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test out hypothesis about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it (Swain, 1985:252).

Swain and Lapkin (1995) refine the comprehensible output hypothesis, developed in Swain (1985) and summarise it as follows:

In producing the L2, a learner will on occasion become aware of (i.e., notice) a linguistic problem (brought to his/her attention either by external feedback (e.g., clarification requests) or internal feedback). Noticing a problem "pushes" the learner to modify his/her output. In doing so, the learner may sometimes be forced into a more syntactic processing mode than might occur in comprehension. Thus, output may set "noticing" in train, triggering mental processes that lead to modified output (Swain and Lapkin, 1995:272-373).

Swain and Lapkin (1995:374) argue that noticing of a gap leads to mental processes that in turn lead to the production of modified, reprocessed output, and that this "may represent the internalization of new linguistic knowledge, or the consolidation of existing knowledge."

Pica (1994:501) observes that both comprehension and modified production are tied closely to learners attention to L2 form. For example, Krashen (1985:2) sees comprehension as the requirement for access to form and Swain (1985) also argues that modified production provides a context for learners to draw on their current system of interlanguage forms.

The third learner-oriented condition which is currently held to play a much crucial role in successful SLA is learners' attention to L2 form. Researchers like Sharwood Smith (1991) argue that learners accuracy can be improved by providing a variety of

'consciousness raising' activities, which aim to draw the learner's attention to properties of the L2. Long (1988) also contends that " a focus on form along with any other... tasks make certain L2 features salient, improves rate and ultimate SL attainment. Attention to form is necessary for mastery of certain types of L1/L2 contrasts...." The need for drawing learners' attention to explicit formal properties of the L2 arises from the conviction that it " provides a more salient kind of positive evidence, which may help to sensitize the learner to aspects of the L2 which would otherwise pass unnoticed" (White et al., 1992: 417).

The claim that L2 form must come to learners' attention as they process input also strongly supports Swain's (1985) argument regarding the importance of production as a more direct means than comprehension for learners to focus on form. For Swain and Lapkin (1995), learners' production of output, especially their modification of their output, draws their attention to the L2 structures that make it possible for them to convey message meaning.

2.1.2 Language-oriented conditions

The next set of claims about L2 learning conditions, as noted above, centres on language process or, more specifically, input processes. The argument here overlaps a good deal with the theoretical claims on learner-oriented conditions, especially with respect to their underlying assumptions. They simply offer another perspective on the same set of conditions for L2 learning (Pica, 1994).

According to Pica (1994:502), first among this second set of claims is the argument that positive L2 input- that is, input that is " grammatically systematic"- must be available to serve the learning process. Pica (1994) observes that SLA theories all assume that learners draw on L2 input as data for their learning. Any debate seems to be over the nature of such data and over whether and how the data must be organised for language learning to proceed- for example, " to allow learners to imitate and respond to linguistic stimuli, to adjust innate structures, to recognize restriction on lexis, to discover rules through hypothesis testing, and so forth" (Pica, 1994:502).

Another language- centred claim, according to Pica (1994), is that "enhanced L2 input, which makes subtle L2 features more salient for learners, can assist their learning processes." Of particular benefit is input that provides information to help learners identify which forms can occur in the L2 and which cannot (Sharwood Smith, 1991). Along similar lines, it is held that feedback and negative input are needed to provide learners with metalinguistic information on the clarity, accuracy and/ or comprehensibility of their interlanguage (Schachter, 1986,1991).

To illustrate the relationship of negotiation to learners' comprehension of L2 input, their production of modified output and their access to L2 form, the following overview will present results of several studies that have documented negotiations positive effect on these processes.

2.2 The negotiation of meaning

In recent years, a much greater role has been attributed to interactive features of classroom behavior such as negotiation of meaning in contrast to a more traditional view of teaching and learning which conceptualises classroom interaction as the conveyance of information from the knowledgeable teacher to the 'empty' and passive learner (Chaudron, 1988:10). In fact, this shift of focus towards the role that can be played by interactive features in the second language learning process was motivated by Hatch's (1978) seminal work which urges researchers to turn their attention away from questions about how L2 learning led to the learner's communicative use of L2, and instead to examine how the learning of L2 structure evolved out of communicative use. With regard to the importance of interaction in the EFL classroom, Ellis (1984:95) comments:

Interaction contributes to development because it is the means by which the learner is able to crack the code. This takes place when the learner can infer what is said even though the message contains linguistic items that are not yet part of his competence and when the learner can use the discourse to help him/ her modify or supplement the linguistic knowledge already used in production.

Task - based interaction is particularly characterised by the opportunity it provides for learners to negotiate for meaning (Ellis, 1982). As a result, most research into tasks has tended to have the characteristic of measuring task performance in terms of "negotiation of meaning variables" (Skehan and Foster, 1999). According to Pica

(1994), the term negotiation, which is a specific type of interaction, has the following features:

This term has been used to characterize the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility. As they negotiate, they work linguistically to achieve the needed comprehensibility, whether repeating the message verbatim, adjusting its syntax, changing its words, or modifying its form and meaning in a host of other ways.

Widdowson (1990:111) explains that negotiation of meaning, under normal circumstances, is always a matter of achieving an objective by the most economical means and is carried out by whatever short cuts available. In contrast to many writers like Krashen (1982), Long (1983), Pica (1988) and Varonis and Gass (1985); Widdowson (1990) downplays the significance of negotiation of meaning in creating conditions for the acquisition of linguistic knowledge of the foreign language. He further argues:

The internalization of the system as a communicative resource is only likely to happen when there is a concentration on symbol to index conversion, when the potential value of symbols is actualized indexically in the process of discovering new meaning; that is to say, when there is a recurrent association of new schematic knowledge with new systemic knowledge (1990:112).

However, in pointing out the significance of negotiation in communication, Widdowson (1984: 219-220) comments:

Communication, let us agree, is a function of the discourse process and unless a discourse is enacted no communication takes place, and discourse is not enacted by the simple expedient of expressing individual notions and functions. It is done by the extension of utterances by negotiation.

2.3 Studies on negotiation as an aid to comprehensible input and output

2.3.1 Comprehensible input

There is considerable evidence for the role that negotiation plays in bringing about comprehension. Indirect evidence has come from studies such as those by Chaudron (1983) and Long (1985). In these studies, English L2 learners could better comprehend and recall lecture content when the words and sentences in the original versions of the lectures were modified in ways that negotiation has been shown to generate. These modifications included repetitions - at the word, phrase and sentence level, the use of paraphrase and insertion of conjunctions and enumerators to mark relationships of time and space.

Evidence of a more direct relationship between negotiation and comprehension has come from Pica et al. (1987), who investigated the listening comprehension of L2 low-intermediate learners as they followed 30 different directions to a picture assembly task under two input conditions. In one condition, the researchers first modified the

direction utterances in ways similar to those used in the lecture research described above. Three female NSs then presented them orally to individual learners. Among the modifications in these directions were reductions in syntactic complexity and repetitions and rephrasing of direction content.

In the other condition, the direction input was not premodified but instead left in its original form, then presented by the same NSs during interaction with a matched group of learners. As often as possible, the NSs encouraged the learners to ask for clarification of the directions.

As reported and discussed by Pica et al. (1987), both the premodified and the negotiated input conditions enhanced the learners' comprehension. However, the negotiated input was significantly better in aiding direction comprehension. Further, a related, classroom-based study involving the same assembly task found that, among two comparable classrooms of learners, participants who witnessed their classmates negotiate over the initially unmodified directions were able to comprehend them as well as did participants who engaged in the actual negotiation (Pica, 1991). Thus, when it comes to comprehension, negotiation appears to be a "powerful commodity"; even learners being allowed only to observe negotiation can improve their comprehension (Pica, 1994).

Analyses of the language used during negotiation in these studies uncovered the same kinds of manipulations of L2 lexis and structure that were made to the premodified

directions. However, these arose spontaneously in negotiation and there were significantly more of them.

Pica (1994:506) argues that this possible link between negotiation and the processing of L2 form serves to extend the work of negotiation beyond that of helping learners with comprehension of message meaning, and thus to make negotiation a potentially powerful contributor to other dimensions of the L2 learning process.

2.3.2 Comprehensible output

The empirical research that investigated Swain's arguments for the comprehensible output hypothesis and the related IL modification claims will be briefly summarised here.

Pica (1988) examined negotiated interactions between 1 NS and 10 NNSs of English to find out how the NNSs make their IL utterances comprehensible when the NS indicated difficulty in understanding them. The data consisted of 10, 1hr, transcribed audiotapes of 10 first language (L1) Spanish/L2 English NNSs of low-level proficiency interacting with an English NS who was an ESL teacher experienced in talking to foreigners. The findings revealed that NNSs generated their own modifications of initial trigger utterances only 48% of the time, but when they did so, consistently (91%) they showed target-like use of English. Pica (1988) concluded that these results show that NNSs can modify their IL utterances in response to an NS signal to achieve output that is both more comprehensible and more target-like:

... More comprehensible because... during 95% of the interactions in which the NS signaled comprehension difficulty, the NNS response to the signal led to a successful resolution; and more target-like because 48% of NNSs' total number of responses to the NS signal were encoded, through their own initiation, in more target-like form, a figure which represents 91% of the NNSs self-initiated modification (Pica, 1988:59-60).

In a more detailed and controlled study, Pica et al. (1989) transcribed and analysed audiotapes of 10 adult NSs of Japanese, each interacting in English with 1 of 10 NSs of English in a noninstructional, experimental setting. The NNSs were of low-intermediate and mid-intermediate proficiency levels. Three tasks were employed to collect data: information-gap, jigsaw and discussion type (opinion exchange). The results showed that the NS signal had a significant impact on the type of response NNSs made, regardless of task. Across all tasks, NNSs tended to modify their output most often when NSs signalled an explicit need for clarification rather than provided a model utterance for clarification. Pica et al. (1989) argued that the findings of their study provide empirical validation for Swain's (1985) construct of the comprehensible output hypothesis as well as the other claims about the IL modification of NNSs.

Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993) investigated learners' ability to produce more accurate output when teachers requested clarification. Six Japanese students performed the same task twice (telling a picture-based story to their teachers) a week apart. The researchers studied the use of past tense forms. The teachers requested clarification

either when they noticed an incorrect use of the past tense form or when they did not actually understand the verb used. Nobuyoshi and Ellis found that when teachers pushed learners in the direction of greater accuracy in their production, learners were able not only to make self-repair, but also to achieve a higher accuracy level in their output. This improved accuracy of output resulted in improved performance, both immediately and over time.

Pica et al. (1996) compared the interaction of 10 dyads of English L2 learners with that of 10 dyads of learners and English NSs on two jigsaw tasks (a house sequence task and a story task). All NNS participants share one mother tongue background (Japanese). They were all adult learners enrolled in low-intermediate classes. The researchers sought to investigate the difference in the learners' further modification of their previous utterances when these utterances were modified by NSs or other learners.

Pica et al. (1996:63) predicated that "when learners were given signals that modified their previous utterances, they would produce a similar amount of modified output in their responses whether the signals were from other learners or from NSs." As predicated, the results showed that there were comparable production of modified versions of their previous utterances when learners negotiated with NSs or with each other.

Finally, Van den Branden (1997) investigated the effect, immediate and delayed, of various types of negotiation on L2 learners' output in an instructional setting. He

collected data from three groups of 16 fifth grade primary school pupils whose ages ranged from 11 to 12 years. The NNS pupils were each asked to describe six drawings (to solve a murder case) to an NS peer or teacher partner who was not allowed to see the drawings. The researcher found that children were able to modify their output interactionally when confronted with a negative feedback, and that these interactional modifications had delayed effect on their output in subsequent interaction (p.626). Van den Branden concluded that " children of 11 to 12 years old appear to be quite able to push each other's output through negotiating meaning and content, and to learn enough from these negotiations to produce higher-quality output during subsequent interactions" (p.627).

This review shows that previous empirical studies on comprehensible output and IL modification have collected data mostly from NS-NNS interaction and only when interlocutors requested clarification. However, studies by Shehadeh (1999) and Varonis and Gass (1985) have established that negotiations of meaning occur with greater frequency in NNS-NNS dyads than in dyads that include native speakers.

2.4 Negotiation, comprehension and access to form

The research findings reported above corroborate what has been found in a more recent piece of research by Holliday (1993) on the nature of input during negotiation: that input modifications are significantly more abundant during negotiation than during the rest of learners' interaction. The findings also provide further evidence that negotiation modifies the L2 in ways that help learners comprehend its meaning. This

perspective on negotiation is highly restricted, however, and places negotiation in a secondary role in L2 learning, because it sees comprehension of meaning as the principal way to access and internalise L2 form, and negotiation as simply a way, though a very good way, to bring comprehension about (Pica, 1994:506).

Pica (1994:507) argues that looking at negotiation in this light makes negotiation important for SLA only insofar as comprehension is important to SLA. Pica remarks that this is unfortunate because the role of comprehension in SLA has become increasingly controversial. As a number of researchers have argued (Chaudron, 1985; Færch & Kasper, 1987; Gass, 1988; Sharwood Smith, 1987; White, 1988), it is difficult to find a direct relationship between comprehension of meaning in L2 input and the internalisation of L2 forms that the learner aims to acquire.

The most popular view on such a relationship is typified by much of the work of Krashen (1980, 1985). According to Krashen, comprehension of meaning suffices to enable learners to access the forms and structures that encode that meaning. It is not clear, however, what process makes this happen, and as a number of researchers have pointed out, Krashen himself has not been consistent about this (Chaudron, 1985; Long, 1990; Schimdt, 1990). As Chaudron (1985) has noted, for example, Krashen (1983) proposed that learners might access L2 form by noticing differences between forms in their current level of competence and those in whatever input they comprehended. In most of his other writing, however, Krashen (1980,1985) has said that the process of accessing form through comprehension does not take place on so

conscious a level. From either of Krashen's perspectives, however, the direct connections between comprehension of meaning and acquisition of form place negotiation in a learning sequence in which it simply initiates L2 comprehension, whereas comprehension then serves as a catalyst for more direct L2 learning experiences (Pica, 1994:507). In such a sequence, negotiation can lead to comprehension of meaning, but it is comprehension of meaning that leads to a focus on, and eventually acquisition of, L2 forms.

Pica (1994:507) points out that a different sequence is equally likely given the greater number of opportunities that can arise during negotiation to draw learner's attention to both message meaning and L2 form. She argues that, in this alternative sequence, the opportunities to hear a message repeated, segmented and reworded during negotiation are what make it possible for the learner to process the message and to comprehend its meaning. Negotiation data seem to suggest, therefore, that learners' comprehension of meaning can be " the result of their access to L2 form rather than its precursor" (p.508).

2.5 Negotiation as a source of feedback to learners and a context for their modification of output

Pica's (1994:513) argument that " negotiation offers learners more than assistance with comprehension of L2 input is made quite clear when analysis extends beyond the input learners are given to the output they produce." Swain (1985) argues that learner production of modified output is necessary for second language mastery and may

result from ample opportunities for output and the provision of useful and consistent feedback from teachers and peers. More recently, Swain (1995) proposes that "modified or reprocessed, output can be considered to represent the leading edge of a learner's interlanguage" (p.131). Pica (1988) found that such modified output occurred most often when native speakers signalled an explicit need for classification rather than provided a recast for confirmation.

Some of the earliest studies of error treatment led researchers such as Allwright (1975) and Corder (1967) both quoted in Lyster (1998) to propose that pushing learners in their output, rather than providing them with correct forms, could benefit their interlanguage development. More recently, van Lier (1988) argues that teachers should delay the use of corrective techniques that "deny the speaker the opportunity to do self-repair, probably an important learning activity" (p.211), and Chaudron (1988) suggests that instruction that emphasises self-repair in this way is more likely to improve learners' ability to monitor their own target language speech. Allwright and Bailey (1991) recommend that L2 classroom learners be allowed "both time and opportunity... for self-repair, whether it is self - or other- initiated" (p.107).

Notwithstanding ample support for pushing learners to modify their output during the treatment of oral errors, there is still considerable debate as to what exactly the modified output represents in terms of L2 learning and whether it is indeed necessary. For example, Schachter (1983) as cited in Lyster (1998) argues that neither imitation of correct forms nor the use of alternative forms following feedback provides

conclusive evidence that learners take advantage of negative feedback. Similarly, Long (1977) cited in Pica (1994) cautions against confusing the effects of corrective feedback on "monitored linguistic performance" with its usefulness in bringing about lasting modification of a learner's interlanguage grammar. Gass (1988) argues against the assumption that learners, with mere presentation of either implicit or explicit language information, would convert it to output; she also argues, however, that without direct or frequent negative evidence in the input, which would permit learners to detect discrepancies between their learner language and the target language, fossilisation might occur. Gass and Varonis (1994) concluded from their study of dyadic interaction that interactional input provides the opportunities for learners to detect such discrepancies and that "the awareness of the mismatch serves the function of triggering a modification of existing L2 knowledge, the results of which may show up at some later point in time" (p.299).

2.6 Modified comprehensible output and L2 learning

Pica et al. (1989:83) maintain that comprehensible output is an outcome of linguistic demands placed on the NNS by the interlocutors in the course of negotiated interaction. Research has shown that NNSs tend to modify and reformulate their output when their NS speech partners signal an explicit need for clarification (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993; Pica, 1988; Van den Branden, 1997). A study by Shehadeh (1999) has further shown that NNSs encoded their own modification towards comprehensible output in response to other-initiation, in both NS-NNS and NNS-NNS

contexts. Shehadeh's study revealed that out of 212 cases of other-initiated clarification requests, NNSs achieved 171 NNS-based MCO instances (81%).

These results are important in light of theoretical conclusions (Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Pica, 1988) that the NNS's ability to accomplish self-adjusted comprehensible output (i.e. NNS-based MCO) rather than other-adjusted comprehensible output (i. e. interlocutor-based MCO) is evidence that supports Swain's (1985) claim that the comprehensible output forces the learner to move from semantic analysis to syntactic analysis of the TL (i.e. when they attempt to produce the L2), they become aware of (notice) a gap in their current IL performance. Swain and Lapkin (1995) have consistently argued that when learners reprocess and modify their current performance to make it more enhanced, they are engaged in mental processes that are part of the process of language learning. Swain and Lapkin(1995:374) concluded that " 'pushing' learners beyond their current performance level can lead to enhanced performance, a step which may represent the internlization of new linguistic knowledge, or the consolidation of existing knowledge."

Swain and Lapkin (1995) based their conclusion on the findings of an introspection study they conducted in which they tried to shed more focused light on the processes and mechanisms that L2 learners follow to reprocess and modify their IL utterances. The researchers sought " to try to arrive at the mental processes... reflected in the changes students made to their output " (p.381). They examined the ability of 18 eighth grade immersion students learning French to consciously reprocess their IL

output without any sort of external feedback when faced with a performance problem.

The task given to the students was to write a report on some environmental problem.

Swain and Lapkin (1995) found that there were 190 occasions in which students encountered a linguistic problem in their output. In each case the students forced themselves to modify their output towards greater comprehensibility. That is, communicative needs forced students to move from semantic analysis of the language to syntactic analysis of it. Swain and Lapkin argued that " on each occasion, the students engaged in mental processing that may have generated linguistic knowledge that is new for the learner, or consolidated existing knowledge" (p.384). In other words, it was argued that in the process of modifying their IL utterances towards greater message comprehensibility, L2 learners are engaged in " some restructuring of the system that affects their access to the knowledge base, and that this restructuring process is part of second language learning" (Shehadeh, 1999).

If these arguments by Swain (1995) and Swain and Lapkin (1995) are valid, the findings of Shehadeh's (1999) study provide empirical support for Swain's (1985) earlier theoretical conclusion that comprehensible output- like comprehensible input- is a mechanism that plays a role in promoting SLA. According to Shehadeh, it will be possible to argue that the function of L2 learner's production is not just that of indirectly generating more comprehensible input, as claimed by, for instance, Krashen (1982, 1985,1994), but also facilitating second language developemnt by providing the learner with an opportunity to produce comprehensible output achieved by

reprocessing and modifying his/her current IL capacity towards successful and more accurate use of the target language. By the same token, it is possible to argue further that negotiated interactions are important not just because they provide NNSs with an opportunity to receive input that they have made comprehensible through negotiation (Gass and Varonis, 1994; Loschky, 1994; Varonis and Gass, 1985), but also because they provide them with an opportunity for IL modification in the direction of output, as shown by various studies (Pica et al., 1996; Shehadeh, 1999; Tarone & Liu, 1995; Van den Branden, 1997). Based on this consideration, Figure 1 shows a possible link between negotiation of meaning, comprehensible input, comprehensible output and language learning.

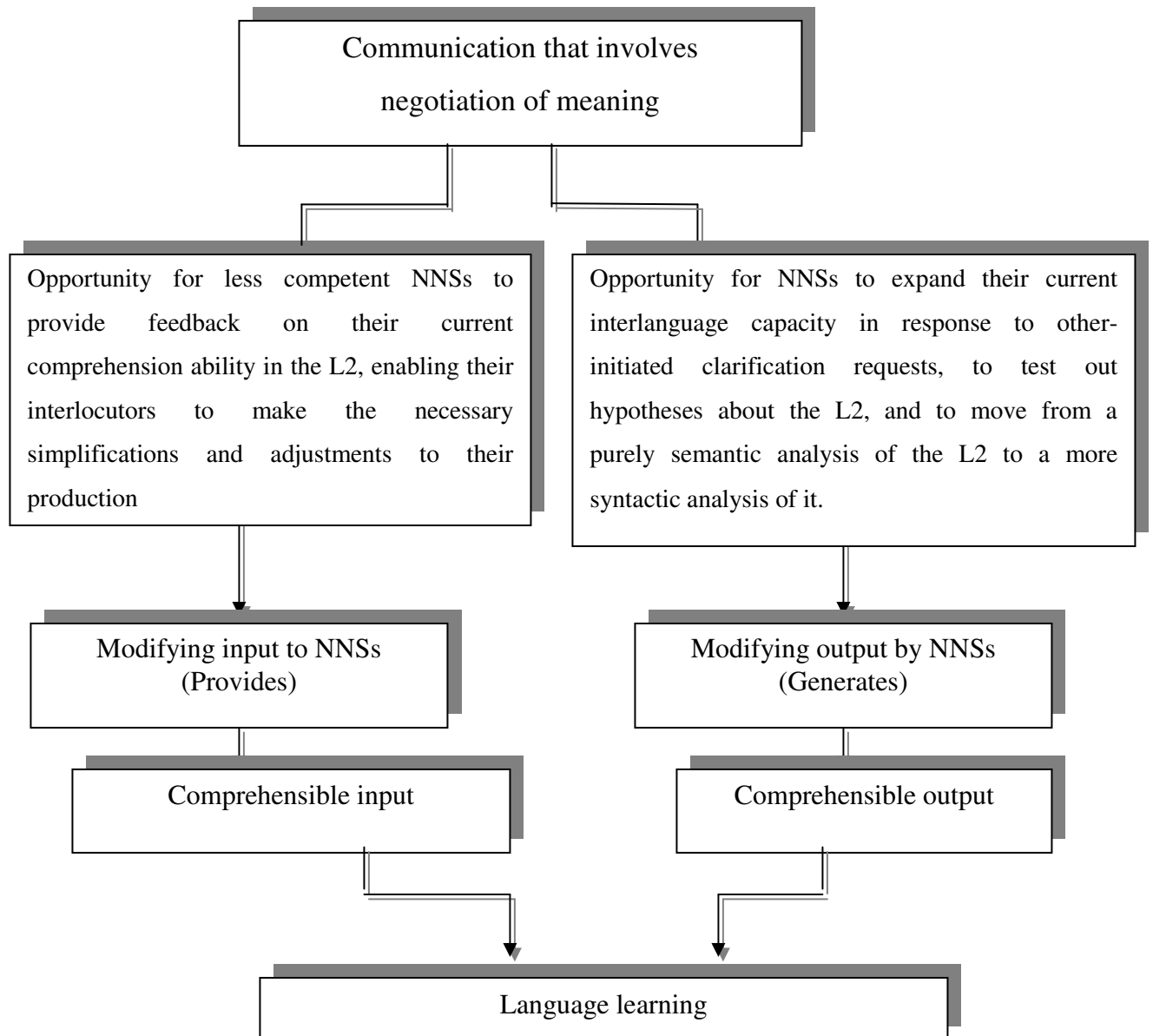


Figure 1. A link between negotiation of meaning, comprehensible input, comprehensible output and language learning (Taken from Shehadeh, 1999).

It is important to note, though, that this model involves some speculation because no one has yet shown clearly if there is (or if there is not) a direct relationship between interaction with L2 learners, their comprehension of input data, feedback on their IL

utterances, and their (modified) performance, on the one hand, and L2 acquisition on the other (Pica, 1994:507). However, Swain and Lapkin (1995:373) speculated that "although no one has yet shown directly that these modified, or reprocessed, responses are maintained in the learner's interlanguage, the assumption is that this process of modification contributes to second language acquisition." The present model is based on the assumption that when learners stretch their current IL capacity and modify their performance to meet communicative demands, they are engaged in "cognitive processes that have been implicated in second language learning," to use Swain's (1995:130) words.

2.7 A model for interlanguage modification towards comprehensibility

The model which is used in this study as a framework for describing NNSs' IL modification towards comprehensible output is based on Varonis and Gass's (1985) model. The model falls into four functional primes. The first prime consists of trouble source (TS) or trigger. The second prime consists of an initiator (I). The third prime is the outcome of or response to initiation, represented by (R). And the fourth prime consists of the interlocutor's reaction to the response (RR).

A trouble –source may be either ignored or reacted to. In cases where the TS was ignored, there is often no way for the investigator to recognise that there was a breakdown in comprehension or communication, although something later in the discourse may indicate that in fact the listener had not understood (Aston, 1986), or that the speaker did run into difficulty but did not initiate repair (Hawkins, 1985;

Varonis and Gass, 1985). On the other hand, the trouble-source may be reacted to by the interlocutor in which case we have other-initiation. Shehadeh (1999) comments that the outcome of initiation can take different forms, including ignoring the trouble-source or other-initiation/ signal of TS, failing to repair, appealing for help, switching to a new topic, expressing difficulty in repairing the trouble-source, repeating the TS utterance without modification, or successfully repairing the TS by reprocessing and modifying IL performance in the direction of comprehensible output- in other words supplying modified comprehensible output (MCO). Shehadeh points out that the reaction to the outcome is " an optional unit of the routine that helps to tie up the routine in some way before the speakers return to the main flow of conversation" (1999:644).

Following Lyster and Ranta (1997), clarification requests indicate the NNS that his/her utterance has not been understood or has been misunderstood or that the utterance is ill-formed in some way. This means that clarification requests " can refer to problems in either comprehensibility or accuracy, or both" (Lyster & Ranta, 1997:47).

Therefore, according to Shehadeh (1999), modified comprehensible output can be operationally defined as " the output that NNSs achieve to make an initial utterance more accurate and/ or more comprehensible to their interlocutor(s) in response to other-initiated clarification requests (p.644). On the basis of this definition, the model operates according to the following mechanism. This mechanism (TS-OI-O-RO) implies the presence of interpersonal negotiation of information of units, which may

be described as routines/ instances in which negotiation of meaning in the direction of greater message comprehensibility takes places between interlocutors (Shehadeh, 1999). This mechanism is demonstrated by the following excerpt, taken from Shehadeh (1999), which illustrates a simple routine for the negotiation of meaning between two NNSs.

NNS1: two small <u>bottle</u>	TS
NNS2: two small what?	OI
NNS1: bot... small <i>bottles</i>	O
NNS2: yeah	RO

Below is an excerpt, taken again from Shehadeh (1999), of an extended negotiation of information unit that illustrates complex and embedded layers with a series of three signal-response exchanges for the negotiation of meaning.

NNS1: and another side one in that er... in side of table emm	
<u>nabikin</u> is hanging _____	TS
NNS2: what? _____	IO
NNS1: <u>nappikin or towil</u> _____	O/TS
NNS2: what? _____	OI
NNS1: <u>towel or nappkin for er rubbing hand</u> _____	O/TS
NNS2: I don't know what is it ... what is	
this for? _____	OI

NNS1: for men to dry hands after washing towel towel _____ O

NNS2: uhh washing to dry hands yes yes _____ RO

Therefore, based on the relevance of the above theoretical claims and results of studies to second language acquisition, this study embarks on investigating our students' ability to modify their initial interlanguage utterance towards comprehensibility or target-like use by making use of routines of the negotiation of meaning.

CHAPTER THREE

III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This chapter deals with the research design adopted for this study. It describes the participants who took part in the study and how they were selected. It also discusses how the data for the study were collected. Finally, it outlines the procedure followed to carry out the research.

3.1 Participants

Twelve students of Grade 12 at Enjibara Comprehensive, Preparatory and Technic School were the participants in this study. Their selection was based on their performance of English in the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE) and on their results of Grade 11 English exams. Of the 12 participants, 4 scored an A in the EGSECE and got an average of above 81 per cent in English in Grade 11. The other 4 participants scored a B in the national exam and achieved an average of 65 to 74 per cent in the Grade 11 English exams. The remaining 4 students got a C in the EGSECE and scored an average of below 55 per cent in English in Grade 11. Except a few, the majority of the participants were from different classes.

Three categories of levels in English ability were specified for the purpose of the study based on the students' performance of English in the Ethiopian General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (EGSECE) as well as on their results of Grade 11 English exams. The first category consisted of students with a score of an A in the

EGSEC English Examination and with an achievement of more than an average of 81 per cent in the Grade 11 English exams. The second category comprised students who scored a B in the national English exam and who achieved an average of 65 to 74 per cent in the school English exams. The third category included students with a C in the EGSEC English Examination and with an average of below 55 per cent in Grade 11 English exams. The reason behind creating the three categories was the belief that students with different proficiency levels would exhibit various characteristics in negotiated interaction and that this could render the results of the study a higher credibility.

3.2 Database

Six recordings of the interactions of six dyads were made for the study. The six dyads were formed by using the twelve participants described above. Each recording is about 20 minutes long and all six recordings were used for the study.

The interactions were prompted by a picture-dictation task. The selection of this task was motivated in the first place by previous studies (e.g. Crookes & Rulon, 1988; Gass & Varonis, 1985; Hawkins, 1985; Pica et al., 1991), and in particular by Pica et al.'s (1989:72) remark that " there is a great deal of consensus regarding the value of [this task] in providing data on interaction in general and negotiated interaction in particular." Basically, a thorough analysis of the contents of the Speaking Sections of the teaching materials for Junior and Senior Secondary English Courses revealed that the participants could not be familiar with the picture- dictation task. However, the

results of the pilot study had shown that unfamiliarity with the task would have little or no impact on the students' ability to interact and produce enough data for the purposes of the study.

In a picture- dictation task a participant in a pair will have to describe the contents of the picture to a partner who has to reproduce the picture as precisely as possible only on the basis of the description. This means that the successful completion of the task depends in the first place on the participant's ability to supply a clear and accurate description of the picture he/she holds.

In fact, the picture for the task (see Appendix G) was carefully selected by the researcher from English for Ethiopia Grade 2 Student's Book. The picture is believed to have clear, easily recognisable features describable in a simple vocabulary to enable the participant with the picture to understand its content and describe it to his/her partner.

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Selection of participants

Following the formation of the categories, groups of students were identified on the basis of the three categories mentioned above making use of officially recorded documents in the school. Of the total 211 students who completed Grade 11 at Enjibara Comprehensive, Preparatory and Technic School in the academic year 2001/2002, only 5 scored an average of above 81 per cent in the school English exams. Among these, 4 got an A in the EGSECE and, as a result, were automatically selected

for the first category to be the participants in the study. The remaining one student was rejected because she scored a B in the national exam.

For the second category, 15 students, out of the total 211, were identified. This was the total number of students who got an average of 65 to 74 per cent in the school English exams. Among these, 11 scored a B in the EGSECE. The four students who were included in the second category and who participated in the study were selected from among these 11 students by drawing lots.

Since the number of students who could be included in the third category was too big, the four students who were chosen for the third category and who took part in the study were the first four students who were selected by taking every 5th student on a list of students which recorded their grades on English in the EGSECE. The participants included in this category scored a C in the national exam and achieved an average of below 55 per cent in the Grade 11 English exams.

The twelve participants in the study were paired up with the intention of creating 6 dyads with as many different combination of grades as possible. Even if the number and type of the combination of the grades had already been determined, the participants in each dyad were selected randomly by drawing lots. The table below shows the grades of the participants in each dyad scored in the EGSECE and in the school English exams.

Table I: English scores of participants in the EGSECE and in their school English exams

Dyad	EGSECE results	Average score in the school English exams
I	A	93.5
	A	88.5
II	A	82
	B	66
III	B	68.5
	B	65.5
IV	A	84
	C	54
V	B	73.5
	C	45.5
VI	C	49
	C	48

3.3.2 Recording of interactions

Each pair was given by the researcher the same picture-dictation task for interaction immediately before a recording of each interaction was made. Each member of the dyads was also presented with a written set of instructions in English to help them perform the task more successfully (see Appendix H). In addition, they were given oral explanations, again in English, to make matters much clearer for them. The

performance of the task by each dyad, which was carried out in English, was tape-recorded in turns in a separate room. The researcher was not available during the 20-minute-on-average duration of each interaction, hoping that this would give the interactants more freedom to talk. The recording of the interactions was made at the end of the first semester.

There were a couple of practical reasons for recording the interactions of each dyad in a separate room. The main reason was because of the fact that recording the interactions of 6 dyads would require several tape-recordings to be made at the same time or many classes at different times which was practically difficult to do given the scarcity of classrooms and the number of tape-recorders at the disposal of the researcher. The other main reason was, in fact, to ensure a high quality recording. Indeed, the results of the pilot study had indicated that recording the interactions out of a classroom situation would not affect the objectives of the study.

3.3.3 Data transcription

The tape-recorded interactions of the six dyads were transcribed for analysis. To get the closest transcriptions possible, an English teacher rechecked and verified the transcriptions made by the researcher to ensure their accuracy. The final transcription was intended to reflect what was recorded during the task with some of its linguistic features marked in the transcription. These included hesitation fillers, indications of unintelligible language, simultaneous speech and pauses.

3.3.4 Coding of data

All data were coded by the researcher on the basis of the model proposed earlier (see Section 2.7). The data were coded for the following categories: sources of trouble, responses to clarification requests or confirmation checks and responses which are still sources of trouble for interlocutors. To ensure reliability of data, a colleague rechecked and verified the coding done by the researcher and it was found that there was a 91% agreement between the codings done by the researcher and the colleague.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The general objective of this study is to find out whether students modify their initial interlanguage utterances towards comprehensibility and /or target-like use when they experience difficulty in message comprehensibility during task-based interaction which involves only students. To achieve this objective interactions of six dyads, which were prompted by a picture-dictation task, were tape-recorded, transcribed and analysed.

The model for the negotiation of meaning which was proposed by Varonis and Gass (1985) was adopted for this study as a framework for analysing IL modification towards comprehensible output. This analytical model used in various studies has proved effective in describing IL modification in negotiated interactions (Pica et al., 1996; Shehadeh, 1999; Van den Branden, 1997). The model falls into four functional primes. The first prime consists of trouble source (TS) or trigger. The second prime consists of an initiator (I). The third prime is the outcome of or response(R) to initiation. And the fourth prime consists of the interlocutor's reaction to the response (RR).

Based on the above model, the analysis examines the frequency of comprehension difficulties encountered as well as the proportion of IL modifications made to the number of comprehension difficulties faced by the participants. The analysis will further inquire into types of modifications of IL utterances and if these modifications

exhibit any movement towards target-like use. Finally, the analysis will investigate the types of incomprehension signals employed by the participants and whether the signals will have any effect on the types of responses made by the participants.

4.1 Resolving comprehension difficulty

Comprehension difficulty is said to occur when an interlocutor requests confirmation, clarification or repetition of a speech partner's trigger utterance. The request indicates that the utterance heard by the interlocutor has not been understood or has been misunderstood or that the utterance is ill- formed in some way (Lyster and Ranta, 1997:47). When a comprehension difficulty occurs, L2 learners usually tend to resolve the problem by engaging in the negotiation of meaning (see studies by Pica, 1988; Shehadeh, 1999). These negotiated interactions are often characterised by a four-move exchange (Varonis and Gass, 1985).

In negotiated interactions, the trigger utterance which is the first move and the trouble source (TS), is first followed by an interlocutor's signal for non- understanding which is then followed by the speaker's response to resolve the comprehension difficulty (for example, the originator of the trigger utterance repeated or modified all or part of the trigger or repeated or confirmed all or part of the signal). This is finally followed by an interlocutor's response which shows that the speaker's response has been understood (for example, the interlocutor's acknowledgement with 'Ok' or an interlocutor's continuing move based on an apparent comprehension of the trigger utterance with, for example, 'Ok continue').

This four- move exchange of negotiated interactions is illustrated by the following extract. In all extracts, numbers in parentheses refer to the length of pauses in seconds within one's turn or between turns. Letters representing speakers in an extract refer to the initials of the participants in the study and each dyad of participants is designated by numbers. The participants' background of achievement in English on the EGSECE and in their Grade 11 school English exams are found on page 36 as well as in the appendices. Moreover, in the excerpts cited, underlined items refer to the trouble source (TS), italicised items to the response and items that are both underlined and italicised refer to a response that is still a source of trouble (see Appendix I).

In the extract below, part of the first utterance (i. e. 'a chair') was a source of trouble for the interlocutor and he signalled his non- understanding by making a request for confirmation ('a chair?') which consisted, as can be seen, only part of the trigger utterance which had been a source of incomprehension for him.

Example 1

F: after the table there is a chair a chair

E: a chair?

F: *yes*

E: Ok

- Appendix E; Page 99

The signal for incomprehension was then followed by the response ('yes') from the originator of the trigger utterance, which was intended to confirm what the interlocutor

asked for. Finally, the interlocutor's reaction ('Ok') to the response was an indication that the comprehension difficulty was resolved.

The above extract is a typical example of one-signal negotiated interaction, found throughout the data, in which the comprehension difficulty was resolved after a single signal for non- understanding. Also observed in the data were instances of negotiated interactions in which the negotiation extended beyond one signal-response exchange. In extended negotiated interactions, a response made to a request for confirmation or clarification or repetition serves as a trigger utterance for the next signal- response exchange. This results in complex and embedded layers with a series of signal-response exchanges for the negotiation of meaning. This type of negotiated interaction is illustrated by the following excerpt:

Example 2

A: having two poles that means

M: er?

A: having two poles

M: what?

A: *a goal*

M: not goal a girl I said Ok?

A: a girl? (laughing)

M: *yes, a girl standing at the end*

A: Ok Ok

- Appendix A ; Pages 80-81

In the above extract which exemplifies a typical routine of an extended negotiated interaction, all of the first utterance was apparently the source of trouble for the hearer because he did not specifically indicate his trouble source by saying that part of the trigger utterance which was indeed his source of trouble. Unlike the one-signal negotiated interaction seen earlier, the comprehension difficulty encountered in the extended negotiated interaction above was not surmounted after the first signal for total incomprehension ('er?') but instead the response ('having two poles') to the first signal for non- understanding became a source of trouble for the next signal-response exchange. This first response was again a source of trouble for the interlocutor (M) and he posed another signal for incomprehension ('what?') to indicate that the non-understanding persisted rather than resolved.

The second response ('a goal') to the second signal for incomprehension ('what?') could not settle the problem of the non-understanding; therefore, the comprehension difficulty continued. In fact, the reaction ('not goal a girl I said ok?') to the second response ('a goal') should have resolved the impasse because the interlocutor (M) tried to confirm or explain that what he was talking about was not a goal but a girl. However, part of the reaction utterance ('a girl') again became a source of trouble for the hearer (A) and he showed his non- understanding by asking for a confirmation ('a girl?'). The comprehension difficulty was finally resolved after the speaker (M)

confirmed, for a second time, that he was talking about a girl and not a goal and this was acknowledged by the hearer (A) using the expression ('Ok Ok'), showing that he understood what his speech partner was saying.

Table 1 below shows that there were 111 utterances which were sources of trouble for the interlocutors.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of trigger utterances vs other-initiated clarification requests

Conversation move	Dyad												Total	
	1		2		3		4		5		6			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Trigger utterances	23	21	17	15	15	14	14	13	8	7	34	31	111	100
Other-initiated clarification requests	23	21	17	15	15	14	14	13	8	7	34	31	111	100

According to Table 1 above, all sources of trouble in the trigger utterances prompted the interlocutors to seek for clarification requests. The majority of utterances which were sources of trouble for the interlocutors occurred in the conversations of the participants in Dyad 1 and Dyad 6, that is 23(21%) and 34(31%), respectively, which

totally accounted for 52% of all trigger utterances made by the six different dyads. The participants in Dyad 1 and Dyad 6 were the highest and lowest scorers, respectively, in the EGSECE and in the school English exams. The higher frequency of trigger utterances in the conversations of the participants in these two different dyads implies that their interactions were riddled with comprehension difficulties.

Table 2 below shows that there were 74 negotiated interactions of which 48(65%) were one- signal negotiated interactions and 26(36%) were extended negotiated interactions.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of negotiated interactions

Dyad	One- signal negotiated interaction		Extended negotiated interaction		Total negotiated interaction	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	14	19	4	5	18	24
2	8	11	5	7	13	18
3	8	11	5	7	13	18
4	5	7	2	3	7	9
5	6	8	0	0	6	8
6	7	9	10	14	17	23
Total	48	65	26	36	74	100

As to Table 2 above, each of the negotiated interactions resolved the comprehension difficulties faced by the participants. In other words, there was no one incomprehension signal that was ignored by the participants. The bulk of the negotiated interactions were made by the participants in Dyad 1 and Dyad 6, that is 24% and 23%, which totally amounted to 47 per cent of all negotiated interactions made by the six dyads. The high prevalence of negotiated interactions observed in the interactions of these two different dyads points to the fact that their conversations were dominated by attempts or procedures to resolve comprehension difficulties through the negotiation of meaning.

Table 2 further shows that, except one dyad of participants, participants in all dyads engaged in both types of negotiated interactions. The participants in Dyad 5, one of the low achievers, were not observed engaging in extended negotiated interactions, however. This means that, in the interaction of the participants in Dyad 5, a response made to a clarification request did not act as a trigger utterance for another signal - response exchange.

The above results are consistent with theoretical arguments (Swain, 1985) and results of studies (Pica, 1988; Shehadeh, 1999; Swain and Lapkin, 1995) which claim that L2 learners work jointly towards greater comprehensibility when they encounter difficulty during interaction.

4.2 Modification of trigger utterance towards comprehensibility and /or target-like use

Modification of trigger utterance is an outcome of linguistic demands placed on speakers by interlocutors in the course of negotiated interaction (Pica et al.; 1989:83). Research has shown that NNSs tend to modify and reformulate their output when their NS speech partners signal an explicit need for clarification (Nobuyoshi and Ellis, 1993; Pica, 1988; Van den Branden, 1997). A study by Shehadeh (1999) has further shown that NNSs encoded their own modification towards comprehensible output in response to other- initiation, in both NS-NNS and NNS- NNS contexts.

The analysis of the coded data has revealed that the participants engaged in the negotiation of meaning which resulted in the modification of their IL utterances towards greater comprehensibility and/or target-like use. A further analysis of the data has also disclosed that the IL modifications made were of various types and that they were dominated by semantic modifications followed by modifications which exhibited morphosyntactic features. As Table 3 below indicates, the majority of the modifications made in response to incomprehension signals were semantic (77%). Only 7(23%) of the modifications showed syntactic features.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of modification types in one- signal negotiated interaction

Modification Type	One- signal negotiated interaction												Total	
	Dyad 1		Dyad 2		Dyad 3		Dyad 4		Dyad 5		Dyad 6			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Semantic	11	37	3	10	6	20	2	7	1	3	0	0	23	77
Morphosyntactic	3	10	1	3	2	7	1	3	0	0	0	0	7	23
Total	14	47	4	13	8	27	3	10	1	3	0	0	30	100

Semantic modifications involve addition or substitution of semantic content through synonyms and paraphrase while morphosyntactic modifications are characterised by addition, deletion or substitution of morphemes and functors. Extracts which illustrate these modification types are discussed below. The following excerpts demonstrate semantic modifications made by the participants.

4.2.1 Semantic modification

In the excerpt below, the originator of the trigger utterance, in response to the confirmation check, 'a broom?', posed by the interlocutor, strived to modify his initial utterance to resolve the comprehension difficulty faced.

Example 3

M: ... there is a broom there is a broom

A: a broom?

M: *with an stick er just ho with a holder with a holding*

[xxx] hold broom (2.5) somewhat sticklike [xxx] a

broom is long (2.0) long broom

- Appendix A; Page 84

In the above extract, in an effort to make his initial utterance more comprehensible, the speaker (M) used the word 'sticklike' in the modified version of his original utterance, assuming that 'sticklike' would function as a synonym for the word 'broom'. He also tried to describe 'broom' with the word 'holder' in the phrase 'with a holder'. Although the modification of his initial utterance was successful in breaking the impasse, the words the speaker used to modify his trigger utterance were far from target-like use. The words 'holder' and 'sticklike', used in place of 'handle' and 'broom', respectively, exemplify non-target-like use.

The following extract also typifies semantic modification of a different type made towards greater comprehensibility:

Example 4

F: in front of the door there is thist (7.0) brush

E: brush?

F: *eh draw brush which for cleaning house*

- Appendix E ; Page102

In the above extract, the speaker (F) used a paraphrase or definition ('which for cleaning house') in the modification of his trigger utterance in reply to the confirmation check, 'brush?', posed by the interlocutor (E). Though the modification achieved greater comprehensibility and as a result resolved the comprehension difficulty, the modified version consisted of forms which were far from target-like use. The missing articles before the count nouns 'brush' and 'house' and the lack of a finite verb in the relative clause were the non-target-like forms used in the modification of the trigger utterance in the above extract.

However, in the following extract one can observe the effort the speaker made to modify his trigger utterance towards a more accurate target-like use in response to a clarification request.

Example 5

B: *next to the er er the door and there is also (1.0) a person who is laying er
laid in the(1.0) wall*

S: *is it it a male or a female?*

B: *a male who weary who is wearing er a sort short*

S: *Ok*

- *Appendix C; Page 92*

In the above excerpt, the word 'person' in the trigger utterance posed a problem for the interlocutor because it did not identify the sex of the individual in the picture. Therefore, she made a clarification request by making use of the words 'male' and 'female' which she thought should have been used in place of 'person' in this particular

context. In response to the clarification request, the speaker realised that the word 'person' was ambiguous and consequently modified his trigger utterance by replacing 'person' with 'male' thereby moving towards greater comprehensibility and more accurate use. In fact, the process of the modification did not stop there. The speaker has also changed the adjectival clause 'who is laying', which was used in his trigger utterance, to 'who is wearing a short,' which was more descriptive because the boy in the picture wears shorts but does not lie down.

Even if the modified version was more effective in accomplishing the picture-dictation task and showed some movement towards target-like use (e.g. from 'who is laying er laid in the wall' to 'who is wearing er a short'), it still indicated non-target-like use (e.g. the speaker used 'a short' instead of 'shorts' and the present continuous 'who is wearing' instead of the present perfect or the simple present which would be more appropriate in the description of the picture).

All the earlier examples of modification of trigger utterance were taken from one-signal negotiated interactions, but the following extract illustrates a very typical semantic modification of trigger utterance in a two-signal extended negotiated interaction.

Example 6

A: at the left at the bottom of [xxx] seen at the bottom of the left draw a girl

G: Ok

A: on the ground

G: in which direction?

A: *at the left*

G: at the left?

A: *yeah at the left side*

G: Ok I have drawing a girl in the left direction

- *Appendix F; Page 103*

In the above two-signal negotiated interaction, the speaker, in response to the second confirmation check ('at the left?'), modified his trigger utterance ('at the left') by adding a word ('side') to it and thereby expanding it ('yeah at the left side'). This is an example of modification by expanding one's trigger utterance.

4.2.2 Syntactic modification

Despite being small in number, there were syntactic modifications made in response to signals for incomprehension. Syntactic modifications are characterised by addition, deletion or substitution of morphemes and functors. The following excerpt illustrates this type of modification:

Example 7

B: er near near near to the chair there is also a basket which contains I

think er tomato (4.0)

S: near what?

B: near the chair under the chair

S: chair?

B: ye yeah a chair

S: Ok

- Appendix C; Pages 91-92

The originator of the trigger utterance (B), in reply to the signal for non- understanding ('near what?'), tried to adjust his trigger utterance based on the syntactic difference between 'near' and 'under'. Assuming that the spatial relationship between the 'chair' and the 'basket' in the picture for the picture-dictation task was not of proximity but of hierarchy, the speaker (B) replaced 'near' by 'under'. Although this syntactic modification reflects target- like use of English, when it is seen in terms of accomplishing the task successfully, one can argue that it was a failure because the basket in the picture is near the chair not under the chair.

The total number of modifications made by the participants in response to requests for clarification is summarised in Table 4. As indicated in Table 4 below, the participants made 48 one-signal negotiated interaction and in 30(63%) of the cases they modified their initial trigger utterances towards comprehensible output.

Table 4: Frequency, proportion and percentage of modified comprehensible output (MCO) towards target-like use in one- signal negotiated interaction

One –signal negotiated interaction and outcome	Dyad												Total	
	1		2		3		4		5		6			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
One-signal negotiated interaction	14	29	8	17	8	17	5	10	6	13	7	15	48	100
Modified comprehensible output towards greater comprehensibility	14	29	4	8	8	17	3	6	1	2	0	0	30	63
Modified comprehensible output towards target-like use	10	21	4	8	4	8	2	4	1	2	0	0	21	44
Modification without target-like forms	4	8	4	8	4	8	3	6	5	10	7	15	27	56

As to Table 4 above, of the 30 modified comprehensible output instances, 21 of them, which were 44% of the total one-signal negotiated interactions, exhibited some kind of movement towards target-like use. In other words, the participants used target-like forms in 70% of the cases when they modified their initial trigger utterances towards comprehensibility. This implies that in the remaining 27(56%) one-signal negotiated interactions the participants either modified their trigger utterances without using target-like forms or repeated or confirmed their trigger utterances in reply to signals for incomprehension.

The largest proportion of modified comprehensible outputs (29%) were made by the participants in Dyad 1. These participants, high scorers in the EGSECE and in their school English exams, modified all 14 of their trigger utterances in response to clarification requests. Moreover, the participants in Dyad 1 used target –like forms in 10 out of the 14 modified comprehensible output instances. In contrast, participants in Dyad 6, one of the low achievers, modified none of their trigger utterances in response to incomprehension signals in the one-signal negotiated interactions.

Table 4 further shows that the frequency and proportion of modified comprehensible outputs decrease as the proficiency or achievement level of the participants gets lower. This result may underscore the fact that the participants with high scores were in a better position to resolve a comprehension difficulty by modifying their trigger utterances towards greater comprehensibility.

A similar analysis was made to see the modification of trigger utterances towards comprehensibility in the extended negotiated interactions. The result of the analysis indicated that, in the extended negotiated interactions, modification of trigger utterances in response to a clarification request was a less frequent phenomenon compared to the rate of modification of trigger utterances in the one- signal negotiated interactions.

According to Table 5 below, the participants engaged in modifying their trigger utterances in 13(50%) cases of the extended negotiated interactions. This differed from

the 63% rate of modification noticed in the one- signal negotiated interactions (see again Table 4).

Table 5: Frequency, proportion and percentage of modified comprehensible output towards target- like use in extended negotiated interaction

Dyad	Extended negotiated interaction	Modified compressible output		Modified comprehensible output towards target-like use	
	n	n	%	n	%
1	4	3	75	3	100
2	5	4	80	4	100
3	5	1	20	1	100
4	2	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0
6	10	5	50	5	100
Total	26	13	50	13	100

Table 5 also shows that all modifications made towards comprehensible output in the extended negotiated interactions indicated some kind of movement towards target-like use. This 100% rate of modification of trigger utterances towards target-like use seen in the extended negotiated interactions also largely differed from the 70% rate of modification observed in the one-signal negotiated interactions.

The frequency and proportion of modifications in the extended negotiated interactions did not seem to be affected by the level of achievement of the participants in the EGSECE and in the school English exams as was noticed in the one-signal negotiated interactions. In fact, it was by one of the low achievers, Dyad 6, that the largest

proportion of modifications was made. However, participants in Dyad 4 and Dyad 5 did not produce any modified comprehensible output and as a matter of fact participants in Dyad 5 did not engage in any extended negotiated interactions at all. This means that the responses made to clarification requests by the participants in Dyad 5 did not function as trigger utterances for other signal-response exchanges.

Be that as it may, these processes of IL modification in which these particular participants involved may represent 'the leading edge' of their interlanguage, to use Swain's (1985) words. In other words, the modified version may represent an advanced stage in the interlanguage development of these particular L2 learners.

4.3 Signal types and their effect on modification of IL utterance

It was of interest to discover why, given the relative ease the participant showed in making their interlanguage comprehensible and target-like in response to an interlocutor's signal, they did not use such modifications more often than they did. Further exploration of the data revealed that interlocutors' signal data were responsible for this situation.

But, before we look in detail at the frequency and proportion of the signal types employed by the participants, the following excerpts, intended to demonstrate the signal types, provide an overall picture of the major types of signals found in the data.

4.3.1 Trigger repetition signal

One type of incomprehension signal used by the participants was the repetition of all or part of the trigger utterance which was a source of trouble for the interlocutor. This signal type will be demonstrated by the following excerpt:

Example 8

A: er one thing that I miss in the first case is (2.0) the er hunder hunder a girl

there is a ball

G: under a girl?

A: yes (7.0)

G: Ok

- Appendix F; Pages 104-105

In the above extract, the interlocutor in his request for clarification repeated only part of the trigger utterance which was a source of trouble for him ('hunder a girl'). The originator of the trigger utterance in reply confirmed the request by saying 'yes', instead of explaining what he meant by 'hunder a girl,' possibly by modifying his trigger utterance towards greater comprehensibility. The interlocutor on his part indicated, with the use of the word 'OK', that the response had been understood.

The response to trigger repetition signals can also come in a different guise. For example, the speaker, in his response to the signal, may repeat the signal itself instead

of confirming the signal with the words ' yes' or 'yeah'. The following extract illustrates this well:

Example 9

F: in front of the girl and the table there is a ball draw a ball in front of or
below the girl on the table

E: a ball?

F: *a ball*

E: Ok

- Appendix E; Pages 99-100

In the excerpt above, the speaker repeated the signal ('a ball?') in his response instead of confirming it with ' yes' or ' yeah'. Throughout the data, it was discovered that speakers tended to confirm a trigger repetition signal rather than modifying their trigger utterance in response to this particular type of signal.

As Table 6 below shows, of the total 23 trigger repetition signals, only 11(48%) of them prompted the participants to produce modified comprehensible output instances in the one- signal negotiated interactions.

Table 6: Frequency and percentage of IL modification in response to the trigger repetition signal in one-signal negotiated interaction

Dyad	Trigger repetition signal	Modified comprehensible output in response to trigger repetition signal	Rate of modification in response to trigger repetition signal
			%
1	5	5	100
2	2	0	0
3	4	4	100
4	3	1	33
5	5	1	20
6	4	0	0
7	23	11	48

Though the total number of modifications made in response to this signal type was found relatively low, the participants in Dyad 1 and Dyad 3, generally high scorers in the national exam and in their school English exams, modified all their trigger utterances towards comprehensibility in response to this signal type. In contrast, participants in Dyads 4,5 and 6, generally low achievers, produced as low as 0 to 20% of modified comprehensible output instances in reply to the trigger repetition signal.

From the perspectives of the two theories of second language acquisition, i.e. comprehensible input and comprehensible output hypotheses, the participants in Dyad

6 particularly were at a disadvantage because the two conditions for SLA which are proposed by the two hypotheses and claimed to be necessary for SLA might not be met in their interaction.

As demonstrated by the above extracts and shown in Table 6, this particular type of signal was less effective in engaging the participants in the modification of their trigger utterances in response to it.

4.3.2 Explicitly marked signal

The other signal type used by the participants was the explicitly marked signal. This type of signal was employed by the participants to indicate complete non-understanding. In this type of signal an interlocutor might use words like ' what?', 'I donno' or 'repeat once again' to indicate his/ her non- understanding. Its frequency and proportion will be discussed later, but now let us look at its effect on the type of response it could initiate. The following extract illustrates this signal type:

Example 10

B: sweeper

T: I think I donno if the

B: *it is used to sweep er*

T: the floor?

B: *floor to dust duster*

T: we can't it as a broom?

B: broom?

- Appendix D; Page 96

In the above extract, the interlocutor (T) was completely baffled by the utterance ('sweeper') and he indicated his complete non- understanding by making the clarification request ('I think I donno if the '). The speaker, presumably assuming that repeating his trigger utterance might not help break the deadlock, seemed compelled to modify his original utterance towards greater comprehensibility in response to the clarification request. In doing so, he replaced the whole of the trigger utterance by another one ('it is used to sweep') and as a result, the modification achieved greater comprehensibility and this was indicated by the interlocutor who came up with the right word ' broom'.

As demonstrated by the above extract and observed throughout the data, explicitly marked signals appeared to have an intrinsic quality in pushing the participants into modifying their trigger utterances.

4.3.3 Trigger modification signal

The trigger modification signal was also the other type of signal used by the participants. This signal type incorporated, as part of the signal, the modification made, in this case, by the interlocutor when he/she thought that this would bring about more comprehensibility. In this type of signal, the interlocutor, when faced with a comprehension problem, instead of uttering all or part of the trigger utterance that had been his/her source of trouble or instead of indicating a complete non- understanding ,

would involve himself/ herself in modifying the trigger utterance and put it as a clarification request. This signal type and the responses it prompted will be exemplified by the following extract:

Example 11

S: draw a simall ball

W: small ball?

S: yeah in front of the girl

W: near her leg?

S: yes in front of certain distance (4.0)

- Appendix B; Pages 87-88

In the above extract, the trouble source for the interlocutor probably was the word 'simall' which was wrongly pronounced by the originator of the trigger utterance who inserted /i/ between /s/ and /m/. The interlocutor in her request for confirmation, first modified the word 'simall', which was her source of trouble, as 'small' and put it to the originator of the trigger utterance, together with 'ball', as a request for confirmation. The speaker, in his response, confirmed the request by using the expression 'yeah' and added extra information 'in front of the girl', that was not available in the trigger utterance. In this extract, the originator of the trigger utterance did not incorporate the modified trouble source used in the confirmation check into his response. But in the excerpt below, the originator of the trigger utterance, in his response to the

clarification request, made use of the word that was provided in the signal as a modification to the trouble source.

Example 12

B: next to the er er the door and there is also (1.0) a person who is laying er
laid in the (1.0) wall

S: is it it a male or a female?

B: *a male who weary who is wearing er a sort short*

S: Ok

- Appendix C; Page 92

For the interlocutor in the above extract, the word ' person' was a source of trouble which created a problem, and in her desire to solve the problem, she first modified her trouble source 'person' as 'a male or a female' and put it to the speaker as a clarification request. The speaker made use of this modification in his response to the clarification request ('a male who weary who is wearing er a sort short') and thereby solved the comprehension difficulty.

Table 7 below shows that 48% of the one-signal negotiated interactions were initiated by trigger repetition signals.

Table 7: Frequency, proportion and percentage of signal types used by the participants in one-signal negotiated interactions

Dyad	Signal type in one- signal negotiated interaction						Total	
	Repetition of trigger		Modification of trigger		Explicitly marked			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	5	10	4	8	5	10	14	29
2	2	4	3	6	3	6	8	17
3	4	8	2	4	2	4	8	17
4	3	6	1	2	1	2	5	10
5	5	10	1	2	0	0	6	12
6	4	8	1	2	2	4	7	15
Total	23	48	12	25	13	27	48	100

As we saw in Section 4.3.1, the participants responded to this signal type using expressions like 'yes' or 'yeah' instead of engaging in the modification of their trigger utterance in response to it. Although trigger modification and explicitly marked signals were more conducive to involving the participants in the modification of their trigger utterances, the infrequent occurrence of these two signal types, 25% and 27%, respectively, could be one of the main reasons as to why the participants adjusted their trigger utterances less frequently. Table 8 below compares the frequency and proportion of modifications made in response to the three signals discussed in section 4.3.

According to Table 8, there were 23 trigger repetition signals, 12 trigger modification signals and 13 explicitly marked signals which make the total number of incomprehension signals 48(see also Table 7). These figures indicate that the majority (48%) of the incomprehension signals were composed of trigger repetition signals.

As Table 8 further indicates, of the total 30 modified comprehensible output instances, only 11(36%) of them were made in response to the majority trigger repetition signals whereas the larger proportion of modifications were made in response to the relatively fewer trigger modification and explicitly marked signals, which were 25% and 27% of the total number of incomprehension signals, respectively.

These results clearly indicate that the trigger repetition and the explicitly marked signals were more conducive to engaging the participants in the modification of their trigger utterances than the trigger repetition signals.

In summary, results of the study indicated that the subjects in the study were able to successfully negotiate for compressibility either by repeating all or part of a trigger utterance, by confirming a trigger utterance or by modifying their trigger utterances towards greater comprehensibility in response to a clarification request. The participants encountered 111 sources of trouble and these initiated 74 one-signal and extended negotiated interactions. The negotiated interactions resolved all the comprehension difficulties faced.

With respect to modification of trigger utterances, the participants were observed modifying their trigger utterances towards greater comprehensibility in response to a

signal for non- understanding. For instance, of the total 48 one-signal negotiated interactions in which the participants resolved comprehension difficulties, 30 (63%) resulted in the modification of trigger utterances. Most of the modifications (87%) made towards comprehensible output were generated by the participants with high scores both in the EGSECE and in their school English exams.

Results of the study also showed that the participants used target-like forms in the majority of the cases (70%) when they modified their trigger utterances. However, a study by Pica (1988) disclosed as high as a 91% rate of use of target-like forms in the modification of trigger utterances. Furthermore, when the proportion of these target-like-use modifications was compared with the total number of responses made to clarification requests, it was found to be minimum, i.e. 44%. This highly contrasted with an 81% rate of modification of trigger utterances in response to other - initiated clarification requests reported by shehadeh (1999).

Finally, the result of the investigation made to see why the participants did not engage in modifying their trigger utterances more often than they did, given the relative ease the participants showed in modifying their trigger utterances, revealed that the types of incomprehension signals used by the participants were responsible for this situation.

Among the 48 signals for incomprehension used in the one-signal negotiated interactions, the majority (48%) of them were trigger repetition signals but only 11(36%) modified comprehensible output instances were made in response to this signal type. However, the larger proportion (63%) of the modified comprehensible

output instances were made in response to the comparatively fewer trigger modification and explicitly marked signals, which were 25% and 27% of the total number of incomprehension signals. These results clearly indicated that the trigger repetition signal was less effective in involving the participants in the modification of their trigger utterances. As a result, its prevalence in the one -signal negotiated interactions was found to be the main reason for the participants not to modify their trigger utterances more often than they did.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study was undertaken to investigate whether Grade 12 students, who were in their final year of secondary education, were able to modify their interlanguage utterances towards greater comprehensibility and /or accuracy in response to signals for comprehension difficulty during a conversation.

5.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn based on the findings of this study:

1. The ability of the participants to resolve all of the comprehension difficulties they faced during their interaction implies that they were successful in accomplishing the task they were provided with. Therefore, if, as the writers of the materials for the Junior and Senior Secondary English Courses claim, the students are provided with more opportunity for task- based interaction, i.e. tasks which they can perform successfully as they demonstrated in this study, this could give them a sense of achievement and more confidence in using English, of their own will, not only for academic but also communicative purposes.
2. The fact that most of the modifications made towards comprehensible output were generated by the participants with high scores in the national exam (EGSECE) and in their English school exams in contrast to the modifications made by the participants with low scores may send a message to English

teachers that they should exercise caution when they organise their classes for language tasks. This is because students with low English proficiency or with low English achievement may not get the benefit of the condition which is created when students modify their trigger utterances, a condition which is deemed to be necessary for second language acquisition. Therefore, English teachers should make sure that students who usually work in pairs or in groups to carry out language tasks are not only composed of students with low English proficiency level.

3. Despite the fact that the participants resolved all of their comprehension difficulties encountered during their interaction and modified most of their trigger utterances towards greater comprehensibility in response to signals for incomprehension, only infrequently did they use target-like forms in their responses. This apparent lack of ability to use target-like forms in their responses would be more grave in a situation where students are presented with a lot of oral tasks in which they do not get the opportunity for direct negative evidence from the teacher, which would allow them to notice discrepancies between their learner language and the target-language, which otherwise might result in fossilisation, as Gass (1988) warns.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study and the conclusions arrived at:

1. As the results of the study showed, students may not often use target-like forms in modifying their trigger utterances, which could be ill-formed in some way, during task-based interaction. Therefore, teachers should set up mechanisms which can assist them to monitor the language used by their students to perform language tasks. One possible solution could be an intermittent tape- recording of the performance of their students and looking for common and serious errors and designing tasks ranging from structural drills to quasi- communicative and communicative activities to be performed by their students and which specifically focus on the students' problem areas.
2. Another possible solution to the problem of the apparent lack of students' ability to modify their trigger utterances towards comprehensibility or accuracy is for teachers to make aware their students of the communication strategies which can help them to do something about their utterances which were a source of trouble for their interlocutors.
3. During their interactions, the participants were also observed modifying their initial utterances towards comprehensibility and/or accuracy through self- initiation when they perceived that their utterances could be a source of misunderstanding on the part of their hearers. Therefore, this might be another potential area of research which can investigate how students adjust their interlanguage when the initiation to do so comes from within.

References

- Abdulkader Ali. 1983. ' Student - teacher interactions in English classes in four schools in Addis Ababa.' (M.A. Thesis) Addis Ababa University.
- Allwright, D. and K. Bailey. 1991. Focus on the Language Classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aston, G. 1986. ' Trouble- shooting in interactions with learners: The more the merrier?' Applied Linguistics 7: 128- 143.
- Chaudron, C. 1983. ' Foreigner talk in the classroom – An aid to learning?' in Seliger, H. and M. Long (eds.). Classroom – oriented Research in Second Language Acquisition. Rowley: Newbury House.
- Chaudron, C. 1985. ' Intake: On models and methods for discovering learners' processing of input.' Studies in Second Language Acquisition 7:1-4.
- Chaudron, C.1988. Second Language Classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Crookes, G. and K. Rulon. 1988. ' Topic and feedback in native speaker / non-native speaker conversation.' TESOL Quarterly 22: 675- 681.
- Ellis, R. 1982.' Informal and formal approaches to communicative language teaching.' ELT Journal 36: 73-81.
- Ellis, R. 1984. Classroom Second Language Development: A Study of Classroom

Interaction and Language Acquisition. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Færch, C. and G.kasper.1983. Strategies in Interlanguage Communication. London:
Longman.

Fassil Demissie. 1992.' Communication strategies employed by senior high school
students in oral production of English.' (M.A. Thesis) Addis Ababa University.

Gass, M. 1988, ' Integrating research areas: A framework for second language
studies.' Applied Linguistics 9:198-217.

Hatch, E. 1978.' Acquisition of syntax in a second language, ' in Richards, J.C.
(ed.). Understanding Second and Foreign Language Learning: Issues and
Approaches. Rowley: Newbury Press.

Hawkins, B. 1985. ' Is an " appropriate response" always so appropriates?' in Gass,
S. and C. Madden (eds.). Input in Second Language Aquisition. Rowley:
Newbury House.

Howatt, A. 1984. A History of English Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford
University Press.

Johnson, K. and K. Morrow. 1981. Communication in the classroom. London:
Longman.

Krashen, S.D. 1994. ' The Input Hypothesis and its rivals,' in Ellis, N. (ed.). Implicit

and Explicit Learning of Languages. London: Academic Press.

Krashen, S.D. 1980. Second Language Acquisition and Second Language learning.
Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S.D. 1982. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.
Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S.D. 1983. ' Newmarks Ignorance Hypothesis and current second language
acquisition theory, ' in Gass, S.M.and L. Selinker(eds.). Language Transfer in
Language Learning. Rowley: Newbury House.

Krashen, S.D. 1985. The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications. London:
Longman.

Krashen, S.D. 1987. Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. New
York: Prentice- Hall International.

Kumaravadivelu, B. 1993. ' The name of the task and the task of naming:
Methodological aspects of task-based pedagogy, ' in Crookes, G. and S.M. Gass
(eds.). Tasks in a Pedagogical Context: Integrating Theory and Practice.
Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Long, M.1988. ' Instructed interlanguage development, ' in Beebe, L. M. (ed.).
Issues in Second Language Acquisition. New York: Harper and Row.

Long, M 1983. ' Native speaker / non- native speaker conversation and the
negotiation of comprehensible input. ' Applied Linguistics 4: 126- 141.

- Long, M. 1985. ' Input and second language acquisition theory, ' in Gass, S. and C. Madden (eds.). Input in Second Language Acquisition. Rowley: Newbury House.
- Long, M. 1990. ' The least a second language acquisition theory needs to explain.' TESOL Quarterly 24: 649-666.
- Loschky, L. 1994. ' Comprehensible input and second language acquisition: What is the relationship?' Studies in Second Language Acquisition 16: 303- 323.
- Lyster, R. 1998.' Negotiation of form, recasts, and explicit correction in relation to error types and learner repair in immersion classrooms. ' Language Learning 48:183-218.
- Lyster, R. and L. Ranta. 1997. ' Corrective feedback and learner uptake: Negotiation of form in communicative classrooms.' Studies in Second Language Acquisition 19: 37-66.
- Nobuyoshi, J. and R. Ellis. 1993. ' Focused communication tasks and second language acquisition. ' ELT Journal 47:203-210.
- Nunan, D. 1988. Designing Tasks. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nunan, D. 1989. Designing Tasks for the Communicative Classroom. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pica, J. 1988. ' Inter-language adjustments as an outcome of NS- NNS negotiated interaction. ' Language Learning 38:45-73.

- Pica, T. 1991. ' Classroom interaction, participation, and comprehension: Redefining relationships. 'System 19: 437- 452.
- Pica, T. 1994. ' Research on negotiation: What does it reveal about secondlanguage learning conditions, processes, and outcomes?' Language learning 44: 493-527.
- Pica, T., F. Lincoln - Porter, D. Paninos and J. Linnell. 1996. ' Language learners' interaction: How does it address the input, output, and feedback needs of L2 learners?' TESOL Quarterly 30: 59- 84.
- Pica, T., L. Holliday, N. Lewis and L. Morgenthaler. 1989. " Comprehensible output as an outcome of linguistic demands on the learner.' Studies in Second Language Acquisition 11: 63- 90.
- Pica, T., R. Young and C. Doughty. 1987. ' The impact of interaction on comprehension. ' TESOL Quarterly 21: 737-758.
- Richards, J.C. and T.S. Rogers. 1986. Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching : A Description and Analysis. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schachter, J. 1986. ' Three approaches to the study of input.' Language Learning 36: 211- 225.
- Schmidt, R. 1990. ' The role of consciousness in second language acquisition. ' Applied Linguistics 11: 129- 158.
- Sharwood Smith, M. 1987. 'Comprehension vs acquisition: Two ways of processing

input.' Applied Linguistics 8: 237- 255.

Sharwood Smith, M. 1991. ' Speaking to many minds: On the relevance of different types of language information for the L2 learner.' Second Language Research 7: 118- 132.

Shehadeh, A. 1999.' Non-native speakers' production of modified comprehensible output and second language learning.' Language Learning 38:45-73.

Sisay Asseffie. 1999. ' Classroom interaction and its influence on the development of students' speaking skill in English at Grade 11 in government schools.' (M.A. Thesis) Addis Ababa University.

Skehan, P. and P. Foster. 1999.' The influence of task structure and processing conditions on narrative retellings.' Language Learning 49: 93-120.

Swain, M. 1985. ' Communicative competence: some roles of comprehensible input in its development,' in Gass, S. and C. Madden (eds.). Input in Second Language Acquisition. Rowely: Newbury House.

Swain, M.1995. 'Three functions of output in second Language Learning,' in Cook, G. and B. Seidlhofer (eds.). Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honour of H.G. Widdowson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Swain, M. and S. Lapkin. 1995.' Problems in output and the cognitive processes they generate: A step towards second language learning.' Applied Linguistics 16: 371-391.

- Tarone, E. and G.Q. Liu. 1995. ' Situational context, variation, and second language acquisition theory, ' in Cook, G. and B. Seidlhofer (eds.). Principle and Practice in Applied Linguistics: Studies in Honor of H.G. Widdowson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van den Branden, K. 1997. ' Effects of negotiation on language learners' output. ' Language learning 47: 589- 636.
- van Lier, L. 1988. The Classroom and the Language Learner. New York: Longman.
- Varonis, E.M. and S. Gass. 1985. ' Non-native/ non- native conversations: A model for negotiation of meaning. ' Applied Linguistics 5:71-90.
- White, L. 1988. ' Against comprehensible input: The input hypothesis and the development of second language competence.' Applied Linguistics 9:89-110.
- White, L., N. Spada, P. Lightbown and L. Ranta. 1992. 'Input enhancement and L2 question formation. 'Applied Linguistics 12: 416- 432.
- Widdowson, H. G. 1990. Aspects of Language Teaching: Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H.G. 1984. Explorations in Applied Linguistics 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix A

Speakers	Scores	
	EGSECE	School English exams
M	A	88.5
A	A	93.5

M: Ok Mr Awoke here is a picture here you must draw correctly as I have described it

A: Ok

M: it is inside [xxx] inside the field there are various kinds of pictures

A: that left will field?

M: *of course, you may not call it but what I want to tell you is that there is a field inside the field there are various kinds of pictures*

A: Ok

M: these pictures are going to be described by me and you should

A: Ok

M: picture them

A: Ok

M: the first picture that I want to tell you is that there is a girl (0.8) with standing just at the er left end go at left ends side of all pictures

A: the the the left end?

M: at the left end from at the left end part of all pictures is a girl standing

A: that the goal?

M: a girl

A: having two poles that means

M: er?

A: having two poles

M: what?

A: *a goal*

M: not goal a girl I said Ok?

A: a girl? (laughing)

M: *yes, a girl standing at the end*

A: Ok Ok

M: at the end part of er the pictures at the end and left at the end and left there is a girl (1.5) she is standing she is standing upright her hands are just er below and they have touched the her this this part ok? (laughing)

A: Ok (laughing)

M: she is straight

A: Ok

M: there is (2.0) hair in her hair somewhat projected her hair is Ok?

A: Ok (2.0)

M: Ok don't correct the picture please

A: Ok this this ok?

M: Ok (1.0) remember she is standing upright (10.0) Ok her hair is somewhat (2.0) projected er er is protruding out of er er her head

A: her head Ok

M: around the ear part especially around the ear part it is protruding out what?

A: Ok

M: in both sides ok?

A: that is ok

M: [xxx] of course worn a shoes she has worn a shoes

A: a shoe? a shoe? (laughing)

M: yeah she has worn a shoe in front of her is just in front of her is a ball

A: ok that is football or?

M: *on the floor there is a ball yeah it is football there's a ball (1.5) ball (5.0).*

A: Ok

M: it's { black and it's that's white white and black

A: { black and white

M: in some parts it's darkened in other parts it is white

A: kind of tell me the darkened part and the white part

M: *simple what kind of (2.0) some parts are darkened anothers*

A: the darker [xxx]

M: are white simply white some some parts are darkened darkened don't you know
the ball style of ball how it is decorated just on the righthand side of the girl is er
er a chair there is a chair (1.0) there is a chair er but above the chair on on the
chair there is a radio

A: on the chair? that on the chair?

M: on the chair there is a radio meaning table yeah of course table table

A: the chair?

M: *table just on the right side of the girl is a table*

A: Ok (6.0)

M: on the right side of er (5.0) I'm saying left according to my hand Ok? according to my hand and at the left part girl

A: ok at the left side hand

M: according to my hand

A: Ok

M: Ok?

A: the radio [xxx]

M: on the table there is a radio with its antenna erect

A: Ok

M: with its antenna erect

A: Ok

M: Ok?

A: Ok(2)

M: just also on the right side of the table is er chair

A: a chair?

M: a chair there is a chair (2.0) there is a chair on the chair there is a hat Ok?
please er don't be correct the pictures simply what is needed is your picture (3.0)
no decoration (1.5) so on on the chair is what?

A: on the chair is what?

M: a hat a hat

A: Ok a hat

M: there is a hat on the chair with a hat (1.0) on the chair with a hat(2.0) the set of
chair is of course rectangular the set of chair is rectangular er? rectangular chair
the set of chair with rectangular and its support the supportive chair is also some
what rectangular on the upper part especially (1.0) Ok?

A: Ok

M: it's not totally rectangular on the support but on the upper part at the end
somewhat below also it is rectangular

A: [xxx] (2.0)

M: this [xxx] (3.0 don't make it large too Ok? (11.0) there is a hat just on the left on
the right side of the chair is er a mat there is a mat

A: lying on { laying on the floor?

M: } lying on the floor yeah there is a mat lying on the floor (2.0) lying on
the floor lying on the floor on the on the mat there is a basket a basket there is
basket (2.0)there is a basket (3.0) Ok? basket

A: Ok

M: basket is er

A: with holdings

M: yeah

A: having holdings

M: yes, I think you have basket holding in the basket oi think there is bananas that
of bananas [xxx] I think there is banana there is bananas

A: another else?

M: there is bananas Ok jost in just on the right side there is an entrance a gate

A: gate?

M: *there is an entrance or gate of a house Ok? there is a gate*

A: when {we say

M: {which ones?

A: at the right?

M: on the right side of the basket

A: what is your reference when you say at the right?

M: *at the right?*

A: Ok

M: I am saying e r {according to

A: {reference to what

M: in reference to that of the basket on the right side

A: on the right er (2.0) {there is entrance

M: {there is entrance or a gate there is a gate of a house ok?

(1.0) entrance or gate a pass entrance gate the pass entrance and gate the pass

A: how can I draw it?

M: Ok draw as I have described Ok? you must draw as I described it (1.5) you must draw I described

A: Ok continue

M: if you drawn the gate just on the right side of also er gate there is a broom there is a broom

A: a broom?

M: *with an stick er just er ho with a holder with a holding [xxx] hold broom (2.5) somewhat sticklike [xxx] a broom is long (2.0) long broom*

A: there is no space

M: long broom (1.5) long broom Ok be fast

A: shall I shall I draw er

M: be fast

A: on on another paper

M: be fast I donno [xxx] on the right side is a broom

A: Ok

M: its long holding

A: Ok (2.0)

M: just on the wall in the right side of er the entrance on the game is what? the window it's closed

A: where is the window?

M: Ok window

A: at the right side?

M: *yes at the right side yeah I think it is wi er wire there is wire and window (1.0)
Ok (2.0) there is a window you can copy it finally after you have listed what I
have said [xxx] you should draw all things they have said it*

A: Ok

M: have you drawn the window?

A: Ok yes

M: window?

A: yes

M: it's closed

A: yes

M: there are some er wire-like structures on the window I think on the what like
wire like [xxx] but just ranging from the upper part to that of the bottom but they
are interrupted at some parts

A: Ok

M: not the full line that range from the er upper part to that of the bottom

A: Ok

M: at the right side of the er the window is a boy standing a boy

A: a boy?

M: a boy standing who has worn a short (1.5) who has worn a short and he is just
standing erect like that of the girl that you have drawn before

A: in front of you that means

M: [xxx] in front of yeah he is looking me (1.0) he is looking me his hair is not such is not short it is equal (1.5) he's just looking me at me his hand is just er

A: like that of the girl?

M: yeah like that of he girl meaning his hand is just (1.0) below and on the foot not the foot leg around the his finger is almost around

A: is he wearing a show?

M: *yes he has worn his finger his fingers of two hands is almost on the knee on the knee he has worn a short I have said*

A: Ok

M: it's not rather that he has worn (1.0) his shoes seems somewhat (1.0) very long
Ok?

A: Ok (2.0)

M: ok (2) I think they all seem outside the house they seem outside the house

A: which ones which [xxx]?

M: *all pictures are I think outside the house because I have said you that there is a window there is a gate inside the gate outside the gate there all pictures are around that you have drawn just*

A: ok

M: but [xxx] outside is (1.0) somewhat (1.0) yeah of course er

A: excuse tell me the er is there any er any picture at the right of the boy at the right?

M: *there is no picture you have finished*

Appendix B

Speakers	Scores	
	EGSECE	School English exams
S	A	82
W	B	66

S: draw a big house (2..0) a big house which covers at least seventy-five per cent of the paper

W: yes?

S: a big house draw (5.0)

W: a big house?

S: *at least it covers seventy-five per cent of the total paper big house (5.0) simply a rough sketch try to do that*

S: Ok (20.0)

S: don't try to make a gate or a window a door or a window on the house before [xxx] great position

W: *yeah a window or a door*

W: Ok

S: Ok Ok start at the left end of your house

W: the left end?

S: *yeah at the left end*

W: Ok

S: draw a girl standing

W: a girl?

S: *yeah (10.0) simply try to have a rough sketching*

W: Ok (8.0) [xxx] the floor

S: no matter (laughing) don't worry [xxx] and in front of the girl

W: er

S: draw a simall ball

W: small ball?

S: yeah in front of the girl

W: near her leg?

S: *yes in front of certain distance (4.0) then
on the right side of the girl draw a table*

W: table?

S: *yeah on the right side of the girl draw a table (8.0) Ok er on the table draw a
radio (6.0) on the table draw a radio (5.0)*

W: Ok

S: have you drawn the table?

W: yes

S: have you drawn the radio?

W: yes

S: Ok on the right side of the table draw a chair

W: on the right side of the table?

S: draw a chair

W: chair?

S: yeah (2.0)

W: I have not an experience about the figure

S: *yeah (laughing) it is expected from social science student you haven't er they
aren't [xxxs] with art [xxx] specially natural science students[xxx] don't worry
about your drawing simply try to have a rough sketching Ok on the chair draw a
tape*

W: tape?

S: *yeah you had already tape on the chair draw a hat or a tape (10.0) Ok on the
right side of the chair draw a matters (1.0) small mattress in which one side of
the mattress coincides with the right left side of the leg*

W: repeat once please

S: *Ok you have draw the chair?*

W: yes

S: you have drawn the ca the hat?

W: yes

S: then

W: eh?

S: on the right side of the chair draw a mattress

W: a mattress?

S: yeah a mattress which that whose two sides coincides with the the two legs of the chair

W: repeat once again

S: *on the right side of the chair draw a mattress*

W: Ok

S: have you drawn?

W: no

S: then complete the mattress if you have not completed it (9.0) then at the right end of the mattress draw a basket

W: a basket?

S: *yeah at the right left end of the mattress (6.0) at the right end of the mattress (2.0)*

W: Ok

S: Ok have you drawn the basket?

W: yes

S: then next to the basket draw the gate of the house next to the basket

W: next to the basket?

S: *yeah*

W: eh?

S: the door of the house

W: the door of the house?

S: *with the big house you have drawn yeah (1.0) Ok try to make the door somewhat reasonable comparatively from that the size of the house you have drawn (6.0)*

Ok while drawing while you are drawing please try to make er somewhat

comparison about their size because there are other figures which are to be

drawn Ok?

W: Ok

S: then have you drawn the door?

W: yes

S: then next to the door draw a broom standing on the wall of the house then at least make the height of the broom seventy-five per cent of the door you have drawn (3.0) a standing broom (12.0).

W: Ok

S: have you drawn the broom?

W: yes

S: Ok next to the broom draw the window of the house (1.5) the window of the house (1.5) one end is parallel to the top end of the door

W: Ok

S: Ok the window is closed window and the door you have drawn should be are closed

W: Ok (4.0)

S: Ok have you drawn the window?

W: yes

S: next to the window draw a standing boy

W: standing boy?

S next to the end corner (3.0) let me repeat it you have drawn the door?

W: yes

S: next to the door a standing broom

W: yes

S: then next to the broom the window the room

W: Ok

S: next to the window you should draw a boy (3.0) a boy standing (4.0) have you drawn?

W: yes

Appendix C

Speakers	Scores	
	EGSECE	School English exams
B	B	68.5
S	B	65.5

B: there are four pictures I will tell you one by one until you draw all pictures I will explain with necessary steps

S: { Ok
Ok

B: er first the first picture is draw a woman who weary (1.0) who is who is wearing a drof a dress (1.5) with hair is wearing er long (1.5) near the woman there is (1.0) a record er a tape on the table (2.0) under under the woman there is a ball (4.0)

S: is it a ball?

B: *yes it is one*

S: { is

B: the ball under the er women and the table ta on the table is a tape (6.0)

S: Ok

B: after that near the er table there is also a chair which contains (1.0) I think er a banana (1.0) it is not clear for me

S: is it er

B: it seems to be a banana (1.0) continue what you want (4.0)

S: is it (4.0) is it a chair for one person?

B: *yeah it is on it's it's it is a desk*

S: Ok (8.0) next

B: have you finished?

S: yes

B: er near near near to the chair there is also a basket which contains I think er tomato (4.0)

S: near what?

B: near the chair under the chair

S: chair?

B: *ye yeah a chair*

S: Ok

B: er which is flourished around the floor (5.0) next to the chair there is a door

S: next to the chair?

B: next to next to next to the basket there is a chair

S: is it second chair?

B: *er er er the door*

S: Ok

B: It's not a second chair rather a door er under that there is also a a (4.0) sweet
sweet is it? that used to flourish the floor is said to be

S: br I think brush

B: brush

S: is it near to the door

B: yeah near to the door

S: Ok (8.0)

B: the the man is er standing er behind what ? a wall near to the wall even he's what
laid on

S: where is the wall?

B: next to the er er the door and there is also (1.0) a person who is laying er laid in
the (1.0) wall

S: is it it a male or a female?

B: *a male who weary who is wearing er sort short*

S: Ok

B: there is also er window er between er a ma a boy and a door (3.0)

S: excuse me, repeat again

B: *there is there is a window between a boy and a door*

S: Ok

B: [xxx] there centimeter [xx]

S: Ok

B: after that (6.0) there is also (1.0) er a persons seems to be talking I think it might be [xxx] a boy (2.0) [xxx] (5.)

S: where is it ? (2.0)

B: *near near to the window (2.0)*

S: Ok

B: a boy and a woman er a boy a girl are not er [xxx] to each rather they are they seems to be waking in other direction (1.0) meaning they are parallel to walk

S: are they too (1.0) ev (2.00) are there two persons gene totally?

B: *totally the persons are around here those are found in the corner each*

S: eh Ok (10.0)

B: are you finished?

S: Ok I ask one question is there anything on the on the chair?

B: I think there is something but it's not clear for me what I can say is simply er it seems to be er a banana I think

S: a banana (1.0) I think you said on the table there is a tape

B: *yeah there is a tape*

S: Ok (9.0) is a brush near the near the person?

B: no it's not near the person rather it is near to the window and behind it is between the window and the door after he window there is a person who is near to the wall he's standing he is not sitting rather he is standing near to the wall

S: Ok (7.0)

B: ask what you want do you want (2.0) I I er was I the told you that the (1.0) I I er was I the told you that the (1.0) the woman are walking? (2.0)

S: is it the first woman?

B: yeah (1.5)

S: er is it youth?

B: *she seems she seems I think*

S: ok (5.0)

B: I think the ball are [xxx] the ball are found (1.5) er the under the woman [xxx]

(14.0) I repeat once be careful

Appendix D

Speakers	Scores	
	EGSECE	School English exams
B	A	84
T	C	54

B: a large rectangle is seen on the on the front face of the paper (1.0) a large rectangle (9.0)

T: Ok

B: it seems that the fr the front face of er a house is (1.0) is seen is seen in on the face and the door and the window on the right side (4.0)

T: there is it is there any other house?(2.0)

as I have told you there is er a lager er rectangle

T: yeah I know (2.0)

B: the the the wa the front face of a house with er its door and with its gate and window is seen (4.0) on the right side

T: the door

B: on the right side the window is on the right side of the door (9.0) on the left er have you finished?

T: [xxx] (3.0) I think

B: put the rough sketch

T: eh

B: let me dictate you I have [xxx] the window and the (1.0) do the door as a reference (2.0) er between the window and the door there is (2.0) sweep sweeper (2.0) don't you know sweeper? er to sweep er sweeper, I think it is called sweeper it is used to sweep er the floor sweep

T: eh

B: between the door and the window (1.0)

T: is it a broom? (2.0)

B: in front of the wall the face that take it as if you are assume you are er in front of
this door and the door and the window you see this

T: Ok

B: the door er that is the window and

T: there is a door

B: take as if you are in front of this this block (1.0) between the door an the window
there is er (4.0)

T: what?

B: sweeper

T: I think I donno if the

B: it is used to sweep er

T: the floor?

B: floor to dust duster

T: we can't it as a broom?

B: broom?

T: eh

B: what does it broom?

T: to clean the floor

B: is that broom?

T: [xxx]

B: I donno broom (1.0)

T: duster

B: Ok and a man er on the right of the window a boy stands (3.0) on the right of the
window (10.0) use a rough sketch

T: Ok

B: have you finished?

T: yes

B: Ok er have the door as a reference and there is (1.5) a container (1.0) on the left si
on the left near to on the left of the

T: door?

B: the door(6.0) container

T: is it to the left er [xxx]

B: yes

T: Ok

B: next to the you can assume it as a [xxx] next to gate there is a chair (1.0) on
which a khat (1.5) is put on

T: on the chair? (1.00)

B: *next to the basket (2.0) there is a chair (13.0) there is a chair on the er on the
chair no chair*

T: a a

B: on the chair there is a hat do you know hat?

T: [xxx]

B: finished? (9.0)

T: yes

B: Ok (2.0) er and next er (2.0) to the right of to the left of the picture

T: Ok

B: to you left

T: from?

B: from your left

T: eh?

B: *to your elft*

T: Ok

B: there is a table (1.0) on which I think it is a tape recorder (9.0) or radio (65.0) er
next next to next to te table there is a women I think it is a girl or a woman [xxx]
(30.0)in front is a ball picture of a ball (25.0) one thing I have forgotten is that er
the er your have drawn the basket?

T: yes

B: the basket is lied on what you call in Amharic 'sigaja' you know it is mate (7.0) is

that it? don't you know ?

T: is it? (2.0)

B: 'sigaja' in Amharic [xxx]

T: what type ?

B: mate (7.0)

T: finished?

B: er the front er the front face of er the house (3.0) the the the front face of the
house is not er in the rectangle

T: eh (2.0)

B: the edge of er the edge one edge is or I can observe one edge

T: [xxx]

B: of the house (3.0) but the other is not er (7.0) is that clear?

Appendix E

Speakers	Scores	
	EGSECE	School English exams
F	B	73.5
E	C	45.5

F: near the girl

E: Ok

F: there is a table draw table

E: Ok (4.0) I draw

F: on the table there is a tape- recorder or radio or tape

E: oh I donno tell me the meaning of that word

F: *tape*

E: Ok

F: on the table on the table

E: er?

F: *there is a tape*

E: Ok (5.0) Ok continue

E: after the table there is a chair a chair

E: a chair?

F: *yes*

E: Ok

F: which is used to [xxx] sitting

E: Ok (3.0)

f: on the chair

E: yes

F: there is a khat hat do you know hat? yeah

E: yeah I know yes (2.0) Ok continue

F: in front of the girl and the table there is a ball draw a ball in front of or below the

girl on the table

E: a ball?

F: *a ball*

E: Ok

F: draw a ball (7.0) after the chair there this basket

E: basket?

F: *yes (1.0) or er that is bag-like bag*

E: Ok I don't worry er the bag is in front of er the door in front of the in front of the house

E: Ok (3.0) in front of?

F: *the door of the house(1.5) the door of he house*

E: Ok

F: behind er the basket or the handball

E: Ok

F: after handball there is this er Ok er inside office side by side

E: Ok

F: er in er door there is this window draw window window

E: Ok (1.0) in the house?

F: *yes*

E: Ok

F: left of er right of the how er the door

E: Ok

F: right of the door

E: ok (1.5) draw the boy after er the er

E: a boy?

F: *in front of the house*

E: eh

F: after the window

E: ok (8.0) ok

F: ok (9.0) again can you check it? again check it

E: the drawing? Ok continue repeat and let us check it first what have you draw

F: first you draw

E: yeah

F: the girl

E: yeah I do

F: after the girl

E: there is

F: a table

E: a table

F: on the table there is thist radio or tape

E: yes, there is

F: after the table

E: eh

f: a chair

E: yeah

F: on { the chair there is a hat

E: { there is a hat yeah

F: ok er in front of the boy the girl and the table there si this a ball a ball

E: a boy

F: *ball ball*

E: ball yeah I do I do yes

F: Ok

E: Ok

F: Ok(3.0) after the chair there is thist er basket er hand means bag

v yeah

F: er the bag is in front of the er house door

E: Ok

F: er?

E: Ok

F: Ok (5.0)

E: ok continue there is

F: in front of the door there is thist (7.0) brush

E: brush?

F: *eh draw brush which for cleaning house*

E: oh brush-like

F: yes

E: for cleaning the house

F: eh

E: Ok

F: in front of the door

E: Ok(3.0) brushing (3.0)

F: is ok er do you and er have you draw a window?

E: on?

F: *side by side with door*

E: yeah I do

F: after er the drawing door and window

E: yeah er the drawing door and window

E: yeah

F: have you draw er the boy in front of the house?

E: yeah

F: Ok (1.0) oj (4.0) er one picture I forgot the name of

E: (laughing) what was better (3.0) let us wait our teacher to show me the name of
that thing

Appendix F

Speakers	Scores	
	EGSECE	School English exams
A	C	49
G	C	48

A: first of all though first of all though er it seem like a paper

G: Ok I was drawing like a paper or a border

A: at the left at the bottom of [xxx] seen at the bottom of the left draw a girl

G: Ok

A: on the ground

G: in which direction?

A: at the left

G: at the left?

A: *yeah at the left side*

G: Ok I have drawing a girl in the left direction

A: go to the girl there is a table

G: in which direction?

A: to the left

G: to the left?

A: *yes (4.0) seen to the right directions draw a table (8.0)*

G: Ok I was drawing

A: on the table there is radio

G: Ok (5.0) I was drawing a radio

A: next to the table there is a chair (3.0)

G: that means on the rights direction?

A: *yes (9.0)*

G: the right direction

A: following that table there is a basket some distance to the chair

G: at the back or ? (1.0)

A: seems to the right some distance the chair

G: to the right there is a chair?

A: yes

G: that means er the girl between table and chair and between the girl and the chair
at the back there is ?

A: there is basket (6.0) er

G: I draw

A: there is attaching between the window and the basket

G: the window and the basket?

A: yes remember that the bask the window is larger than the basket

G: the window is larger than the basket?

A: yes

G: in which direction the ba the the window is there?

A: to the right to the right direction from the basket

G: to the right direction ?

A: yes (4.0)

G: at the (1.0) bottom er the the (1.0) basket and the window are found at the same
distance?

A: what is it? repeat once again

G: at the bottom

A: at the bottom?

G: *they are inclined an in the same plane*

A: there is no any inclination but er I says there is some gap between the chair and
the window in this case there is a table since there is a basket this basket is
attached with some block

G: block?

A: yes

G: Ok I draw a a window (2.0)

A: er one thing that I miss in the first case is (2.0) the er hunder hunder a girl there

is a ball

G: under a girl?

A: *yes* (7.0)

G: Ok

A: like to the corners of the rectangle-like shape

F: er?

A: *there is a boy*

G: ok

A: the (coughing) there is I think there is a gap difference between er the boy and the window at this there is (1.0) something rectangle-like structure

G: it's occupy it is found in which direction [xxx] from the window?

A: listen to once [xxx] there is there is some rectangle -like structure between the window [xxx] the girl

G: the window and the girl?

A: yes

G: er [xxx]i It seems not correct the window and the boy it seem (5.0)

A: there is some rectangle-like structure between the window and the boy

G: the window and the boy?

A: yes

G: rectangular-like structure?

A: yes

G: in which direction is found in the window from the boy?

A: from the boy to the which direction? from the window to the right direction

G: from the window?

A: to the right direction and from the from the from the boy to the left direction (1.0) I see it is

G: which the window he boy is found in which direction from [xxx] the window?

A: the window is found er left to the (1.0) right to the same square-like picture

G: from the boy?

A: from the boy it is found to the left direction

G: to the left direction?

A: yes (6.0)

G: Ok

A: there is also some er sink that like (1.0) stick-like structure attached with the window (4.0) like like parallel to the window there is something er what is less than {xxx] there is sticklike structure

G: you say at the beginning there is a basket on the window?

A: not window near to the window

G: window or ? (6.0)

A: there is a basket near to the window

G: not the door?

A: the door I mean the door

G: the door?

A: the door

G: Ok from which direction (3.0) is the basket found?

A: the basket is found (1.0) er left to the window

G: Ok left to the the wi the

A: plea er listen once and (1.0) draw what you want [xxx]

G: at the door?

A: I says at the first time there is a girl

G; yes

A: this girl er next to the girl there is a chair

G: yes

A: on the chair there is a radio

G: next to the girl there is a a a table?

A: a table

G: eh

A: on the table there is a radio

G: yes

A: next to the radio there is a church

G: yes

A: on the church there is something

G: which ?

A: on the top

G: what type of thing?

A: *I sink some stonelike structure st (1.0) structure*

G: Ok

A: next to some distance to the church there is a window

G: a window?

A: yes

G: a window or a door?

A: *the window is near to the basket*

G: Ok

A: next to the basket there is something sticklike structure

G: Ok

A: and then there is er there is a door or between the boy and the window

G: there is a door?

A: yes

G: between the boy and the window?

A: *yes the boy is er right corner to the girl*

G: Ok

A: since the boy si the boy is the girl are (1.0) at the ends of at the ends of this guy

G: Ok (40) what I want to ask you is

A: Ok

G: please understand me when I tell you

A: Ok

G: my draw

A: if you have any [xxx] you can ask me what you are you want
G: Ok
A: Ok
G: er at the left there is a girl
A: yes
G: in front of it there is a ball
A: yes not in front of hunder the the hunder the girl there is a ball
G: Ok under the girl there is a ball on the right of the girl there is a table
A: yes
G: under the table there is a radio
A: not hunder the table on the table there is a radio
G: on the table there is a radio
A: next to the table there is church
G: next to the table there is Ok
A: on the chair there is something er stone-like structure
G: ok
A: on the er on the bottoms of the church there is some er net net –like structure
G: net?
A: *net-like structure*
G: Ok
A: cloth or something
G: Ok
A: on the net-like structure since connecting with a door there is a basket
G: Ok (2.0)
A: the bask remember that the basket and the do are attached to each other
G: they are attached?
A: *yes*
G: Ok (6.0) they are I draw after to them
A: do you have any problem?

Appendix H

- I. A set of guidelines and instructions for the interactant who describes the contents of the picture to a partner.
1. You are going to do a communicative activity with a partner.
 2. In this activity you are going to describe the contents of a picture to your partner to draw.
 3. Use only English for your description.
 4. Try to make your description as clear as possible.
 5. You have only 10-15 minutes to complete the task.
 6. You may find your partner asking questions repeatedly so try to make things clearer for him/ her but make sure that things are done quickly enough.
 7. Don't try to show your partner the picture if you find him/ her unable to understand your description.
- II. A set of guidelines and instructions for the interactant who draws the picture to be described by a partner.
1. You are going to do a communicative activity with a partner.
 2. In this activity you will draw a picture that is going to be described by your partner.
 3. When drawing, don't worry how beautiful your picture is going to be. However, make sure that you have drawn everything in the picture in the right place and that the contents in the picture are recognisable as one thing and not another.
 4. If you ask questions so that things could be clearer for you, use only English.
 5. You have only 10-15 minutes to complete the activity, therefore, try to draw the picture as quickly as possible.
 6. Try every effort to understand the description of your partner but don't try to persuade him / her to show you the picture.

Appendix I

Symbols and codes used in the transcription

- () : pauses in seconds in one's own turn or between turns
- [xxx] : unintelligible or inaudible utterance
- [: a point in a conversation where the interactants begin to speak
simultaneously
- _____ : all or part of an utterance which is a source of trouble for an interactant
- Italics : a response which is still a source of trouble
- Underlined italics: a response to a clarification request*