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Interactional Modifications in Text-based Chats between Korean and Japanese Students

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This study investigates the types of interactional modifications employed by Japanese and Korean university students during text-based chats. In particular, this study focuses on the role of a network-based medium on the use of interactional modifications, which have been claimed to facilitate interlanguage development. The results show that students use a variety of features of interactional modifications. The most used strategies were the use of paralinguistic features, framing, overt indication of understanding/agreement, and clarification checks, which reveals inconsistent results with findings from research on the negotiation of meaning in face-to-face interaction. Results suggest that the computer-mediated communication (CMC) environment requires the above mentioned strategies and students are able to adapt to this new context by employing alternative strategies. The majority of negotiations were generated by content and lexical items either to resolve communication problems or to better manage interactions, and very few negotiations occurred in terms of grammar. The findings suggest that text-based synchronous chats can be an effective tool for promoting interactive competence, but their effectiveness on grammatical development is uncertain.

[interactional modifications/synchronous CMC/interactive competence]

I. INTRODUCTION

The recent proliferation of CMC has prompted a growing body of research. One of the areas is research on learner interaction which is considered to facilitate interlanguage development. Some research has found that synchronous CMC on

interaction bears a resemblance to face-to-face communication (Blake, 2000; Lee, 2002; Pellettieri, 2000), suggesting that the same benefits for second language acquisition (SLA) would occur in CMC. On the other hand, other research suggests that synchronous CMC is not merely intermediate between speaking and writing. Rather the electronic medium uniquely fosters some behaviors and inhibits others, exhibiting unique characteristics in turn-taking and the use of interactional modifications (Kötter, 2003; Smith, 2003). These discrepancies raised the question which motivated this research: what kinds of effects does the networked environment have on interaction between Korean and Japanese learners of English? Therefore, the purpose of this study is to present an analysis of Japanese and Korean University students' discourse in terms of the use of interactional modifications during synchronous on-line chats to uncover how they understand each other and solve communicative problems, and what triggers the use of interactional modifications. The study attempts to explore the potential benefits that this new form of communication holds for language learning.

II. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

1. Interactional Modifications in Language Learning

Interactional modifications are often understood as a way of negotiating meaning. Indeed, negotiation is defined as "the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility" (Pica, 1994, p. 494). With regard to language learning, the Interactionist perspectives claim that negotiation assists learners to make input more comprehensible and modify their own output, and draw attention to form and meaning (Long 1996; Pica, 1994; Swain, 1985). In this way, learners can be forced to a production of output- what is often called 'pushed output'- that is more complete and accurate, far more than merely comprehensible (Pica, 1994; Swain, 1985, 1995). Most of the research on face-to-face interactions has found clarification, confirmation, comprehension checks and recasts as the most used interactional modification devices among others (Long, 1996; Porter, 1986; Varonis and Gass, 1985). Thus, interactional modifications can be referred to as strategies by which interlocutors negotiate meaning. However, it has been pointed out that this definition of negotiation can be limited in that it focuses primarily on resolving communication problems. In fact,

negotiations can be made in non-problematic conversations as well "to achieve a formal display of convergence of the participants' worlds" (Aston, 1986, cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 262) by indicating understanding or agreement. In other words, negotiations can be made not only for overcoming trouble sources, but also for better discourse management. This study will be based on this conceptualization, although much of the research on interaction has been done based on the narrower sense of negotiation. Accordingly, interactional modifications are understood as having two broad functions: discourse repair and discourse management.

2. Interactional Modifications in CMC

1) Synchronous CMC and Language Learning

CMC has been suggested as being more advantageous than face-to-face oral exchanges in that it provides strong motivation, equal participation and the increase of target language production (Warschauer, 1996, 1998). In relation to the topic of this study, namely interactional modifications, Blake (2000) proved that alleged benefits stemming from the interactionist perspective hold true for synchronous CMC and demonstrated that incidental negotiations were abundant in synchronous non-native speakers' (NNS) task-based discussions as well, predominantly in terms of lexical confusions. Chun (1994) illustrates that synchronous CMC is an effective medium for facilitating the acquisition of discourse management skills and interactive competence.[1)] Her study found that learners engaged in a variety of interactive moves and took an active role in discourse management. Similar to Chun's (1994) findings, Kern (1995) observed a wider variety of discourse structures in the synchronous discussions than in the oral discussions, but suggested that the increase in language production might have come at the expense of grammatical accuracy.

In contrast to Kern (1995), Pellettieri (2000) demonstrated that dyadic task-based chats between non-native speakers fosters negotiation of meaning, which in turn leads to the development of grammatical competence even more than oral interactions because the text-based mode of CMC allows learners with more time to process and monitor their interlanguage. Especially, the importance of the language task was

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[1)] Kramsch (1983, cited in Chun 1994) proposed selected types of interactive competence. Those include 1) the ability to express, interpret, and negotiate meaning, 2) turn taking, 3) expanding on topics, 4) giving feedback to others, 5) capturing attention, 6) steering and avoiding topics and 7) starting and ending conversations.

emphasized in achieving the negotiation of meaning and the resultant modification. She comments that the language task must be goal-oriented and devised around the information-gap principles. Confirming Pellettieri's findings, but focusing more on the role of meaning negotiation, Lee's study (2002) on non-native discourse reveals that the rapid speed of exchange encouraged fluency rather than accuracy. In other words, students tend to be more interested in exchanging ideas than correcting linguistic mistakes. However, in general her study confirms that a text-based medium that amplifies student's attention to linguistic form and meaning leads to attending to feedback and self-correction, creating more opportunities for negotiation of meaning than face-to-face interaction. As demonstrated from the previous studies, synchronous CMC seems to be a promising tool for facilitating negotiations and discourse management skills, while the development of grammar tends to be uncertain as different research shows different results.

2) Key Features of Interactional Modifications in Synchronous CMC

Some key interactional modification features which have been found unique in synchronous CMC include the use of emoticons and the heavy use of overt indications of understanding and agreement such as *okay, I see,* and *right,* and so on (Kötter, 2003; Pellettieri, 2000; Smith, 2003). These features are used to provide explicit positive feedback to acknowledge the contribution of others in the absence of visual and audio aids of text-based CMC. For example, Pellettieri (2000) suggests, in terms of the sense-making process, negotiation of meaning among students who meet online differs markedly from face-to-face conversations. She discovered that 84% of negotiation routines between her learners did overtly express their understanding to their interlocutor. According to Pellettieri (2000), not only were they used to indicate that a speaker was ready to "pop up to the main line of conversation"[2)] (p.73), but they also lead to mutual comprehension of the message. She further claims that such indications are even more important in online interactions than in face-to-face

[2)] 'Pop' up is originally termed by Varonis and Gass (1985) from their model of negotiation of meaning among NNS interactions, consisting of 4 steps: Trigger- Indicator-Response- Response to Reaction. They view negotiation as a process from 'pushdown' to 'pop'. When there is some need for negotiation, interlocutors push the conversation down, that is, suspend the normal flow of the conversation to get confirmation or etc. Pop is a move to back up to the main flow of conversation, which occurs in the last phase, response to reaction.

discourse since they are some of the very few means that learners can use to signal their readiness to pop up in the absence of other cues.

In addition, Herring (1999) ascribes the salient use of paralinguistic features to the incoherent discourse pattern of synchronous chats. Disrupted turn adjacency is quite often witnessed in multi-participant chatting since messages are posted in the order received by the system, without regard for what they are responding to (Negretii, 1998, Herring, 1999). However, she also claims that in spite of this limitation, users manage to adapt to CMC and even enjoy CMC, which in turn leads to heightened interactivity.

In light of ongoing discussions on the role of CMC on interactional modifications, and SLA, this study sets up the following research questions:

1) What types of modification devices are used during the negotiation process of the chatting produced by Korean and Japanese university studnets?
2) What triggered those uses of modification devices?
3) How does the use of modification devices in the chatting sessions affect language learning?

III. RESEARCH METHODS

1. Subjects

The subjects in this study consisted of eight Korean students of Korea University and eight Japanese students of Waseda University. They were enrolled in the satellite class called 'Global English', held weekly. 'Global English' was one of the courses of the Korea-Waseda Cross-Cultural Distance Learning (KWCCDL) project, which was initiated in 1999 in order "to enhance students' English proficiency by encouraging them to interact with overseas partners" (Park, 2001, p. 80). Subjects' English proficiency level was between intermediate and high-intermediate. Since the subjects of this study were enrolled in the same satellite class, all the participants of this study were acquainted with each other.

2. Data Collection

Data was collected during the fall semester of 2002. Participants were asked to have a chat on-line in pairs with an assigned partner of different nationality using the real-

time chatting program, CUSeeme. This program provides participants with a visual aid through a camera attached to the computer, but not with audio aid. Five chatting sessions were conducted for 50 minutes outside of their class time. No discussion topic or tasks were assigned in advance. Participants were free to choose any topic they wanted as this chatting was designed to help increase cross- cultural understanding released from the constraints of the classroom. Data of eight Korean-Japanese chatting pairs were selected according to the following two conditions. First, only the pairs who interacted with their assigned partners were chosen. Second, pairs who did not show regular participation throughout the entire chatting sessions were excluded.

3. Data Analysis

The written discourse produced in two sessions out of five sessions was selected[3)] and analyzed qualitatively as well as quantitatively with regard to the following characteristics: 1) the total number of negotiations made in the two chatting sessions, 2) the type and number of modification devices, and 3) the nature of modifications, in terms of triggers for negotiations, e.g., lexis, content or grammar.

Data collected were coded based on the following modification devices using the criteria in Table 1. The coding criteria were derived from a selection of studies on interaction and communication strategies including Lee (2002) and Smith (2003).

TABLE 1

Categories, Definitions and Examples for Modification Devices

Category	Definition	Example
Comprehension checks	- to make sure the message is understood	*Do you understand me?*
Clarification checks	- to request unfamiliar meaning and structure	*What do you mean?*
Confirmation checks	- to repeat parts of the statement to ensure the understanding via paraphrase	*What does school family mean?*

[3)] In selecting sessions for this analysis, two criteria were considered: 1) whether time limit was kept, and 2) first chatting sessions were excluded since they mainly consisted of typical introductions rather than meaning negotiation. These considerations resulted in dealing with only 2 sessions.

Framing	- to mark the closure of old topics and the initiation of new ones	*Good. well then, by the way*
Paralinguistic features	- to signal uncertainty or to confirm an idea or agreement	
1)Punctuation	1) to indicate pitch and intonation, surprise	1) !!!, ...
2)Onomatopoeia	2) to convey feelings and shades of meaning	2) Um, zzzz, haha
3)Capitalization	3) to stress	
4)Emoticons	4) to substitute for visual cues such as facial expressions and eye contact	4) ^^, -.-
Recast (implicit error correction)	- to provide a model form for the partner's non- target form	A: *I go to cinema yesterday.* B: *Oh, you went to cinema.*
Self-correction	- to correct errors made in vocabulary or grammar by oneself	A*: I go to oh no went to cinema yesterday*
Overt indication of understanding and agreement	- to show that the speaker has understood a particular message or agrees with what his/her partner says	*I see, right, okay*
Use of feedback (promoters)	- to encourage continuation of the conversation	*thank you, good*
Request for help	- to request information for unknown words or expressions.	*How do you say...?*
Elaboration	- to enlarge previous comment by giving examples and adding sentences	

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Types and Frequencies of Modification Devices

The main focus of this study was to examine the kinds of modification devices which Korean and Japanese students used to interact with each other. Table 2 displays the types and frequencies of each interactional modification device which occurred in the data.

TABLE 2
Frequencies of Interactional Modification Devices

Types of modification devices	Total occurrences across all participants		# of modification/ total turns
	n	%	
Paralinguistic Features	305	50.1 %	19 %
Punctuation	*139*	*22.8%*	*8.6%*
Onomatopoeia	*95*	*15.6%*	*5.9%*
Emoticons	*71*	*11.6 %*	*4.4 %*
Framing	72	11.8%	4.5%
Overt indication of understanding/ agreement	57	9.4%	3.5%
Clarification checks	53	8.7%	3.3%
Use of feedback (promoters)	40	6.6%	2.5%
Confirmation checks	20	3.1%	1.1%
Elaboration	12	2%	0.7%
Self-correction	12	2%	0.7%
Other[4)]	27	4.4%	1.6%
Total	608	100%	37.8%

On the whole, the results suggest that participants in the KWCCDL chatting used a variety of interactional modification devices. Of a total of 1,605 turns, occurrences of

[4)] The devices which belong to the category "Other" in Table 2 include abbreviation (11 occurrences), capitalization (9), asking for help (4), recasts (2) and comprehension checks (1).

interactional modifications amounted to 608, which took up 37.8 % of all turns. Neither explicit corrective feedback, nor repetitions were observed in the KWCCDL chatting.

However, results differed somewhat from those found in face-to-face interaction. The data suggest that the KWCCDL chatting encouraged some unique features. To begin with, those unique features, which also ranked high in Table 2, will be discussed.

2. Use of Paralinguistic Features

The four most frequently used devices were Punctuation uses (e.g., !!!, >, ..) [5], Onomatopoeia (e.g., Um, zzzz, haha), Framing and Emoticons (e.g., smiley, frown face). Except for framing, the remaining three devices belong to paralinguistic features. This means as many as 20% of total turns were expressed with paralinguistic modification devices, displaying compatible results with the findings of Herring (1999), Smith (2003) and Kötter (2003). Excerpt 1 shows how the paralinguistic features are used in the KWCCDL chatting.

EXCERPT 1

Paralinguistic Features (paralinguistic devices italicized)

1) Waseda: I know she's smart and good English speaker.
2) Waseda: Isn't she?
3) Korea: Yes. She's like a blackhorse
4) Waseda: ***oh..lol*** [Onomatopoeia]
5) Korea: in every discussion
6) Waseda: I feel she's talented.
7) Waseda: and.. do you think she's cute***???*** [Punctuation]
8) Waseda: ***oops*** [Giving feedback]
9) Korea: Why are you keep asking about her?
10) Waseda: It's not a good questions ***fufufu*** [Onomatopoeia]
11) Waseda: okay! I will stop***!*** [Punctuation]
12) Korea: OK
13) Waseda: ***hahaha*** [Onomatopoeia]

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[5] In the case of punctuation use, students seemed to use this device habitually most of the time. In particular, the habitual use of repeated periods (….) was observed at the end of turns. In this research, only the cases where these devices are used to confirm an idea or agreement or to signal for uncertainty are counted as valid.

14) Waseda: oh yeah

A Waseda student shows interest in the girl they are talking about in turn 2 by eliciting his partner's agreement, and then in turn 4 as soon as he receives an agreeing response from his Korean partner, he responds overtly by using 'Onomatopoeia', *ohlol* (abbreviation of laugh on loud). In turn 7, the repeated use of question marks shows he is eagerly anticipating hearing news about her. Then on realizing that his Korean partner is not willing to be cooperative he signals that he knows something is wrong by tying *opps*. This device seems also to be used to check his partner's reaction. He then gives up the topic after sensing his partner's uncooperative or irritated attitude in turn 9. But in turn 10 he employs 'Onomatopoeia', *fufufu* in an attempt to avoid a possible awkward atmosphere. The use of the exclamation point in turn 11 appears to emphasize his intention not to continue the topic on the girl any further (here, the use of the exclamation point was considered different from that as in okay!, which is habitually used). Turn 13 shows 'Onomatopoeia', *hahaha* is used as a means of 'overt indication of understanding'.

Excerpt 1 shows how the use of punctuation and Onomatopoeia contributed to developing or avoiding the discussion of topics. It shows that the participants select certain devices deliberately for their purposes of communication. Unlike oral interactions in which emotions, pitch and other cues are expressed mostly sub-consciously, on-line chat requires deliberate efforts on the part of participants as they need to express their ideas and actions (or emotions) in words. It seems thus reasonable to argue that the lack of visual and aural support can help them develop interactive competence by allowing them to employ other devices such as paralinguistic features. Kötter (2003) also confirms this view commenting,

> it [the limitations of CMC discussed above] can also encourage them (learners) to take risks and to draw on all available resources to avoid a breakdown in the conversation, which is why I would suggest that the unique nature of real-time CMC (chat, IRCs, talkers, and MOOs), plus the need to keep going, can prompt learners to increase their awareness of communicative processes. (p. 148, [ ] was inserted by the author)

3. Use of Framing

Another salient device used in this study was framing. The framing device is used to mark the closure of old topics and the initiation of new ones. Most topic shifts in this study occurred with framing devices such as *well then, by the way, good* and *now then* except for the situations where topics were changed smoothly according to the previous utterances. Only 10 cases were observed as cases of abrupt topic shifts without any signals. Thus, framing is certainly the strategy participants used most regardless of the number of topics discussed.

The heavy use of this device can be attributed to two possible causes. First, intonation and pitch or eye movements are the typical signaling devices for topic and turn boundaries in face-to-face interactions. Therefore, the lack of those features in the text-based chatting seems to be the cause for the high use of framing devices. Furthermore, as pointed out by Herring (1999), during chatting, participants' turns often overlapped, disrupting the linear progression of the exchanges. Disrupted turns are common in many-to-many chats, and a one-to-one chat was not an exception. This is particularly common when the typing speed of the two participants in a pair differs. Consider the following example,

EXCERPT 2

Framing (framing devices italicized)

1) Korea: the base was in PyougTeck..... south from Seoul
2) Waseda: oh,,, ***IC***
3) Korea: why are in suit and tie today?
4) Waseda: that must have contributed much to your English skills and so force
5) Waseda: ***ah.. suit***.. that's cuz I was working [Framing]
6) Korea: English? yes especially for my curse words.. lol
7) Korea: working?
8) Waseda: yeah yeah
9) Korea: in school?
10) Waseda: it's like " security staff'
11) Korea: ***Good***..... I'm almost a beggar..... [Framing]
12) Waseda: of a company
13) Waseda: Oh you!?
14) Korea: **Wow. I see** .. a body guard? [Overt indication of understanding]
15) Korea: yes

Excerpt 2 shows how participants track the main line of discourse by using framing strategies when turns overlap. *ah.. suit* ..in turn 5 and *good* in turn 11 were coded as framing. Each turn is joined as follows: [turn 1 -> turn 2 and 4], [turn 3 -> turn 5], [turn 4 -> turn 6], [turn 11 -> turn 13], and [turn 12 -> turn 14]. This shows turn pairs are disrupted. To proceed in a conversation smoothly in continuously overlapping turns, participants send overt indications which signal they are responding to. In turn 5, a Waseda student employs a framing device to explicitly signal his attention to turn 3. Here this use of *ah... suit...* was considered framing, which functions as overtly marking a new topic. Then, in turn 6, a Korean student overtly elicits the previous topic by typing '*English?'*, and then holds his turn quickly to respond to turn 5. In turn 11, the Korean student closes a topic on the work of a Japanese partner by saying '*Good'*, which is a framing device, and then initiates a new one. However, turn 12, which was also typed while turn 11 was typed, again disrupts constructing a new topic by turn 11. Finally, the Korean student, who seems to have become tired of tracking the previous topic or felt uneasy disrupting, seems to decide to wait for his partner to type.

Framing devices can serve a function similar to that of overt indication used to signal the readiness to pop up to the main line of conversation in the sense-making process of Pallettieri's (2000) study. Thus, the heavy use of framing appears to confirm Chun and Pallettieri's speculation that on-line interactions like KWCCDL chatting require more explicit feedback than face-to-face conversations to successfully manage the discourse. In this regard, the KWCCDL chatting seems to contribute to participants' improved discourse management skills, at least in this particular form of communication. The importance of giving feedback in synchronous CMC was also confirmed by the fact that the device 'Overt indication of agreement and understanding' and other related device `Use of feedback' were used together in 16% of all negotiation work. In turns 13 and 14, the uses of *Oh you!?* and *Wow. I see* show examples of overt indication of agreement or response used to solve a problem resulting from disrupted turns.

4. Face-to-face Interaction VS. CMC

The results differed from the research findings of traditional face-to-face interactions in some ways. However, a direct comparison between face-to-face interaction and the KWCCDL chatting was not easy. One reason for this is that usually studies on face-to-face interactions have been based on task-based interactions

rather than casual conversations such as those which this study is based on. More importantly, results differ due to the fact that the criteria used for analyses vary from research to research.

However, despite these difficulties, differences between the results found in this study and those in face-to-face interaction are easily noticed. Most of the research on face-to-face interactions has found clarification, confirmation, comprehension checks and recasts as the most used strategies (Long, 1996; Pica, 1988; Porter, 1986; Varonis and Gass, 1985). Though clarification checks were detected frequently in this study, the results displayed relatively few confirmation checks and recasts, and only 1 instance of a comprehension check, with no repetition.

The absence of repetitions in the KWCCDL data can be explained by the fact that it is text-based, so participants can monitor what they write. Also, repetitions resulting from inaccurate pronunciation cannot be expected in text-based CMC. In addition, there appeared extremely few comprehension checks and recasts. Comprehension checks, as well as recasts, imply the person who uses them is more knowledgeable than the other participant in a pair. In fact, these repair strategies were reported to be used mainly by the teacher.[6)] This might explain the few occurrences of comprehension checks and recasts. The scarcity of comprehension checks and confirmation checks can be due in part to overlapping functions of paralinguistic features with comprehension and confirmation checks. Especially, punctuation marks were often used to signal for uncertainty or to confirm an idea or agreement. For example, participants used "?" to signal for uncertainty or to seek an answer. A happy face "^^", an onomatopoeic marker, tended to be used to show agreement or confirm the understanding of messages. Thus, it is likely that paralinguistic devices substitute the use of comprehension or confirmation checks.

5. Triggers of Negotiations

The investigation on triggers of negotiations which occurred in this chatting data revealed that the majority of negotiations were generated either by content meaning or by vocabulary, whereas grammar triggered very few negotiations (only 6 cases out of 608). Here are the examples of negotiation triggered by vocabulary and content meaning.

[6)] Jung's (2005) research confirms that the teacher alone tends to do repair work (recast or correction) of learners' trouble sources in the language classroom of Korea. However, other-repair (self-repair) was preferred in the L2 learner's repair sequences.

EXCERPT 3

Negotiation on Vocabulary

1) Waseda: In Jaoan, now the 'Harry Potter' is very popular?
2) Korea: it is really popular movie>>>>
3) Korea: *harry potter?* [Confirmation-content meaning]
4) Waseda: In Japan same
5) Korea: *you mean the sequel* [Confirmation-content meaning]
6) Waseda: ***Sequel?*** [Clarification- vocabulary]
7) Korea: *the second...*
8) Waseda: *Yes.*
9) Korea: *harry potter 2....*

In Excerpt 3, a Waseda student asks for clarification for an unknown word '*sequel'* in turn 6. Then, a Korean student in the ensuing turn responds to the incomprehensible input. It is obvious from turn 8 that non-understanding of the message was resolved. In the following excerpt, negotiation was triggered by a Korean student in terms of content meaning in turn 2.

EXCERPT 4

Negotiation on Content Meaning

1) Waseda: we don't have friends like her.
2) Korea: *what do you mean* [Clarification]
3) Korea: *you mean you don't have woman friend like her* [Confirmation]
4) Waseda: the person who loves same sex
5) Korea: oh I see

The meaning of the message in turn 1 was questioned by a clarification check followed by a confirmation check in turn 2 and 3. A response to these modification devices immediately follows turn 3, and thus the meaning of the message of turn 1 is clarified in turn 4. Then the Korean student who questioned the meaning of turn 1 displays an overt indication of understanding in turn 5 ('*oh I see*'). In this way, mutual understanding on the meaning of turn 1 was achieved.

As mentioned in IV. 3., abrupt topic shifts (only 10 cases) without an overt indication of understanding/agreement rarely appeared regardless of whether negotiations are made for resolving communication problems or managing discourse.

This makes it possible to assume that negotiations appearing in this study are not likely to end up without acknowledging mutual understanding. [7)]

As for grammatical triggers for negotiation, only six cases were detected. Hence, it seems difficult to expect grammatical development from an analysis of this chatting data. The four cases observed in terms of grammatical triggers came from self-correction (i.e., Korea: *he graduate last year*. *graduated*). [8)] Implicit corrective feedback (recasts) appeared only twice. This result appears to be largely influenced by the purpose of the chatting. Participants seem to recognize that chatting is for developing international friendships while communicating in English. The chatting did not necessarily have a specific goal, unlike task-based conversation. Participants tend to be more interested in exchanging ideas than correcting linguistic mistakes as shown in Lee's (2002) study. Considering Pellettieri's (2000) study, the improvement of grammatical competence was demonstrated in task-based interactions. Task types are deemed to have an impact on producing certain types and number of negotiations.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to present an analysis of Japanese and Korean University students' discourse in terms of the use of interactional modifications during text-based chats. It has discussed some potential benefits that this electronic communication holds for language learning. This study has revealed the following findings.

Firstly, participants in the KWCCDL chatting used a variety of interactional modification devices, but their use of modification devices were different in some ways from those found in traditional face-to-face interactions. While devices such as confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and recasts, which are common in face-to-face interactions, were not highly evident, the KWCCDL chatting encouraged some unique features such as the heavy use of paralinguistic features (i.e., Punctuation, Emoticons and Onomatopoeia), framing and overt indications of understanding/ agreement, and explicit positive feedback. It is suggested that these strategies are employed to compensate for the lack of visual and aural support and the incoherent

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7) Resolving communicative difficulties or managing effective interactions (such as topic management) was a main issue in determining the success or failure of negotiation work. Whether or not negotiations end up with modified output was not considered.

8) Self-correction appeared 12 times in total. Except these 4 cases, other cases of self-correction were triggered by typing mistakes such as misspelling.

discourse of CMC, which in turn demonstrates that participants adapted to the new medium successfully. In addition, these adaptation devices are assumed to prompt learners to increase interactive competence considered essential in improving discourse management skills and thus stimulating a change in their interlanguage development. Finally, it was found that very few negotiations were produced by grammar or syntax, while most negotiations were triggered by content meaning or lexical items either to resolve communication problems or to better manage interactions. These findings suggest that grammar received insufficient attention. Therefore, constructing post activities which help learners focus on their grammar is considered necessary so that they can maintain a balance between form and content.

However, since the issue of what type of interactional modifications are more beneficial than others has not yet been clearly investigated, this study cannot provide any firm conclusions about the effects of KWCCDL chatting. The modification devices found most frequently in this study are likely to promote the benefits addressed above, especially in terms of interactive competence, but the question of the effects of the subsequent loss of the strategies abundant in face-to face interactions still remains unanswered. Future research needs to be conducted on these issues.

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Examples in: English
Application Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Elementary/Secondary/College/Higher

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