

Willingness to Communicate - Group Dynamics and Seating Allocation at Beginning Level Japanese¹

Nobuyoshi Asaoka

Abstract

The ultimate goal of L2 learning should be to engender in language learners ‘the willingness to communicate’ or WTC (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). The success of language learning depends to a large extent on the amount of input and output. Pair and group work is widespread in education (Storch, 2002), including the language classroom. This pedagogical practice increases the amount of language input (McGroarty, 1993) as well as output (Long & Porter, 1985). MacIntyre et al. also claim that WTC does not necessarily transfer from L1 to L2. They maintain that some linguistic development is a precondition for WTC. If so, WTC should ideally run in parallel to that of communicative competence.

This study examines whether WTC can be engendered and fostered through group dynamics via seating arrangements among beginning level Japanese learners. Dual methods with video-recording to observe learners’ behavior and a questionnaire to assess their perceptions of their own WTC were employed. The results show that with ‘scaffolding’ by the instructor at the beginning stage, the students became more willing to communicate in L2 while the survey revealed that they found teacher-allocated partners conducive to language learning and active language use.

Key terms: Willingness to Communicate (WTC), Scaffolding, Pair work, Group dynamics

1. Introduction

L2 teaching methodology has evolved based on a series of attempts to address weaknesses of each of the dominant approaches used over the past century. For example, the grammar-translation approach emphasized the development of linguistic competence, which perhaps adequately met the needs of would-be translators, but did not develop the authentic use of language. Likewise, the current emphasis on communicative competence also poses another issue: facilitating learners who are technically capable of communicating, at least inside the classroom, but who may not be autonomous enough to do so in the outside world (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The communicative approach was intended to foster the development of students’ communicative competence. This approach may have achieved a satisfactory level of result for the whole class; however, perhaps not at the individual level. Meanwhile, learners’ attitudes, motivation, or language anxiety, have been brought up as possible causes for this individual communicative differences in the past; however, variations in “Willingness to Communicate” or WTC have more recently emerged as a more comprehensive attempt to provide an explanation (Yashima, 2002). The concept functions on psychologically, motivationally, socio-culturally, and socio-linguistically-defined variables. MacIntyre et al. (1998) claim that the ultimate goal of language learning should, therefore, be to engender WTC. By definition, as one’s linguistic competence goes up, one’s potential to speak more and for longer increases. Understanding of WTC should lead to a better awareness of the gaps in individual communicative differences in the classroom and hopefully help us come up with a better pedagogical approach. However, research on the relationship between WTC and practical pedagogical intervention has been scarce mainly because the two topics, communication and L2 learning, have developed along somewhat different lines (Clément & Kruidenier, 1986).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) also maintain that some development in linguistic competence is a precondition of WTC. This study argues that WTC should run in parallel to L2 linguistic development and investigates the possibility of engendering it through improved group dynamics by manipulating seating allocation among beginning level Japanese learners. Group dynamics, in general, has considerable implications for education most obviously because most

¹ This paper was presented at the 2011 ATJ Annual Conference at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

institutional teaching tends to occur with learners organized in pairs or small groups and is particularly relevant to L2 instruction. In view of this, the present study controlled the seating arrangements by assigning students a seat as they came to class so that they usually had a different partner. The rationale behind this pedagogical practice was that by such a seating allocation, each learner would be motivated to exchange new information in L2, especially a few minutes before class with ‘scaffolding’ assistance (to help them maintain their conversations) by the instructor at the beginning stage to develop better interrelationships which might potentially lead to better group dynamics.

The study offers the opportunity to integrate linguistic, communicative, psychological, and pedagogical approaches to L2 research that have often been independent of each other. Using the WTC concept and group dynamics, the study hopefully provides a useful interface between these disparate lines of inquiry. In particular, the study examines how the teacher should implement the allocation of partners in the classroom and what kind(s) of scaffolding s/he should provide to each student at each stage. Using dual methods, namely video-taped recording and a questionnaire, the study analyzes the workability of this pedagogical practice among beginning level learners of Japanese within the framework of WTC and group dynamics.

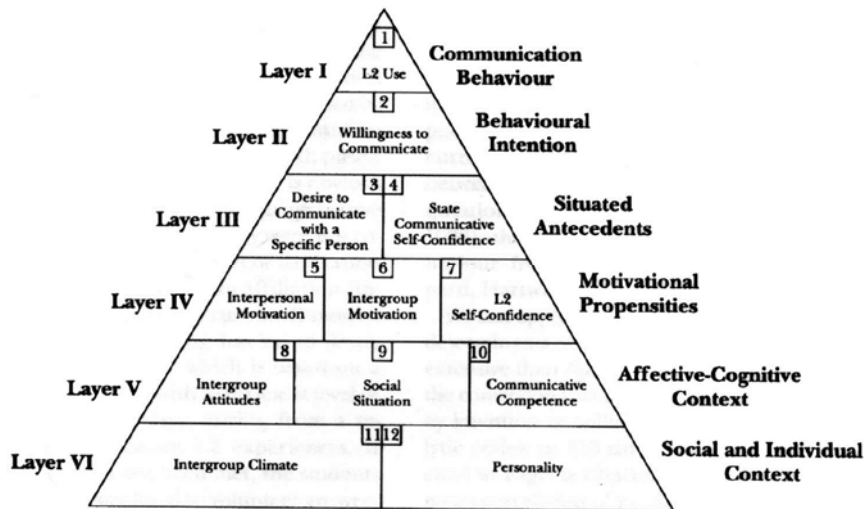
2. ‘Willingness to Communicate’

The concept of ‘Willingness to Communicate’ (WTC) was originally conceptualized by McGroskey and Baer in L1 (1985) based on the earlier work of Burgoon (1985) who, using her construct, identified “Unwillingness to Communicate” with sociological and psychological variables. Burgoon (1985) describes this tendency as the avoidance and/or devaluation of oral communication owing to anomie, alienation, introversion, low self-esteem, and communication apprehension. McCroskey and Baer (1985) adapted and renamed it “Willingness to Communicate”, changing the construct from a negative to positive orientation. McCroskey and associates proposed that WTC depends on personality-based trait variables, such as communication apprehension, subjective communication competence, self-esteem, introversion-extroversion and so forth, with a major impact on human communication behavior. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) applied the concept to L2 communication and concluded that global personality traits, a taxonomy of the most basic personality traits, and social context have an impact on L2 learning. MacIntyre et al. (1998) subsequently developed all the possible determinants of WTC in a more systematic, pyramid-shaped structure, and expanded the original concept to situational variables, including written as well as spoken communication, to account for individual differences in communication.

MacIntyre (1994) developed a path model to predict WTC in L1 and applied the model to L2 communication. The results postulate that a higher level of WTC in L2 is positively affected with a combination of greater perceived communication competence and a relative lack of communication apprehension caused by introversion and low self-esteem. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) conducted research, combined with Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model on Anglophone students in Canada’s bilingual context (English & French), to examine relations among variables underlying L2 WTC and found that WTC predicts frequency of communication whereas motivation predicts WTC.

The heuristic model construct of WTC that MacIntyre et al. (1998) produced is shown below:

Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p.547)



This layered (pyramid) model illustrates the complexity of the WTC concept. The first three layers depict situation-specific influences while the latter three layers are assumed to have stable influence on WTC. As MacIntyre et al. (1998, p.547) say, “Learner personality, intergroup climate, intergroup attitudes, intergroup motivation, L2 self-confidence, and communicative competence, among others are interrelated influences on L2 WTC and L2 use.” WTC, therefore, varies over time and across situations. MacIntyre et al. (1998) also claim that WTC does not necessarily automatically transfer from L1 to L2 because compared to variables in L1, there are some stronger uncertainties inherent in L2 use that interact in a more complex manner. For instance, a much greater range of communicative competence can be found in L2 from zero beginner to native-like proficiency while most speakers reach a high level of L1 competence.

According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), students’ hand-raising is considered as non-verbal WTC, but this behavioral intention is not under complete volitional control because circumstances may intervene between intention and action, such as “I want to speak up and I will do so, given the opportunity (if I am called on by the teacher).” It is, therefore, appropriate that the teacher attempts to facilitate students’ intention to speak and transfer it into action, if possible, in order to improve their overall L2 proficiency as they must ‘speak’ to learn and develop their communicative competence and L2 proficiency. Communication is, thus, an important goal in itself rather than a means of facilitating language learning (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996).

Among over 30 variables MacIntyre et al. (1998) found, the most determining from the cognitive (linguistic and communicative) perspective is arguably discursive because the change of the language discourse, whether from casual chat to formal rhetoric, potentially affects many of the other variables that contribute to WTC. On the other hand, from the social psychological angle, perceived communicative competence and communication apprehension (or anxiety) have a strong influence on WTC (McGroskey & Richmond, 1990; MacIntyre, 1994) and are highly correlated (cf Clément, 1978; Clément, Gardner & Symthe, 1977, 1980). When anxiety is limited to language learning, it basically consists of three elements, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, both by peers, but especially the teacher (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Furthermore, among the four language skills, speaking generally produces the highest anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986, Koch & Terrell, 1991, MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). But anxiety is not simply the combination of these fears but rather a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to unique L2 classroom learning due, for example, to the gap between students’ L1 and L2 capability (Horwitz et al., 1986).

As a result, people with high communication apprehension tend to verbalize less and sit passively in the last row of the classroom (McGroskey & Richmond, 1990) where their performance is constantly monitored and evaluated (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986). Such anxieties, quite typical of L2 learning, often mean that learners fail to initiate speaking or participate in the interaction passively only by smiling and politely nodding or just listening.

Current teaching methodologies aim at developing learners' communicative competence by creating classroom activities where they participate in communicative events. In particular, pair work has been much utilized not only because it increases the opportunity for communicative events but also because it increases the amount of output (Long & Porter, 1985) as well as input (McGroarty, 1993), which is believed to facilitate fluency and accuracy through additional "trial and error" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). At the same time this type of personal interaction has the potential to create pair/group cohesion or "the strength of the relationships linking the members to one another and to the group itself" (Forsyth, 1990, p.10), i.e., the language community. In the following section, the definition of group dynamics and its applicability to this study will be elaborated and discussed.

3. Group dynamics

While the cognitive aspect of WTC deals with the basic element of linguistic competence, it is the contextual aspect that helps shape it into communicative competence through group dynamics. Group dynamics refers to the interaction and interpersonal relationships between the members of a group and the process of group formation. It is relevant to the field of psychology, sociology, and communication and is, therefore, one of the most important, though somewhat neglected disciplines for L2 learning. In the language classroom, the learner group is a powerful social unit, principally (or at least at the beginning) made up of the teacher as the central figure and the students as active members, and its group characteristics considerably affect the rate of learning and the quality of time spent in class (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). The result of group forming is varying degrees of cohesiveness. Greater solidarity in groups exerts more influence over their members. Furthermore, at the individual level, each member's relationship with other group members, whether this is based on liking, respect, or trust, creates cohesiveness, whereas at the group level, cohesiveness reflects 'togetherness' that connects people together to form a single unit (Cartwright, 1968; Festinger, 1950). Cartwright defines cohesiveness as "the degree to which the members of the group desire to remain in the group" (1968, p.91) while Festinger (1950, p.274) describes it as "resultant of all the forces acting on the member to remain in the group".

In certain cases, extreme cohesiveness may be detrimental for L2 learning, if, for instance, the teacher loses control over the students. Evans and Dion (1991) found a consistent positive relationship between cohesion and group performance. The findings of Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) also confirm that perceived group cohesion functions as a crucial motivational component in L2 learning contexts because members desire to contribute to group success and the group's goal-oriented norms have a strong influence over the individual, even though the degree of such a tendency might vary depending on the culture. A sense of satisfaction and communicative enjoyment are much more pronounced in highly cohesive groups than less cohesive ones. Closely-knit groups tend to participate more attentively and cooperate with each other more fully. Also, a stronger cohesiveness provides a source of security for its members, which leads to heightened self-esteem and lowered anxiety.

The complex process of L2 acquisition takes place not only in class but in fact frequently out of class. Considering the amount of time learners spend outside of class doing homework, preparing for oral interview tests in L2, etc., the creation of better group dynamics can facilitate learners' L2 acquisition in many ways in addition to increasing language input and output. Horwitz et al. (1986) also maintain that stress reduction by changing the context of L2 learning is an important factor to allay students' anxiety, but is rather difficult because any institutional L2 learning can not avoid constant evaluation of performance. Psychologically the language instructor may appear to be the authority for learners. Thus, the degree of anxiety induced by teacher-student interactions may be higher than among learners themselves. Yet, considerable anxiety among even peers may exist at the very beginning and indeed often affects beginning level learners

for both social and linguistic reasons. However, as the amount of both verbal communication and non-verbal affiliative behaviors increases, the level of uncertainty decreases (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

It is the author's hypothesis in the present study that teacher-led seating allocation can manipulate the context and stimulate learner's motivation by providing them with an opportunity to exchange small pleasantries with a different partner in L2 before class. In the less formal context before the beginning of a lesson, interaction with a different partner in turn would, it was hoped, enable each learner to build up better interrelationships with each other every day and then lead to better whole class group dynamics during the semester in order to facilitate better language learning.

4. Methods and study

The current study examined the relationships among L2 learning and L2 communication variables, using the WTC model and its relationship to group dynamics. In the author's experience with beginning level Japanese classes, students were generally tentative in using the language they had learned and rarely used it to initiate communication among themselves. Using dual methods, the aim of this study was to examine how teacher-led seat allocation influenced learners' WTC through semi-autonomous pair work before the formal beginning of class. The author conducted similar research previously (Asaoka, 2010) but within the framework of learner autonomy among beginning level Japanese learners in academic year 2009-2010 where he video-recorded their communicative behavior before class several times at several stages and administered a questionnaire at the end of each semester. For this study, a revised questionnaire was adopted in order to more accurately elicit students' perception of their own WTC while the same video-recorded footage was examined for learners' communicative behavior.

The purpose of the seating allocation method was explained to the whole class at the very beginning of the course: namely that this practice aimed to allow each student to get to know each other better as well as provide them with the opportunity to exchange small-pleasantries, which may lead to improvement in overall L2 proficiency. WTC and group dynamics are both indicated often through observable behavior, thus, use of observation as well as eliciting students' own assessments was employed.

4.1 Participants

The subjects for this study were 26 students enrolled in Fall Semester 2010 of Beginning Japanese at Grinnell College.² The classes met five days a week, 50 minutes a day for 15 weeks. The required textbooks were "An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese, *Genki 1*" (Banno, Ohno, Sakane, & Shinagawa, 1999) and "An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese *Genki 1* Workbook" (Bannno, Ohno, Sakane, & Shinagawa, 2000). The semester covered up to the end of chapter 6. The students were divided into two sections consisting of 16 and 10 students respectively. Both classes were taught every day by one instructor (the researcher of this study).

4.2 Procedure

The experiment proceeded as follows. Throughout the three semesters,³ the instructor typically arrived at the class 10 minutes early and while setting up the teaching materials, he prompted students to use the relatively elementary Japanese they had learned as they arrived to class. On a typical day, at least half of the subjects arrived at least 5 minutes before class. During the early part of the first semester the instructor played a more active role, for instance, welcoming each student with a greeting in Japanese and if necessary prompting each of them, by demonstration, to also greet her/his classmate(s) accordingly,⁴ as well as ensuring that each of them sat in an allocated seat from the corner as s/he came in. Later in the semester the instructor prompted each student by asking, for instance, "How was your weekend?" and

² Grinnell College is a private college with an enrollment of about 1,500, located in Iowa.

³ JPN101 Fall Semester 2009, JPN102 Spring Semester 2010 & JPN101 Fall Semester 2010.

⁴ Namely "ohayoogozaimasu" to the instructor and "ohayoo" to the classmates.

relaying to the partner, “S/he said her/his weekend was good”. By the middle of the semester the instructor reduced this type of ‘scaffolding’ and encouraged pairs to initiate small pleasantries-exchanges themselves and extend this to brief conversations.

Some pairs were videotaped several times during the period (i.e., before class) in order to analyze how students responded. The intention of the video-recording was to observe learners’ behavior to see whether WTC was being engendered and fostered and was made through the whole 50-minute-long class so that the subjects were not aware that the focus was an out-of-class activity, but only that the researcher was conducting some kind of research. One pair, a male American student and a female Chinese student, was video-taped, for instance, on the 2nd of November 2009 when the class was in the middle of chapter 4 of *Genki 1* (see below). Both subjects had very limited previous linguistic knowledge of Japanese before taking the course and their linguistic proficiency was average among the class.

When a pair was unwilling or unable to converse in L2, the instructor approached to provide scaffolding, but as the semester progressed, the number of such pairs decreased as both their linguistic competence and level of comfort with each other increased.

In addition to this observational evidence, students’ own views were elicited at the end of the semester. The following two questions were asked, followed by room for explanatory comment:

1. What effect on your language learning do you think practice with different partners has had?
2. During the semester have you felt uncomfortable making small pleasantries in Japanese with a different partner before class?

Each subject answered the first question on a Likert-type five-point scale ranging from “very positive” at one end and “very negative” at the other and the second question on a four-point scale ranging from “always or almost always” at one end and “rarely” at the other, followed by comments to support those choices.

The first question was intended to elicit students’ impressions of how the opportunity to speak with almost everyone in class made an impact on their spoken Japanese while the second question sought to elicit students’ impressions of how the practice impacted on their affective filter. On the day when the questionnaire was administered, three subjects were absent, so 23 out of 26 were collected for analysis.

5. Results & discussion

As the activity was intended to promote WTC outside formal teaching, the recording chosen for analysis of a small pleasantries-exchange lasted over 4 minutes extending until just before the start of the class.⁵ The two recorded students perhaps had slightly higher levels of communicative competence as they were able to keep their dialogue going without the instructor’s scaffolding but other pairs also already managed to carry on at least 1 or 2 minute-long conversation at this stage. The recorded pair started speaking about how they spent their weekend and then extended the topic to their daily routine, such as what time they got up and what they ate for breakfast. Most of the time their interactions were restricted to Initiation/Response/Follow-up, but using the variety of learned vocabulary and grammar they had acquired in class, the interactions allowed the two interlocutors to share their strengths as they explicitly helped each other through prompting, error correction, clarification requests, and comprehension checks. Ohta (1995) claims that successful pair work takes place where learners’ strengths are collaboratively joined. Some students also commented on this point:

“Different partners have different knowledge so partners with more knowledge help to correct and help with pronunciation.”

⁵ For the detailed script of the video-recorded footage, please refer to the author’s article (Asaoka, 2011).

“When you talk with someone [and] you are better, then you would help them and learn at the same time. And when you are worse [than] someone, you would be helped....”

Students’ responses to the activity were generally positive. From the questionnaire, on the first question regarding language improvement, results showed the majority of subjects felt the pedagogical practice helped them improve their spoken Japanese as most of the subjects chose either “very positive” (11 subjects) or “positive” (12 subjects). As for the second question regarding the ease they felt with a different partner, the majority of the subjects (18 out of 23) rarely felt uncomfortable with the practice. Throughout the questionnaire responses, a lack of anxiety was evident as they gained confidence with a perceived increase in communicative competence:

“With different partners, I can practice Japanese in a variety [of ways rather] than just [...] with the same partner: while [I] also increase my confidence in speaking in the public. Interacting with different people everyday is a good way to become friends, which will allow me to feel comfortable with everybody else.”

“It helps to build confidence in language...”

“I think that varied discussions with different classmates both helps me to learn how to react in different situations, [and] allows both of us to improve our Japanese...”

One’s communicative experience in one situation may not be transferred automatically to another, which in turn, increases the perceived variability in L2 communication events and may generate different levels of WTC in various social situations. Teacher-student interactions, especially at the beginning level, are often characterized as asymmetrical as the former potentially takes control in their conversation, however, letting beginning level learners exchange small pleasantries in a natural setting not only leads to different patterns of active participation by themselves but also increases their variability in responding to different partners. McCroskey & Richmond (1990) maintain that an individual’s level of communication anxiety is probably the single best predictor of the person’s WTC. Also, the concept of WTC is indicated by the importance of the amount of talk and affiliative behaviors at the initial stage of an interpersonal relationship. Moreover, although perceived communicative competence and greater confidence are closely related, the former comes mainly from speaking ability, not from one’s knowledge-base (Yashima, 2002).

The following comments by students suggest that closer communicative interactions through pair work every day lead to better group dynamics and perhaps vice versa, better group dynamics may lead to more active communicative interactions among pairs.

“I think through talking with other partners, I was able to get closer with my classmates. Also, it was actually fun to talk to a different partner every class.”

“I think that having to interact with different people each day really helped me get to know everyone in the class and build class community. The frequency with which we interacted with partners made it not awkward or uncomfortable. I think it was a very good strategy.”

As one of the most influential determinants of WTC is discursive (MacIntyre et al., 1998), good interrelationships also allow a great deal of flexibility in negotiation of meaning among the pairs. Moreover, as beginning learners cannot

often avoid rote memorization of basic vocabulary and formulaic expressions through repetition, the frequent social context change that this activity entailed also made such routine refreshing, as noted by one student:

"[This practice] not only helped to get to know everyone but made repetition better because it was a new experience every time."

The type of pedagogical practice in this study lends empirical support to the hypothesis that the sociolinguistic context plays a very influential role in L2 learning as it may provide the opportunity for more frequent and pleasant L2 contact (Clément, 1980, 1986). Teachers may hope that in the longer term, being active not only in class but also before class may engender and foster students' WTC in future real life communication situations, but without sacrificing practice of the language basics in the full curriculum.

There were, however, a few negative comments. One student agreed to the efficacy of the practice but added: *"It sometimes feels uncomfortable to talk before class because I'm not sure what to say."* The reason for this hesitation may have been because of her/his communicative competence or initial interrelationships with a different partner but further investigation on this would be needed. Three other students also had some reservations which highlighted the social context of language use:

"Some people were more serious, versed, and prepared than others...."

"...I never felt it was awkward except when I was talking with someone I did not match well."

"...[I sometimes felt uncomfortable] when I did not know the other person."

Vygotsky (1978) suggests that active social interaction with a more able member of society leads to cognitive development. On the other hand, whilst the classroom is a 'safe' arena for language practice, discovering that some members may be somewhat difficult to talk to and then managing to socialize with them is arguably a necessary part of students' language learning experience in a sociolinguistic sense and a means by which to develop the skills required for the development of 'total' communicative competence.

However, this initiation of a small pleasantries-exchange by beginning level learners was not possible without 'scaffolding'. Communication breakdown was prevented with intervention from the instructor: for example, when noticing a long silence among some pairs, he approached and asked a simple question to reignite the conversation. Even a student who showed some reservations about the commitment of some classmates, nevertheless noted that *"... Teacher kept facilitating light conversation"*. In addition, so called 'initiators' among the students (i.e., more proficient and extrovert students), favorably influenced other pairs and helped keep the conversations going. As students' linguistic competence increases, a gradual shift from the teacher's scaffolding to students' mutual scaffolding can then be made to foster WTC more autonomously.

6. Conclusion

Although the results of the questionnaire were generally positive, individual differences in these results may need to be further explored to understand WTC better. Nevertheless, the video-recorded communicative interactions indicated that students were generally able to use L2 in a less formal learning environment (i.e. before class). The questionnaire also indicated that the majority of the students felt the seating allocation method facilitated their WTC in L2 thus creating better group dynamics. Most did not feel a substantial anxiety with a different partner, which enabled them to build up confidence in their communicative competence. From this evidence, it is possible to conclude that among even beginning

level learners of Japanese, WTC can potentially be engendered and fostered by changing the context of group dynamics in the manner outlined in this research.

Japanese, along with other Asian languages, is considered to be the most difficult for native English speakers. Of course, each language has its own challenges and all the four skills are not equally challenging but during the basic linguistic foundation-building period, repetition of vocabulary, pronunciation, and basic grammar cannot be avoided. This often turns out to be time-consuming and thus uninspiring. However, this study shows that the type of teacher-managed pair-work used in this research has the potential to make basic language learning routines enjoyable. This sense of satisfaction and enjoyment comes in large part from learners' L2 use under the mutual influence between group (class) dynamics and interrelationships among each pair. But although L2 use is at the apex of the pyramid-shaped representation of WTC, language teachers often do not have the capacity to provide opportunities for L2 communication beyond the classroom activities (MacIntyre et al., 1998), especially for beginning level learners. This study highlights the importance of awareness of group dynamics in the language classroom as well as L2 use opportunities by changing the interactional context even during the basic-foundation building period. The type of teacher-managed seating allocation in this research can enhance group dynamics and provide L2 use opportunities even among lower level learners of Japanese if they are offered appropriate scaffolding by the instructor.

Acknowledgements

The author is very appreciative of all the people who have helped him as well as motivated him to conduct this research and write this paper. Without their help and support, this paper would not have been made possible. First, he would like to thank Magnus Wilson at Beijing Language & Culture University who kindly proof-read his draft and provided him with his constructive feedback numerous times. He is also very thankful for all of his students of JPN101 Fall Semester 2010. He truly enjoyed teaching those wonderful, highly motivated, and hardworking students, who have helped him refine his teaching methodology and grow to be a better instructor of Japanese. It was also rewarding and gratifying for him to be able to witness tangible progress in their Japanese, his mother tongue, every day while researching their WTC.

References

- Asaoka, N. (2010). Is Learner Autonomy Manipulable? The Interactive Impact on Teacher- Allocated Partners. Paper presented at the 1st Teaching Japan Conference, Illinois.
- Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's Construct of Foreign Language Anxiety: The Case of Students of Japanese. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, (2), 155-168.
- Ajzen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, personality, and behavior*. Chicago: The Dorsey Press.
- Berger, C. R. & Calabrese, R. J. (1975). Some explorations in initial interaction and beyond: Toward a developmental theory of interpersonal communication. *Human Communication Research*, 1, 99-112.
- Burgoon, J. K. (1985). The Unwillingness-to-Communicate Scale: Development and Validation.
- Cartwright, D. (1968). The nature of group cohesiveness. In D. Cartwright & A. Zander (Eds.), *Group Dynamics: Research and theory* (3rd ed.). 91-109. New York: Harper & Row.
- Charos, C. (1994). *Personality and individual differences as predictors of second language communication: A casual analysis*. Unpublished Honors Thesis, University of Ottawa, Canada.
- Clément, R. (1978). Second language proficiency and acculturation: A investigation of the effects of language status and individual characteristics. *Journal of Language & Social Psychology*, 5, 271-290.
- Clément, R. (1980). Ethnicity, contact and communicative competence in a second language. In H. Giles, W. P. Robinson, & P. M. Smith (Eds.), *Language: Social psychological perspectives*. 147-154. Oxford, UK: Pergamon.
- Clément, R. (1986). Second language proficiency and acculturation: An investigation of the effects of language status and individual characteristics. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 5, 271-290.
- Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1994). Motivation, self-confidence, and group cohesion in the foreign language classroom. *Language Learning*, 44, 417-448.
- Clément, R., Gardner, R. C., & Symthe, P. C. (1977). Motivational variables in second language acquisition: A study of Francophones learning English. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 9, 123-133.
- Clément, R., Gardner, R. C., & Symthe, P. C. (1980). Social and individual factors in second language acquisition. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 12, 293-302.
- Clément, R. & Kruidenier, B. G. (1986). *The effect of context on the composition and role of orientations in second language acquisition*. Ottawa, Canada: International Centre for Research on Bilingualism.
- Donato, R. (1988). Beyond group: A psycholinguistic rationale for collective activity in second-language learning, Unpublished Ph. D Dissertation, University of Delaware, Newark.
- Dörnyei, Z. & Murphey, T. (2003). *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ehrman, M. E. & Dörnyei, Z. (1998). *Interpersonal dynamics in second language education: The visible and invisible classroom*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Evans, C. R. & Dion, K. L. (1991). Group cohesion and performance: A meta analysis. *Small Group Research*, 22, (7), 175-186.
- Festinger, L. (1950). Informal social communication. *Psychological Review*, 57, 271-282.
- Forsyth, D. R. (1990). *Group dynamics* (2nd ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B. & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 125-132.
- Koch, A. S. & Terrell, T. D. (1991). Affective reactions of foreign language students to natural approach activities and teaching techniques. In E. K. Horwitz & D. J. Young (Eds.), *Language anxiety: From theory and research to classroom implications*, 109-126. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Levinson, K. (1991). *Cooperation and dominance in second language learner interactions*. Paper presented at the Second Language Research Forum, Los Angeles.
- Long, M. & Porter, P. (1985). Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19, 207-228.
- MacIntyre, P. D. (1994). Variables underlying willingness to communicate: A casual analysis. *Communication Research Reports*, 11, 135-142.
- MacIntyre, P. D. & Charos, C. (1996). Personality, attitudes, and affect as predictors of second language communication. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 15, 3-26.
- MacIntyre, P.D., Clément, R., Dörnyei, Z. & Noels, K.A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal*, 82 (4), 545-562.
- MacIntyre, P. D. & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Methods and results in the study of anxiety in language learning: A review of the literature. *Language Learning*, 41, 85-117.
- MacIntyre, P. D. & Noels, K. A. (1994). *Communication apprehension, perceived competence, and actual competence in a second language*. Presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Psychological Association, Prenticton B. C.
- McGroarty, M. (1993). Cooperative learning and second language acquisition. In D. Holt, *Cooperative Learning*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics and ERIC Clearing house on Languages and Linguistics.
- McCroskey, J. C. & Baer, J. E. (1985). *Willingness to Communicate: The construct and its measurement*. Paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, Denver, CO.
- McCroskey, J. C. & Richmond, V. P. (1990). Willingness to Communicate: A Cognitive View. In M. Booth-Butterfield (Ed.), *Communication, Cognition, and Anxiety*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Ohta, A. S. (1995). Applying sociocultural theory to an analysis of learner discourse: learner-learner collaborative interaction in the zone of proximal development, *Applied Linguistics*, 6, (2), 93-121.
- Oxford, R. and Shearin, J.. (1994). Language Learning Motivation: Expanding the Theoretical Framework. *Modern Language Journal*, 78, (1), 12-28.
- Phillips, G. M. & McCroskey, J. C. (1982). Postscript: *Communication Education*, 31, 223.
- Richards, J. C. & Rodgers, T. S. (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Steinberg, F. A. & Horwitz, E. K. (1986). The effect of induced anxiety on the denotative and interpretive content of second language speech. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 131-136.
- Storch, N. (2002). Patterns of Interaction in ESL Pair Work, *Language Learning*, 52, (1), 119-158.
- Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small group. *Psychological Bulletin*, 63, (6), 384-399.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Yashima, T. (2002). Willingness to communicate in a second language: the Japanese EFL context. *Modern Language Journal*, 86, (1), 54-66.

APPENDIX

SURVEY RESULTS

Section 1 & Section 2

Q 1	very positive	positive	no difference	negative	very negative
	11 (9/2)	12 (5/7)	0	0	0
Q 2	always or almost always	often	sometimes	rarely	
	0	0	5 (3/2)	18 (11/7)	

QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS' COMMENTS

Section 1:

"With different partners, I can practice Japanese in a variety than just to spend with the same partner: while also increases my confidence in speaking in the public. Interacting with different people everyday is a good way to become friends, which will allow me to feel comfortable with everybody else."

"It helps to build confidence in language and encourages creativity with different partners. [I rarely felt comfortable because I] always make small pleasantries with friends outside of class sessions."

"Some people were more serious, versed, and prepared than others. Was still very fun studying and getting to learn classmates. Many of my good friends are now in Japanese because I feel so comfortable around them. Teacher kept facilitating light conversation."

"[It] helps to become used to using phrases and getting different kinds of answers. I became familiar with everyone. So was not uncomfortable. [It] helped [me] to be friendly with everyone."

"I think that having to interact with different people each day really helped me get to know everyone in the class and build class community. The frequency with which we interacted with partners made it not awkward or uncomfortable. I think it was a very good strategy."

"Having different partners allowed me to practice better because I didn't feel like I was repeating myself. It sometimes feels uncomfortable to talk before class because I'm not sure what to say."

"I felt that as a result of this (practice), I got to know everybody to a greater degree."

"Sitting this way helped me to practice my Japanese more and feel more comfortable with the other students in the class."

"I liked having different partners but if people get >>> [illegible] at the same time each day you end up with the same people."

"It was good not to have the same seat every day, you get to meet all of the classmates better. That (practice) was fine because everyone in the class is pretty comfortable with conversing before class."

"I can learn more – communicate more. Classmates become familiar with each other."

"(This practice) not only helped to get to know everyone but made repetition better because it was a new experience every time."

"It allowed us to interact with another and become comfortable with everyone."

Section 2:

"I think through taking with other partners, I was able to get closer with my classmates. Also, it was actually fun to talk to a different partner every class."

"It helped with my grammar and vocabulary whenever they corrected me. We got to know each other well enough not to be awkward with each other."

"I think that varied discussions with different classmates both helps me to learn how to react in different situations, allows both of us to improve our Japanese, and allowed the class to bond; a bonus."

"Different partners have different knowledge so partners with more knowledge help to correct and help with pronunciation. We learn from each other. [I sometimes felt uncomfortable] only when I did not know the other person."

"Usually I had the same partner, but when interacting with others, I am more conscious of my errors so I can correct myself or them. It just seems easy to talk to others in small pleasantries in Japanese. Once we learn more words, it's easier to talk."

"The small talk very helpful in understanding the language."

"When you talk with someone you are better, then you would help them and learn at the same time. And when you are worse with someone, you would be helped. Even though we didn't know each other, because we were learning the same thing, we would always have something to talk about. I never felt it was awkward except when I was talking with someone I did not match well."

"I love Japanese!"

"Talking to everyone helps."

