

Individual Paper Session 10
Motivation/Learner Strategy
Wednesday, July 5
11:15-11:45am

Impact of interaction with NS on linguistic and affective development

Taeko Imura
Griffith University
t.imura@griffith.edu.au

One of the ultimate goals of language learning is to be able to communicate successfully with native speakers (NSs). It has been perceived that interaction with NSs creates conditions that are facilitative for second language acquisition. Thus, for those who are learning the language, it seems ideal to have this opportunity. However, the opportunity to interact with NSs is scant for learners in a foreign-language learning environment unless the teacher incorporates interaction with NSs in the language course. Surprisingly, only a small number of studies have reported the effect of interaction with NSs on learners, yet their evidence has mainly been based on observation therefore far from conclusive.

This paper presents the results of a study which examined the impact of interaction with NSs on the development of affective factors and oral communication skills when foreign language learners had an opportunity to use the target language regularly outside the classroom as an integral part of a foreign language course. Forty students, who were studying Japanese at an intermediate level at an Australian university, participated in the study. During a semester, all students met for ten hours with their matched NS partners. The students completed questionnaires on perceived competence and anxiety measures and took listening and speaking tests before and after the ten-hour interaction. The effect of interaction with NS was examined by comparing the scores on the pre-test and post-test and written journals, which were collected after each meeting.

The results showed that interaction with NS had a significant positive impact not only on improving oral communication skills but also on increasing perceived competence and reducing anxiety. Analysis of written journals suggests that there is a strong association between affective development and improvement in oral communication skills. The study, therefore, has implications for foreign language pedagogy especially in developing oral communication skills.