

**Individual Paper Session 27**

**CALL**

**Thursday, July 6**

**1:45-2:15pm**

**Development of L2 sociolinguistic competence in email correspondence between learners of Japanese and their tutors**

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The use of email in second language learning has been found to bring positive learning outcomes (Stockwell & Harrington 2003; Warschauer 1997; Flórez-Estrada 1995). However, studies of the development of L2 sociolinguistic competence through email-mediated learning processes (e.g. Gray & Stockwell 1998) remain limited. This paper contributes to research on the acquisition of L2 pragmatics by discussing the sociolinguistic competence developed through email correspondence between learners of Japanese in Australia and their composition tutors in Japan. The paper focuses specifically on the negotiation of politeness in Japanese and the marking of politeness which is required at both morphological and discursive levels.

Correspondence between 14 student-tutor pairs over 13 weeks was monitored by project coordinators, who subsequently interviewed the students and the tutors about the project. The contents of the email messages were classified by topic, and speech function, and styles used in each topic/function group were analysed. We will illustrate negotiation of different types of footings, namely that of student-teacher and that of pen-pals, taken by the participants, and discuss the students' development of sociolinguistic competence in Japanese over time. The students were found to be conscious of ensuring an appropriate level of politeness and to be monitoring the level of politeness encoded in the language of their tutors as a limited but crucial resource for their email message composition.

The data also show that the student-facilitator pairs varied in the development of their relationship and the level of rapport reflected in their language use and style. In particular, the students' varied backgrounds and access to Japanese used in naturalistic settings seem to have affected negotiation of social relationships.