

# Patterns of Negotiation of Meaning in English as Second Language Learners' Interactions

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## Abstract

**Problem Statement:** The Internet as a tool that presents many challenges has drawn the attention of researchers in the field of education and especially foreign language teaching. However, there has been a lack of information about the true nature of these environments. In recent years, determination of the patterns of negotiation of meaning as a way to delve in these environments has grown in popularity.

**Purpose of the Study:** The current study was an effort to determine the types and frequencies of negotiation of meaning in the interaction of Malaysian students as English as a second language learners and, furthermore, to compare findings of this study with correspondent previous studies. To this end, two research questions were posed for this study: (a) what types of negotiation of meaning emerge in text-based synchronous CMC environments? and (b) Are there any differences between findings of this study and previous studies in terms of negotiation of meaning functions in this environment?

**Method:** Participants of this study were fourteen English as second language learners at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). They were involved in a series of discussions over selected short stories. Analysis of students' chat logs was carried out through computer - mediated discourse analysis (CMDA).

**Findings and Results:** This study yielded 10 types of functions in negotiation of meaning, which are clarification request, confirmation, confirmation check, correction or self correction, elaboration, elaboration request, reply clarification or definition, reply confirmation, reply elaboration, and vocabulary check. Furthermore, findings of this study indicated that students negotiated with an average of 2.10 per 100 words. According to the findings of this study, the most - frequently used functions were confirmation, elaboration, and elaboration request and the least frequently used functions were vocabulary check, reply confirmation, and reply clarification. The findings of this study were in line with the findings of previous studies in that the proficiency of the participants influences the amount of negotiation for meaning strategies that occur.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Findings of this study will give insight to teachers, learners, and researchers in the field of SLA and will help to sustain their liveliness and curiosity. Taking into account the current situation of Malaysia as the country that host so many international students from all over the world, future studies of these kinds can focus on examining the factor of proficiency in different dyads and its effect on students' interactions in terms of negotiation of meaning.

**Keywords:** Computer – mediated communication (CMC); computer–mediated discourse analysis (CMDA); negotiation of meaning, teaching English as a Second Language; Language learning

## 1. Introduction

A decade after the advent of high-speed network connections, connection among people all over the world has become very easy through computers and other mobile technologies. Advances in information and computer technologies (ICTs) have sparked new initiatives in integrating these advances into language learning and teaching. The form of this use is still getting more advance and more complicated in a way that it has become an inseparable part of people's lives. The astonishingly rapid pace of advances in Internet – related technologies have concurrently moved forward the field of computer – assisted language learning (CALL) which is defined as by Lluna-Mateu (2006) as “A new line of L2

research that is concerned with studying the practical, pedagogical applications of computer technologies and how their implementation may be advantageous in fostering L2 learning/acquisition” (p.9). The highest level of interactivity is characterized by different mediums of CMC which includes E- mail (asynchronous communication) and on - line chat (synchronous communication). CMC is defined by Romiszowski and Mason (2004) as “the process by which people create, exchange, and perceive information using networked telecommunication systems that facilitate encoding, transmitting, and decoding messages” (p.389). Computer - mediated communication (CMC) has extended the boundaries that surpass time and location for language learning and teaching. Akayoglu and Altun (2009 ) define CMC as “any form of communication between two or more individuals who interact and/or influence each other via separate computers through the internet or a network connection, using social software” (p. 292). Highest level of interactivity is characterized by different mediums of CMC which includes E- mail (asynchronous communication) and on - line chat (synchronous communication). Interaction and negotiation of meaning have been given special attention as essential elements of language acquisition in SLA (Patterson & Trabeldo, 2006). Pica (1994) defines negotiation as “the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility” (p. 494). In other words, in the process of interaction as problems in communication arise, the learners modify their speech linguistically in an effort toward making it comprehensible. According to Pica (1994), negotiation data does not reveal any information as to whether or not learners perceive discrepancies between their production and a target model. However, these negotiations can provide learners with opportunities to attend to L2 form and to relationships of form and meaning. Since negotiation of meaning is closely related to comprehensibility, a crucial term in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1985), it has been given a special status in language learning and teaching. This can be manifested in learners’ attempt to make their input comprehensible by repeating a message, adjusting its syntax, changing the vocabulary, or modifying its form and meaning. According to Gass (2003) the type of interaction that has been referred to as negotiation of meaning is characterized with what is believed to be optimal conditions for language acquisition that is comprehensible input and modified output. Up until recently, focus of the most studies has been on the outcome of this interaction as to whether or not it leads to learning (Bitchener, 2004; Leahy, 2001; Luan & Sappathy, 2011). In recent years, studies have made a huge turn to analyze context of interaction regardless of whether or not it leads to learning (Jepson, 2005; Patterson & Trabeldo, 2006; Schwienhorst, 2004; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002). In other words, emergence of online environments as a pedagogical tool has raised the issue of analyzing these environments and written discourse analysis of these environments has drawn the attention of so many scholars as one of the ways to delve into true nature of these Internet and technology mediated environments. In other word, written discourse of these environments has been examined from three perspectives of social presence (Akayoglu, Altun, & Stevens, 2009; Reysen, Lloyd, Katzarska-Miller, Lemker, & Foss, 2010), turn taking (Fitze, 2006; Kern, 2006), and negotiation of meaning (Akayoglu & Altun, 2009 ; Bitchener, 2004). The concept of social presence is defined by Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, and Fung (2010) as “the ability of learners to project themselves socially and emotionally as ‘real’ people into a community of learners.” According to Table 1, Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, and Archer (2007) proposed taxonomy for analysis of students’ interactions in terms of social presence that was consisted of three categories of affective, interactive, and cohesive and respective indicators:

Table 1. Taxonomy for social presence

<b>Category</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Affective	Expression of emoticons Use of humor Self-disclosure
Interactive	Continuing a thread Quoting from others’ messages Referring explicitly to others’ messages Asking questions Complimenting, expressing appreciation Expressing agreement
Cohesive	Vocatives Addresses or refers to the group using inclusive pronouns Phatics, salutations

Additionally, examining these environments in terms of negotiated patterns has been crucial for language learning and has consequently been the focus of so many studies. As a result, “ethnographic and discourse- analytic methods” with an emphasis on the broader context in which the learning takes place...” (Chapelle, 2004, p. 594) have achieved popularity in finding patterns on the Net. This paper was an attempt to contribute to the understanding of negotiation of meaning in a text-based synchronous computer-mediated communication environment and examine whether codes and patterns emerged in the interactions of the participants of this study will be in correspondence with the findings of other adult studies. To this end, two research questions were examined for this study:

1. What are the types and frequencies of negotiation of meaning functions in English as second language learners' interactions?
2. What are the differences, if any, between the findings of this study and previous studies in terms of negotiation of meaning functions?

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants

The participants consisted of 14 undergraduate students from the department of Language and Humanities Education at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). All 14 students were second - year students majoring in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and were between the ages of 21 and 23. The participants were predominantly of Malay, Chinese, and Indian ethnicity, and spoke English as their second language. They were divided into three groups of four or five each. The reason for dividing these students was to avoid overcrowded chat sessions and the threats that it may have on following smooth flow of conversation. At the beginning of this study, participants were given information regarding the study excluding the part that was related to the issue under observation- negotiation of meaning. This was done to minimize the threat that would affect the results of the study if the issue of negotiation of meaning was disclosed. In addition, the aim of this study, the time schedule, and the stories to talk about, the place, and the data collection procedure were described in detail.

### 2.2 Material

Five short stories were chosen and assigned for the study. They include: "Love At Long Last," "The Luckiest Mistake," "The Kid Stays in the Picture," "Ten Indians," and "The Old Man at the Bridge." These short stories were chosen as the topic of discussion for the participants of this study because it was thought that they were not too long and their reading would not be an extra burden for the participants in this study who provided their cooperation out of their regular class time. Furthermore, the researcher of this study followed previous studies with regard to the assigning of stories with the themes of love, marriage, and being envious of friends on the grounds that they are open to discussions and talk for students of that age.

### 2.3 Method of Analysis

Computer – mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) was a response to the growing interest in CMC provided by the internet and a consequent desire to understand and maximize the effects of this new medium (Herring, 2002). CMDA was first coined by Herring in 1995. Ethnographic observation, surveys, interviews, or other methods may be used to support CMDA and this kind of analysis may also involve some qualitative and quantitative analysis. However, analysis of logs of verbal interaction (characters, words, utterances, messages, exchanges, threads, archives, etc.) constitutes main and core part of definition for CMDA. That is, any analysis of CMC follows a purely linguistic approach and can be interpreted based on language and language use in these environments . According to Herring, four domains or levels of language that is structure, meaning, social behavior, and interaction, can be the subject of CMDA and the latter includes turn-taking, topic development, and other means of negotiating interactive exchanges. This analysis approach is applied to identify how discourse patterns emerge in participants' negotiations of meaning in synchronous (simultaneous) text-based CMC.

In a broad sense, CMDA is based on the same theoretical assumptions that underlie linguistic discourse. First of all, recurrent patterns characterize discourse which may be produced consciously and unconsciously; in the latter case a speaker may not be aware of what she is doing, and thus direct observation may produce more reliable generalizations than a self-report of his behavior. A basic goal of discourse analysis is to identify patterns in discourse that are demonstrably present, but that may not be immediately obvious to the casual observer or to the discourse participants themselves. Second, it is assumed that discourse involves speaker choices. These choices are not conditioned by purely linguistic considerations, but rather reflect cognitive (Chafe, 1994) and social (Sacks, 1984) factors. In other words, discourse analysis can provide information about both non-linguistic and linguistic phenomena. The third assumption, exclusively related to CMDA, emphasizes the possible role of technological features of CMC in shaping computer-mediated discourse.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Researcher of the study divided students into three small groups to facilitate online discussions. For a period of 5 sessions, 45 minute each, students involved in a series of negotiation over selected short stories. Students met the instructor throughout the week except Thursdays, weekends, and public holidays for the duration of the study. All sessions were held in three computer laboratories (A, B, C) at the faculty and the groups for this study involved in online text-based chats through Yahoo messenger, free software. Tasks chosen for this study were based on previous studies and believed to promote interaction between participants in this study. The researcher of the study was present throughout the discussion sessions as a facilitator and topic initiator. Semi-structured questions were prepared for each session to maintain the smooth flow of conversation. Stories that were used for five consecutive sessions were "Love At Long Last," "The Old Man at the Bridge," "The Luckiest Mistake," "Ten Indians," and "The Kid Stays in the Picture" respectively and they were sent to the students' yahoo account one session ahead of time. Discussions that students had over the short stories were mostly related to characters, plots, settings in the stories among many others. Frequencies and types of the problems, mostly related to online connection and students' arrival for the sessions held were not major concerns and the researcher was able to overcome these problems.

Students in the control group started their discussions over short stories that were requirement of the course they were taking and were required to discuss the topics for deeper understanding and analysis. They include: "Love At Long Last," "The Luckiest Mistake," "The Kid Stays in the Picture," "Ten Indians," and "The Old Man at the Bridge." These short stories were appropriate as the topic of discussion for the participants of this study in the control group because they were not too long and their reading was not an extra burden for the participants in this study. Furthermore, the topics of the study were mostly related to themes of love and marriage which are usually open to discussions and talk for students of that age. All prompts to stimulate discussion on topics were written by the researcher. To illustrate, regarding the reading on "Ten Indian," chat room questions were as follows:

1. How does story emphasizes the importance of women in families?
2. What is the theme of the story?
3. Does the title have anything to do with the theme?
4. How is "Fourth of July" related to theme of the story?

The following excerpts from students' interactions illustrate how they negotiated for meaning:

- 1 Aahil: Fourth of July - guys any idea what is this
- 2 I mean, is this symbolize smthg ?
- 3 Lee: America's Independence Day?
- 4 Lee: symbolizes freedom I guess
- 5 Dayang: I think so...
- 6 Aahil: Yes, it's true
- 7 Yana: But how it is related to the discrimination?
- 8 Aahil: Maybe a lot of discrimination happened
- 9 to achieve the independence
- 10 Yana: the message here is, although America already got its independence
- 11 long time ago but discrimination toward other natives is still there
- 12 Yana: What do you guys think?
- 13 Aahil: Yeah, I think I agree with you Lee
- 14 Aahil: what is the meaning of prudence?
- 15 Yana: The discrimination actually occurs all around the world
- 16 Dayang: Why did you say that Lee? Any evidence in the story?
- 17 Yana: If I am not mistaken, we can see the reaction of Mrs. Garner
- 18 when she knew that one of the boy having affection on the native girl
- 19 Dayang: I don't know the reason why some people do this?
- 20 Lee: I think it may have something to do with both history and pride.
- 21 Yana: May be they are too proud on themselves
- 22 and can't accept the others on how they are

In the above excerpt which is a part of students' interactions on their topic for the fourth session, students' interactions mostly revolve around the negotiation of content, for Example in line 1, Aahil trigger a negotiation sequence around the content by asking about what Fourth of July symbolizes which advances by embedding other negotiation sequence within still ongoing negotiation in line 7 as Yana request for elaborating on how independence relates to discrimination. Following lines (line 8, 9, 10, and 11) demonstrate how students negotiate their way out of their problem with content by asking for confirmation, confirmation check, elaboration, elaboration request, and vocabulary request. Consequently their involvement in interaction yields interesting responses; as for example, Yana in lines 10 and 11 believes that America is still suffering from discrimination despite its independence. However, students' interactions in control group were suffering seriously from the absence of any negotiations over grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation. By the same token, Aahil's utterance in line 14 to ask for the meaning of "prudence" triggers a problem with vocabulary which remains unattended and ignored.

After having finished the discussion sessions, the transcribed chat logs which were usually in HTML format were extracted from the history section of yahoo messenger and then copied and pasted to a word processing document. They are then organized according to the number of sessions in order to facilitate the analysis. Parts of the chat logs that were indicative of information about time of turns, joining, and leaving the conference were omitted and the rest including the opening, body, and closing parts of the chats were considered for analysis. Furthermore, students' names were

replaced with numbers in order to stick to the principle of confidentiality. Finally the organized data were entered into Qualitative Research Data Analysis Computer Software, Hyper Research.

#### 2.4 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by means of CMDA. The novelty of environments and platforms on the Internet necessitate the new methods and approaches to discourse analysis and a new term, CMDA, which came on the scene in 1995 (Herring, 2001). By means of this approach, CMC environments were analyzed to better understand the discourse within these environments.

#### 2.5 Coding Procedure

During the discourse analysis process, taxonomies which were developed and adapted by Patterson and Trabeldo (2006), alongside four categories added by Akayoglu and Altun (2009) were used for the coding process. These taxonomies are presented in Table 2 and illustrated with data from this study in Table 3. These codes were applied to the data in this study.

Table 2. The Taxonomy Prepared by Patterson and Trabeldo (2006)

<b>Functions of Negotiation of meaning</b>	
Clarification request	Confirmation *
Comprehension check	Elaboration request *
Confirmation request	Reply elaboration *
Correction/ self – correction	Elaboration
	Reply clarification / definition
	Reply comprehension
	Reply confirmation
	Reply vocabulary
	Vocabulary check

\* Functions of negotiation of meaning added by Akayoglu and Altun (2009)

Table 3. Functions of Negotiation of Meaning: Explanations and Examples

<b>Function</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Example</b>
Clarification request	are made by the listener to clarify what the speaker has said and include statements such as “I don’t understand,” wh- questions, yes/no questions, and tag questions.	34: what was the old man reprehensive of? 34: I mean symbolically 2: my idea is peace 26: <i>really? The old man symbolizes peace??</i>
Confirmation	are also made by the listener to establish that the preceding utterance has been heard and understood correctly. They include repetition accompanied by rising intonation.	7: ...I think she mean that her father wants Jacque to marry the guy she meets in Japan...she did it for the sake of the father... 34: but there was no mention of father force 1: <i>yeah there is no mention of a father</i>
Confirmation check	Asking for confirmation of a previously made statement to be sure he or she has understood correctly.	5: Fourth of July - guys any idea what is this, I mean, is this symbolize smthg ? 26: <i>America's Independence Day?</i> 26: symbolizes freedom I guess 2: I think so..
Correction or self correction	Correcting an error made by another speaker or self-correction of one’s own error.	5: we need to be passion on what we're doing 5: Like what Steven did 2: I agree 26: <i>passionate*</i>

Elaboration	Elaborating the meaning of a previous statement no matter whether the previous statement belongs to him or her.	18: Maybe she meant that she is a woman, and it is her duty to get married, raise children and take care of a family. 18: Besides, it is a must for a woman to get married before they reach 30s. 18: <i>Well, I just thought that way.</i> 27: I disagree
Elaboration request	Requesting elaboration if he or she does not have an idea about the speaker's utterance, and requesting extra information.	5: <i>it's started about the Indians. Who are they?</i> 2: did you mean the Indians?? 5: yeah, very confusing
Reply clarification	Clarifying his or her previous statement as a result of request (clarification request).	18: wasn't it the truck is for the old man so that they will be sent far away from here 3: to evacuate those who were left behind 27: to take the old man? 3: <i>like the old man</i>
Reply confirmation	Confirming a statement when someone requests confirmation with expressions like "yes," "OK," "you are right."	18: You have to agree that society during early 60s is more conservative to compare than early 2000, right? 3: <i>indedd</i> 3: indeed* 34: in what aspects please dear Aisha?
Reply elaboration	Elaborating his or her own statement to make it clear as a result of request (elaboration request).	20: parents decision is very important ... 2: Maybe... 2: but what if they made the wrong decision? 20: <i>if they made the wrong decision then they have to face the consequences not the others..</i>
Vocabulary check	Checking whether the other participants know the meaning of vocabulary or not.	20: Prudence...is it????? 26: I think that can be true 0020 and yes it's Prudence 5: what is the meaning of prudence?

### 2.6 Intercoder Reliability

In order to ensure the reliability of coding, 25% of the entire data was coded by two coders independently where the coding taxonomy was considered and taken into account. The coders agreed on 88% of their coding, suggesting that the data were coded with strong consistency.

### 3. Findings and Results

Two research questions were asked in this study. One of them is related to the types and frequencies of negotiation of meaning functions, and the second one is related to the differences and similarities between findings of this study and previous studies in terms of negotiation of meaning functions. The number of words that was analyzed was 24980 and the number of words related to negotiation of meaning was found to be 5330. As Table 4 shows, among the data for this study, 10 types of negotiation of meaning functions were observed; they included clarification request, confirmation, confirmation check, correction or self correction, elaboration, elaboration request, reply clarification or definition, reply confirmation, reply elaboration, and vocabulary check.

Table 4. Types and Frequencies of the Negotiation of Meaning Functions

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Total	Percentage
Confirmation	35	22	38	14	31	140	26.61
Elaboration	31	27	27	3	25	113	21.48
Elaboration request	28	16	18	8	12	82	15.59
Confirmation check	7	20	18	23	15	83	15.78
Correction or self correction	8	9	13	3	17	50	9.50
Reply elaboration	13	5	5	2	3	28	5.32
Clarification request	6	4	2	3	0	15	2.85
Reply clarification or definition	5	2	1	2	0	10	1.90
Reply confirmation	2	1	0	0	0	3	0.57
Vocabulary check	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.38
Comprehension check	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reply comprehension	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vocabulary request	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reply vocabulary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	135	108	122	57	104	526	100

In addition, data obtained revealed that, confirmation was seen as the most frequent type of negotiation of meaning with a percentage of 26.61, Elaboration was the second most frequent one. This shows that elaboration and confirmation are the two most preferred utterances by the participants. Finally, the third most frequently used type was elaboration request. The least frequently used types are comprehension check, reply comprehension, reply vocabulary, and vocabulary request. They are not observed in the data of this study. Since there are no cases of comprehension check, reply comprehension, reply vocabulary, and vocabulary request, the other least frequently used categories are given here as the least frequently used ones. The least frequent categories are vocabulary check (.38), reply confirmation (.57), and reply clarification or definition (1.90).

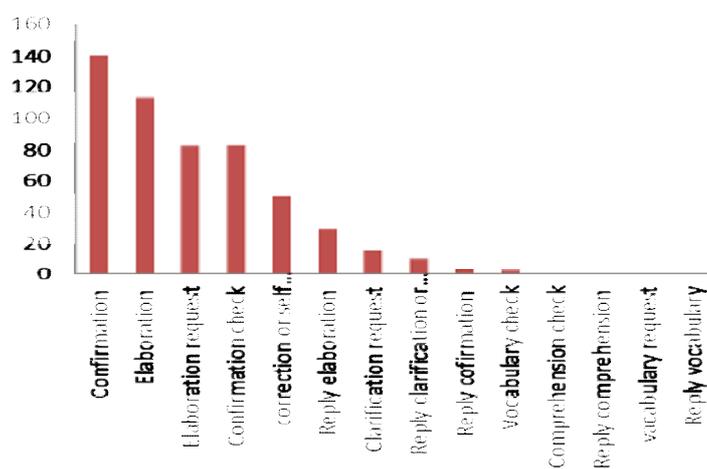


Figure 1. Negotiation of meaning functions in students' interactions

Figure 1 also illustrates that, most frequently used function for negotiation of meaning in the interactions of students was confirmation with a percentage of 26.61. Elaboration was the second most frequent one with a percentage of 21.48. This shows that students used confirmation and elaboration functions frequently to discuss their problems with understanding and maintain smooth flow of interaction. Finally, the third most frequently used type is confirmation check with a percentage of 15.78. Four functions of comprehension check, reply comprehension, reply vocabulary, and vocabulary request were not observed in the data of this study. In order to answer the second research question about the differences and similarities between the amount of negotiation of meaning in English as second language learners' discussions and the findings of previous studies, as shown in Table 5, the amount of negotiation of meaning per 100 words were computed.

Table 5. Percentage of Negotiation of Meaning Functions per Sessions and per 100 Words

	Negotiation of meaning functions	Number of words analyzed	Percentage of negotiation of meaning functions per sessions	Negotiation of meaning functions per 100 words
Session 1	135	5123	2.63	2.63
Session 2	108	4805	2.24	2.24
Session 3	122	6606	1.84	1.84
Session 4	57	2360	2.41	2.41
Session 5	104	6086	1.70	1.70
Total	526	24980	2.10	2.10

As can be seen from Table 5, average negotiation of meaning functions per 100 words for five sessions were 2.63, 2.24, 1.84, 2.41, and 1.70 respectively. In total, students were involved in negotiations at an average 2.10 per 100 words.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The first research question of this study was related to the frequencies and functions of negotiation of meaning. This study yielded 10 types of functions in negotiation of meaning, which are clarification request, confirmation, confirmation check, correction or self correction, elaboration, elaboration request, reply clarification or definition, reply confirmation, reply elaboration, and vocabulary check. Confirmation was found to be the most frequent negotiated function. This can be explained from a social point of view in which negotiation needs to be balanced by the smooth flow of even exchange. That is, too many impasses and repairs create uneasy social relationships. Too many clarification questions can be downright annoying (Pica, 1994). In this study, four categories of reply comprehension, comprehension check, vocabulary request, and reply vocabulary were not observed which is partially in congruent with the findings of Akayoglu and Altun (2009) and Jepson (2005) in that the occurrence of negotiation of meaning functions can be influenced by high proficiency level of students and functions related to vocabulary, comprehension check, and reply comprehension are usually absent in native like students' interactions. Accordingly, Schwienhorst (2004) found that more proficient second language speakers display features which are more similar to the characteristics of NS- NS dyads than NS- NNS dyads. The second research question for this study examined the findings of this study with the previous studies in terms of types and frequencies of negotiation of meaning. Findings of this study indicated that students negotiated with an average of 2.10 per 100 words. This is in line with the findings of Patterson and Trabeldo (2006). In their study, tandem partners negotiated more often in Spanish chats with an average of 2.99 per 100 words than English chats with an average of 2.00 per 100 words. In other words, the factor of proficiency has been found to be closely related with the amount of negotiating for meaning that occurs and the findings of various studies of adult learners indicate that dyads of NNS-NNS outperform NNS-NS dyads in terms of the amount of negotiation for meaning (Varonis & Gass, 1985; Yule & MacDonald, 1990). Furthermore, learners who were paired in both NNS-NNS and NNS-NS dyads negotiated for meaning more than their NS-NS counterparts (Ellis, 1985; Wesche & Ready, 1985). Findings of other studies also confirm the effect of learner's L2 proficiency on the amount of negotiation for meaning that occurs (Ellis, 1985; Porter, 1986; Shortreed, 1993). To elaborate, it can be said that much more interaction between NS-NNS dyads than between NS-NS dyads was due to misunderstandings between language partners and subsequent linguistic negotiations and modifications in order to resolve misunderstandings. A possible indication of the high language abilities of the English as Second Language students can also be seen in the absence of any vocabulary request and comprehension check and the low frequency of functions like vocabulary check with an average of 0.38

The findings of this study bear significant pedagogical implications: In the light of the findings of this study teachers may emphasize the use of the internet by their students in the process of second or foreign language learning. Being aware of the characteristics of these environments in terms of the use of functions like clarification, confirmation, and elaboration, reply clarification, reply confirmation, and reply elaboration, students can build on their scaffolding within

their zone of proximal development in the process of second of foreign language learning. However, caution should be exerted in interpretation of the findings of this study due to the lack of studies of the similar nature and it should be bore in mind that any comparison with existing data in SLA is of tentative nature. Future studies in Malaysia can focus on finding the patters of negotiation of meaning in other modes of CMC like voice chat and video chat and their findings can be compared with previous studies in literature. Furthermore, proficiency as a factor that influences the process of negotiation of meaning can be the focus of future studies; participants of this study were all advance second language learners, and studies with participants of elementary and intermediate levels of proficiency can yield different results. Taking into account the current situation of Malaysia as the country that host so many international students from all over the world, researchers can examine different dyads to find out the effect that factor of proficiency can have on students' interactions in terms of negotiation of meaning.

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