ENHANCING NEGOTIATION OF MEANING THROUGH TASK FAMILIARITY USING SUBTITLED VIDEOS IN AN ONLINE TBLL ENVIRONMENT

Abdurrahman ARSLANYILMAZ, Ph.D.
Youngstown State University
Assistant Professor, Computer Science & Information Systems
Meshel Hall, 317 Youngstown, OH 44555
Email: aarslanyilmaz@ysu.edu

PEDERSEN, Susan. Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Educational Technology Program
Department of Educational Psychology
Harrington Tower, 643 Texas A&M University
College Station, TX 77840
Email: spedersen@coe.tamu.edu

ABSTRACT
This study examines the effects of task familiarity through the use of subtitled videos on negotiation of meaning in an online task-based language learning (TBLL) environment. It explores the amount of negotiation of meaning produced by non-native speakers (NNSs) aimed at improving input comprehension to enhance second language acquisition. Ten NNS-NNS dyads collaboratively completed 4 communicative tasks using an online TBLL environment specifically designed for this study and a chat tool in WebCT-Vista. Five dyads were provided with subtitled videos prior to task completion; the remaining 5 dyads completed tasks without seeing the videos. The amount of negotiation of meaning was calculated via the negotiation of meaning sequences model developed by Gass and Varonis (1985) and revised for online communication by Smith (2003). The data from the chat-scripts showed that NNSs who were familiarized with tasks engaged in more negotiation of meaning as compared to their peers who were not.

INTRODUCTION

Online TBLL and Negotiation of Meaning

In recent years, research has shown Task-based Language Learning (TBLL) to be an effective approach in second language acquisition (Doughty & Pica, 1986; Ellis, 2001; Ellis & He, 1999; Ellis, Tanaka, & Yamazaki, 1994; Mackey, 1999; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Rulon & McCreary, 1986; Skehan, 1996; Willis, 1996; Willis, 2000). In TBLL, students focus on task completion, not on the study of a de-contextualized linguistic structure or a list of vocabulary items (Doughty & Long, 2003). The emphasis in TBLL is not on learning the language or form per se, but on engagement in the authentic, pragmatic, contextualized, and functional use of language.

As TBLL has gained respect, researchers have attempted to incorporate this approach into online classes, hoping to bring the strengths of TBLL to distance learners. Some of these benefits were found to be that it forced students to be active and involved in the task completion process promoting a fertile learning environment in addition to be fun, helpful, and/or conducive to improving learners' communication skills (Blake, 2000), that it offered more equal interactions without turn taking competition (Kitade, 2000), that students were able to scroll back and re-think what was discussed and re-formulate their own utterances before sending them (Kitade, 2000), that the web was making each individual much more accountable because all the evidence of participation was there (Sengupta, 2001), that students externalized their thinking through chat tools by means of writing, drawing, sketching, and sharing the artifacts with their peers and/or tutor (Zähner, Fauverge, & Wang, 2000), that task-based synchronous online communication could foster the negotiation of meaning (Pellettieri, 2000), that students were able to construct multiple perspectives on an issue and talk about critical subjects, such as alcohol, race, class, and gender, without any problem, and comfortably through online discussions (Müller-Hartmann, 2000), that the quantity of participation in online discussion increased as compared to face to face discussions (Müller-Hartmann, 2000), that it increased students' memorization of the abstract words (Tsou, Wang, & Li, 2002), and that students did not feel stressed during online communication (Beuvois, 1996; Chen, Belkada, Okamoto, 2004; Warshauer, 1995-96; Strambi & Bouvet, 2003).

As with all communicative language learning approaches, input comprehension during TBLL is essential to effective learning. Students must understand each other in order to complete the task posed in TBLL, overcoming the confusion caused by a lack of adequate vocabulary, usage errors, grammatical mistakes, and deficiency of cues and clues (through gestures, facial expressions, time, body language, and objects) in the online environment (Sengupta, 2001).

In order to achieve input comprehension, students must negotiate meaning; that is, they must modify their input until shared comprehension is achieved (Ellis, 1985; Long, 1996; Long & Porter, 1985). A rich body of research shows that increased negotiation of meaning results in improvements in input comprehension (Chaudron 1983; Long, 1985; Pica, 1987; Pica & Doughty, 1985; Pica, Young, & Doughty, 1987; Rulon & McCreary, 1986) and there is considerable evidence for a causal relationship between comprehensible input and second language acquisition (Ellis, 1985; Gass & Madden, 1985; Krashen, 1985; Long, 1981; Long, 1983).

There have been numerous efforts to examine the effect of task familiarity on negotiation of meaning. However, this research has been less than promising. Robinson (2001) compared negotiated interaction between a map task which students had prior knowledge of and another map task which students did not have prior knowledge of. For both tasks, one of the students was asked to give directions from point A to point B on the maps, and the other student was asked to listen and draw the routes described by the other student on the same maps with only point A marked on. Robinson reported that students provided with unfamiliar map got involved in more negotiated interaction (more confirmation checks as a measure of negotiated interactions used in the study) than did students given familiar map. Hardy and Moore (2004) found that students who were *not* given content support to familiarize them to the task generated significantly more negotiation of meaning sequences during task completion than students who were. These researchers have suggested that task familiarity may reduce the need for negotiation of meaning. Gass and Varonis (1985, p. 150) argued that "when interlocutors share a common background and language, the turn-taking sequence was likely to proceed smoothly without enough negotiation exchanges." Robinson (2001) argued that unfamiliar tasks are more cognitively demanding than familiar tasks, resulting in an increased need for negotiation of meaning. However, the research on task familiarity shows some inconsistency, with Yule, Powers and McDonald (1992) reporting no significant difference between groups in a study in which the experimental group had access to sample transcripts of similar tasks and the control group did not. Given the limited research and inconclusive results on this topic, additional studies are needed to investigate the effect of task-familiarity in the pre-task phase of TBLL.

Subtitled Videos

In this study, we attempted to increase students' task-familiarity through the use of subtitled videos. Task familiarity through observing subtitled videos helps students enhance task-familiarity by improving their memory as it relates to the knowledge of the assigned tasks. "Our memories change dynamically in the way they store information by abstracting significant generalizations from our experiences and storing the exceptions to those generalizations" (Schank, 1999, p. 2) and as we have more experiences, our memory structures are modified based on the new experiences by adding them to a general structure if there is a related one, otherwise, by creating a new general structure from the new experiences. By observing similar tasks, students fill gaps in their linguistic resources by attaching representations of experiences of native speakers that students have not had into their own memory. As students enhance their linguistic resource to draw on available prior knowledge about the assigned tasks, they will not spend much effort to retrieve information from their memory; consequently, more attentional and memory resources during task completion will be allocated to formulate language needed in order to express their ideas, development feature of the tasks, and negotiation of meaning (Ellis, 2003, Robinson, 2005; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 2000). Observing authentic subtitled videos allowed students to see a model of successful interaction, to be exposed to useful vocabulary and sentence structures within the context of an authentic situation while maintaining the need for them to generate their own original dialog. Swain (2000) stated that students who watch native speakers completing a similar task to their assigned tasks will be motivated to pay attention to form so as to produce language like native speakers. Also, observing similar tasks helps students reduce cognitive processing load, facilitate conversational development, and make things less threatening (Skehan, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 2000).

Each subtitled video segment presents a short dialog between two people engaged in a task similar to the one that students will address during the TBLL activity. These videos were embedded in the software and were available before students began the activity. Students could play the videos as many times as they wanted, pausing and reviewing at will and studying both the oral pronunciation and subtitles as long as they wished. In this way, we sought to take advantage of the affordances of the online environment, namely that it offers access to and learner control over rich media resources. We chose to show people engaged in similar tasks rather than the same tasks that students would address in the TBLL activity in order to maintain the cognitive complexity of the task. Using the same tasks in these videos might have encouraged students simply to replicate the dialog in their own discussion of the task.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, we used subtitled videos to enhance students' familiarity with the task they would address in an online TBLL activity. Our goal was to increase their task-familiarity with the vocabulary and sentence structures that would be immediately useful to them, but to do so in a way that did not reduce the cognitive complexity of the task so that they would involved in more negotiation of meaning during task completion. The research question we addressed was therefore

> Do non-native speakers with access to subtitled videos produce more negotiation of meaning than non-native speakers without access to subtitled videos in an online TBLL?

METHODS

Participants

Participants in this study were 20 non-native intermediate-level students in an English language institute in the southern United States. They were recruited from two sections of an intermediate level composition course, and had been taking other intermediate-level English courses for the previous three months. They represented a variety of first language backgrounds, including Korean, Mandarin, Arabic, Spanish, and Japanese. They ranged in age from 18 to 29 with the majority in their early twenties.

Participants were placed in the intermediate level composition course by the institute at the beginning of the semester based on a combination of their scores on TOEFL (Test of English Foreign Language), ELPE (English Language Proficiency Exam administered by Texas A&M University), and two in-house assessments: an interview with the director and a composition test (K. Clark, personal communication, November 7, 2006).

Online TBLL Environment

An online TBLL environment was developed for this research study (See Figure 1). The environment was designed to present four tasks for students to complete in dyads. The control button labeled "Your Task" was available to all dyads, and was used to display the instructions for each task. Subtitled videos in the environment were available only to the experimental group through the "Similar Tasks" button. The environment did not have an embedded chat tool; therefore, dyads used the chat tool provided by WebCT-Vista to complete the assigned tasks.

Figure 1. Main framework of the online TBLL environment and similar tasks.

Tasks. Four tasks, "Compare the Maps", "Christmas Break Trip", "Gifts for a Family", and "Garage Sale", were designed using the topology by Pica, Kanagy, & Falodun (1993) because it is considered one of the most informative typologies within the interactionist framework (Smith, 2003). In "Compare the Maps," (see Figure 2) both students in a dyad were provided with the same map containing 15 buildings, six of which are clickable, along with trees, roads, and vehicles. Upon clicking one of the six clickable buildings, one activity in each building is displayed. Three of the displayed activities are the same for both members of the dyad, and three of them are different. Descriptions of the same activities are (1) a person repairing his TV, (2) a lady studying, and (3) a child feeding her dog. Descriptions of different activities are (1) a child playing with two different toys in two different ways, (2) a lady shopping for clothes versus another lady shopping for notebooks, (3) two teams playing basketball versus three people running. Dyads were asked to identify the similarities and differences between the activities occurring in the six buildings. Therefore, partners must exchange information in order to complete the task.

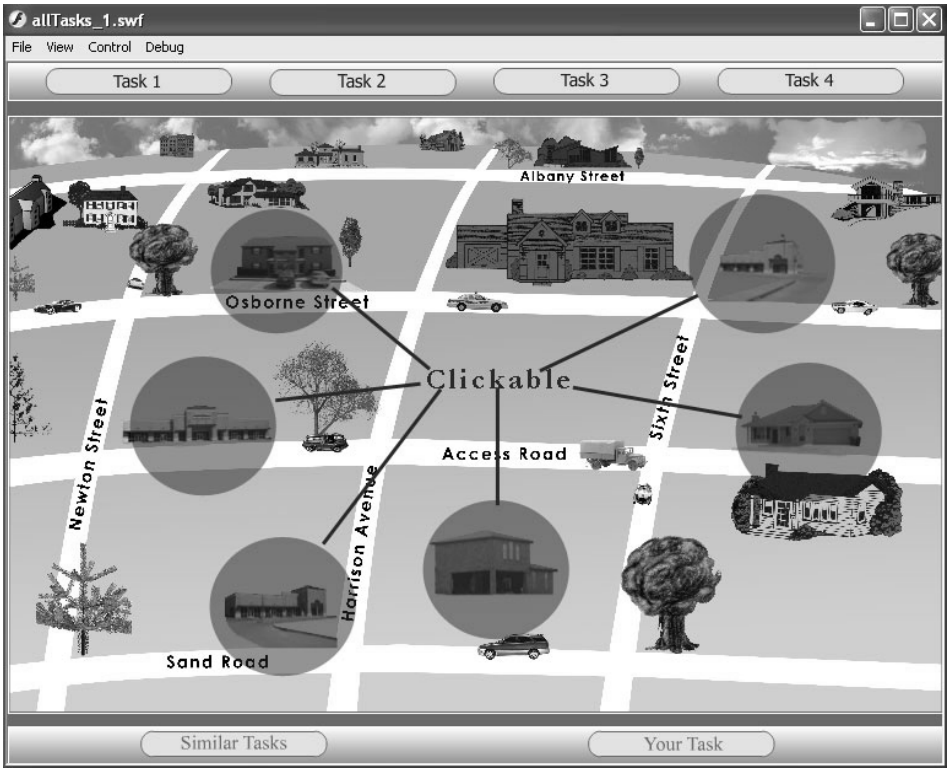

Figure 2. Compare the maps task.

In "Christmas Break Trip," (see Figure 3) dyads were asked to imagine that they have decided to take a trip together during Christmas break. Each member of a dyad was provided with information about attractions, hotels, activities, and flights to three different cities (see Figure 4 and 5). Dyads were asked to exchange information and decide which city to visit during Christmas break.

Figure 3. Christmas break trip task.

Figure 4. Buttons used to learn about attractions, hotels, activities, and flights to three different cities in the "Christmas Break Trip" task.

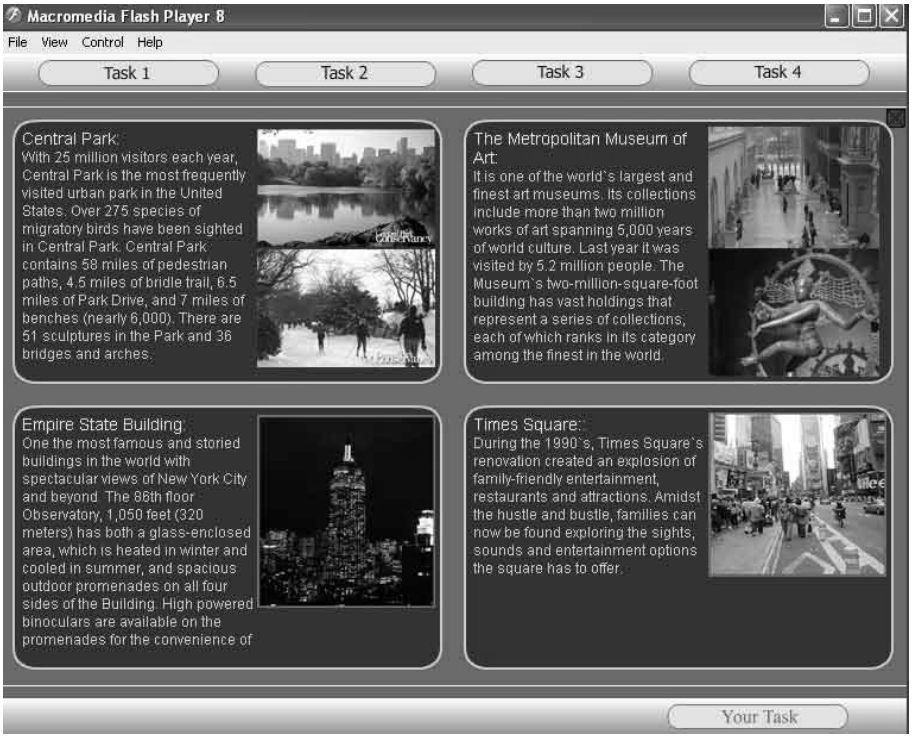

Figure 5. Attractions of the city of New York in the "Christmas Break Trip" task.

In the "Gifts for a Family," (see Figure 6) students in the dyads were asked to decide on gifts for each member of a family of four people with whom they would be staying in the U.S. When students clicked on the house image marked with an arrow, a picture for each family member and their hobbies were displayed in the middle main content area, which was the same image for both members of the dyads. Students were then asked to decide on the amount of money to spend for each gift and what to buy for each family member based on his/her hobbies.

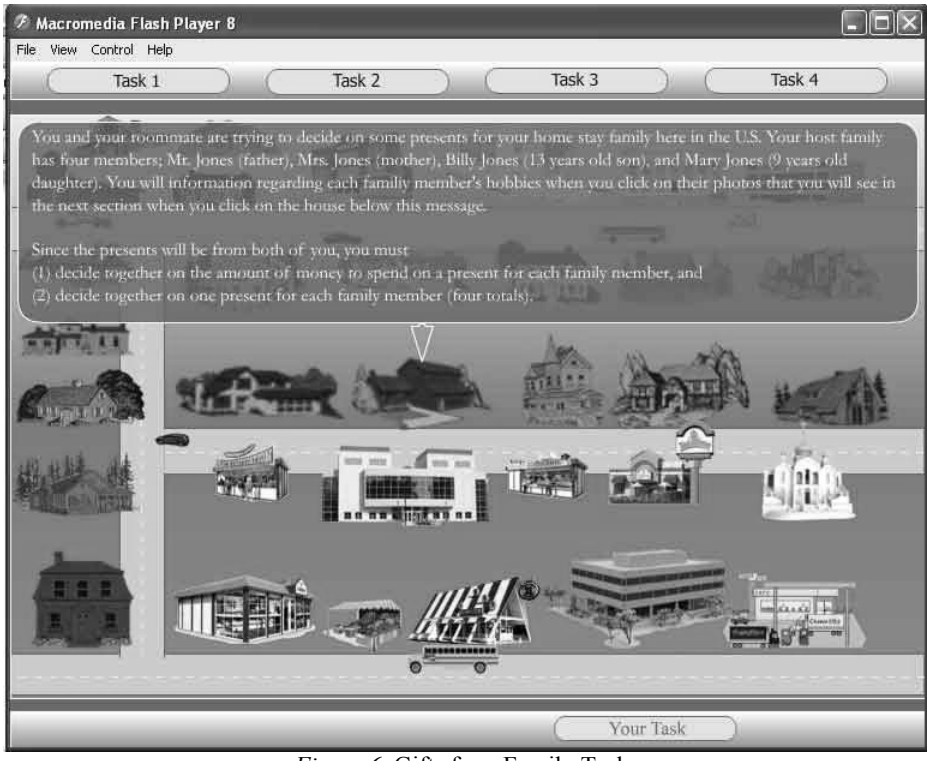

Figure 6. Gifts for a Family Task.

Figure 7. Garage Sale Task.

In the "Garage Sale," (see Figure 7) students in the dyads were asked to imagine that they were dormitory roommates. Dyads are presented with their room and items in the room (see Figure 7). Both members of the dyads had the same image of a dormitory room with the same information on it. When students click on the items in the room, the items were zoomed in and additional information is given in the middle main content area. Students were asked to donate four items in their dorm room to be sold at a garage sale in order to help their class raise money for a trip to Niagara Falls. The dyads were asked to decide on the four items after talking about usefulness, value, condition, and transportation of the items, and discussing how they would convince people to buy them.

Treatment Conditions

One section of the course was randomly assigned to the experimental condition and the other section was assigned to the control condition. Because intact groups were utilized (each student was not randomly assigned to experimental and control groups but one group of students was randomly assigned to the experimental and the other group of students was randomly assigned to the control group), this study should be characterized as a quasi-experiment rather than a strict experiment. As explained above, participants were all drawn from an intermediate level class, but as a safeguard against outliers or unbalanced groups, the director of the institute reviewed group membership and determined the groups to be roughly equivalent in terms of English fluency.

After randomly assigning the two sections to experimental and control conditions, students in each group were randomly paired to form dyads. There were 10 dyads in the study, five in each of the two treatment conditions. Both groups were provided with the online TBLL environment; however, the experimental group had access to subtitled videos within the environment that they could watch before task completion.

Description of Subtitled Videos. Each subtitled video presents a short dialog between two native speakers engaged in a task similar to – but not the same as – the one students are about to complete. The videos were recorded in natural and authentic environments, and subtitles were provided below the video. The videos were recorded in real-life settings. Language used by the native speakers in the videos were not prescribed and prepared prior to the recordings. Native speakers were asked to complete tasks using language as if in real-life situations. The primary function of the subtitled video is not to illustrate and exemplify the workings of language and not to teach linguistic structure, but rather communicative, to share experiences of native speakers in similar task situations with the ones the students were expected to complete (Breen, 1985). Students were provided with

control buttons to be able to rewind, fast forward, play, stop, pause, or re-play each video at their will, and study the subtitles as long as they wished. See Table 1 for a brief description of the subtitled videos.

Table 1: *Description of Subtitled Videos*

Assigned tasks	Quantity	Topics of the subtitled videos
Compare the Maps	6	These focus on demonstrating and modeling an activity that is currently happening. These activities include playing a guitar, studying for an exam, making an omelet, getting ready to go home on a bike, and asking directions.
Gifts for a Family	2	Two native speakers play a couple who are deciding on gifts for their relatives, whom they are planning to visit.
Christmas Break Trip	3	Two native speakers play a couple who are making travel plans for a Thanksgiving trip.
Garage Sale	6	Speakers discuss items in their house in order to decide which to sell at a yard sale to raise money to save an endangered animal species. They talk about the value of each item, the condition of each item, the use of each item, and reasons customers might buy them.

Procedures

All dyads met twice during regularly scheduled class meetings, each of which lasted about 2 hours. Two computer labs were used for the study. To ensure that none of the dyads worked face-to-face, one member of each dyad was assigned to work in each computer lab. Dyads completed two tasks in each session for a total of four tasks. Before beginning the experiment for each task, all students were given 10 minutes of instruction on how to use the online TBLL environment and WebCT Vista. After the training, each student was sent to the computer lab to which he or she was randomly assigned. Students were given 50 minutes to complete each task.

Data Source

The chat tool that students used to complete the assigned tasks created a transcript of their interaction. Because dyads had no other means of communication, this transcript captured all of the language they produced in the course of their interaction. The transcripts of each of the 10 dyads were analyzed for comparison by treatment condition.

The dependent variable in this study is the ratio of negotiated turns to total number of turns. A turn is considered to occur whenever there is a transfer of the floor from one student to another. Negotiated turns are those turns that occur in negotiation of meaning sequences, which is the most widely used model of negotiation (Smith 2003, p. 39). The total number of negotiated turns in a negotiation of meaning sequence shows the amount of negotiation of meaning occurred in that negotiation of meaning sequence. For example, there are 7 negotiated turns in Excerpt 1 while there are only 2 negotiated turns in Excerpt 2. Although both of them are negotiation of meaning sequences, more negotiation of meaning occurs in Excerpt 1 as compared to negotiation of meaning in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 1	
H.Y.: i see that he repair the t.v.	
A.Q.: he fix the TV or what	Turn 1
H.Y.: mend,repair	Turn 2
A.Q.: what is mean	Turn 3
H.Y.: put in order	Turn 4
H.Y.: reform	
A.Q.: the TV has prablom and he wanted to fix or what	Turn 5
H.Y.: correct	Turn 6
H.Y.: improve	
H.Y.: antena correct	
H.Y.: i don't know	
A.Q.: good it is defferend too	Turn 7

Excerpt 2	
B.K.: Whenver you can see the runner on the third floor	
B.K.: It's good	
J.K.: sorry I couldn't undersand your saying.	Turn 1
B.K.: That;s ok	Turn 2

The ratio of negotiated turns to total turns was used as a dependent variable because a direct comparison of the number of negotiation of meaning sequences across groups may be sensitive to the amount of talk produced by the dyads in each group. That is, dyads in the experimental group may produce more negotiation of meaning sequences not because they are involved in a higher rate of negotiation of meaning, but because they produce more talk. It has been reported previously that students provided with subtitled videos produced more talk than students who were not provided with them (Arslanyilmaz, 2007). In order to remove the effect of the amount of talk from the amount of negotiation of meaning produced by dyads, a ratio was calculated for each dyad.

Data Coding

In order to calculate the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns, it was first necessary to code the data and count the number of negotiation of meaning sequences, the number of turns within these sequences (negotiated turns), and the total number of turns.

All negotiation of meaning sequences were identified using the model developed by Varonis and Gass (1985) and revised by Smith (2003). As defined in the model, negotiation of meaning sequences consist of two parts: trigger and resolution. The trigger <T> is the utterance or portion of an utterance on the part of the speaker that results in some indication of non-understanding on the part of the listener (Varonis & Gass, 1985, p. 74) as shown in Excerpt 3. Many types of triggers have been reported in the literature including lexical, syntactic, content, task related triggers (Smith, 2003); discourse, phonetic, language complexity, task complexity by Doughty (as cited in Gonzalez-Lloret, 2003), and any aspect of the discourse including as a question and as neither a question nor an answer (Varonis & Gass, 1985).

Five types of triggers were found in this study: *lexical* as shown in Excerpt 3, where the listener did not understand one of the lexical items in the speaker's utterance; *content* as shown in Excerpt 4, where the entire content of the previous message was somewhat problematic or vague: *syntactic* as shown in Excerpt 5, where the structure or grammar of the speaker's message was not understood by the listener; *task complexity* as shown in Excerpt 6, where non-understanding occurred because of a difficult aspect of the task; and *discourse* as shown in Excerpt 7, where communication problems arose because of the general incoherence of the conversation caused an inability to reference a pronoun correctly or differing opinions of the listener and speaker.

The resolution part of a negotiation of meaning sequence consists of an indicator, and perhaps a response, the reaction to the response, a confirmation, and a reconfirmation (Smith, 2003; Varonis & Gass, 1985). Indicators, the written communication where the listener signals that there is a non-understanding, were coded <I>. Responses, where the original speaker attempted to clear up the non-understanding, were coded <R>. Reactions to the response in which the listener signaled a degree of understanding were coded <RR+> and those that indicated continued difficulty with the speaker's response were coded <RR->. Confirmations, which indicate a positive reaction to the response <RR+>, that is, that some degree of understanding was achieved by the listener, were coded <C>. Reconfirmations, where even a minimal response to the respondent's confirmation occurred were coded <RC>.

Excerpt 3	
Lexical Item Trigger	
H.Y.: shall we but it?	<T>
A.Q.A: what shall	
A.Q.A.: what is shall	<I>
H.Y.: shall we go to buy it?	<R>

Excerpt 4	
Content Trigger	
A.H.: I was looking for the attractions and that just make me be excited	<T>
L.Y.: What kind of attractions? Could you tell me?	<I>
A.H.: There we can visit Walt Disney World, Discovery Cove,Epcot Center and the Universal Studios	
A.H.: it could be fun	<R>
L.Y.: Yes, that sounds very good. How about the prices?	<RR+>Implicit<TAR>

Excerpt 5	
Syntactic Trigger	
A.Q.A.: what do you thing about Brushed that machian do damage the papers	<T>
H.Y.: whats mean?	<I>
A.Q.A.: machian do damage the papers	<R>
H.Y.: what damage?	<RR->
A.Q.A.: it is next the referajrater	<R2>
H.Y.: ok	<RR+>

Excerpt 6	
Task Complexity Trigger	
S.K.: In book store building, a woman is looking around the shop, She has an aggi T- shirt.	<T>
C.D.: In my picture she has a black coat	
C.D.: Has she a back bag?	<I>
S.K.: No, she wears yellow coat.	
S.K.: She does not have any bag.	<R>
C.D.: Ok. They are different.	<RR+>Explicit
S.K.: OK.	<C>

Excerpt 7	
Discourse Trigger	
I.J.: do you know tori?	<T>
K.K.: tori	<I>
I.J.: she is in the video	<R>
K.K.: tori is a couch of Newyork Yankees	
K.K.: coach	<RR->Implicit<TD>

Negotiation of meaning sequences produced by each dyad and consisting of a T-I-R, a T-I-R-RR, a T-I-R-RR-C, or a T-I-R-RR-C-RC were identified and counted. The negotiation of meaning sequences consisting of only a T-I were not included in the data analysis. After identifying the negotiation of meaning sequences, the total number of turns and negotiated turns as seen in Excerpts 1 and 2 were counted for each dyad. Finally, a ratio of negotiated turns to total turns was calculated.

Reliability

A random selection of 10% of the language produced by dyads in each of the two treatment conditions were coded by an independent rater to identify negotiation of meaning sequences using the same procedures as described in this study. The agreement for the ratings of the negotiated turns in the negotiation of meaning sequences was 85% for the experimental group and 90% for control group.

Data Analysis Technique

This study used only one 2-tailed independent group t-test. The set of dependent variables is made up of the ratio of negotiated turns to total turns in each group. Therefore, there is one dependent variable in the 2-tailed t-test for both experimental and control groups. 2-tailed independent group t-test is used to compare the two groups of dependent variables, namely ratio of negotiated turns to total turns produced by students in the experimental group and ratio of negotiated turns to total turns ratio produced by students in the control group. These two groups of dependent variables are not related to each other in any way because the negotiated and total turns in the two groups are produced by different students in two different groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 shows the number of negotiation of meaning sequences, total turns, negotiated turns, and ratio of negotiated turns to total turns produced by all dyads across the experimental and control groups (see Table 3 for range of negotiation of meaning sequences, total turns, negotiated turns, and negotiated turns to total turns ratios). Table 2 shows that negotiation of meaning sequences accounted for about 17% of the total turns generated by control group dyads. In contrast, negotiation of meaning sequences accounted for about 30% of the total turns generated by dyads in the experimental group. This result suggests that when provided with subtitled videos, students engage in negotiated interaction in about one-fourth of their total interaction while when students are not provided with subtitled videos, they engage in negotiated interaction in about one-sixth of their total interaction. These figures also suggests that students with subtitled videos in an online TBLL environment

produce about three times more negotiation of meaning sequences, about two times more turns, and about three times more negotiated turns than do students without subtitled videos.

Table 2: *Total Negotiation of Meaning Sequences, Total Turns, Negotiated Turns*

Groups	Negotiation of meaning sequences	Negotiated turns	Total turns	Ratio of negotiated turns to total turns
Control Group	32	128	765	0.17
Experimental Group	94	393	1374	0.30

Table 3: *Range of Negotiation of Meaning Sequences, Total Turns, Negotiated Turns, and Ratio of Negotiated Turns to Total Turns*

	Range			
Groups	Negotiation of meaning sequences	Negotiated turns	Total turns	Negotiated turns to total turns ratio
Control Group	5-9	15-36	169-401	0.10-0.22
Experimental Group	16-23	57-90	107-192	0.24-0.34

Table 4 shows the results of an independent samples *t* test with the percentage of turns negotiated as the dependent variable and groups as the independent variable. This table shows that dyads provided with subtitled videos produced a significantly higher percentage of negotiated turns than dyads that were not provided with subtitled videos. One of the reasons for the significant result with a small number of participants is the low within group variance, variance between students prior to the experiment. This was undoubtedly partly a result of the sample selection procedure in that participants were chosen from a homogenous group of English language students. Another reason for the significant result is high between group variance, mean differences between the ratios of negotiated turns to total turns for students who were provided with the subtitled videos and for students who were not provided with the subtitled videos. This high between variance is obtained because students were exposed to the treatment for an extended period of time, which increased the effect size (d = 2.82). That is, students completed each task in 50 minutes for a total of four tasks in 200 minutes. During this time period, students in the experimental group observed subtitled videos as many times as they wanted.

The answer for our research question appears to be that non-native speakers with access to subtitled videos produce more negotiation of meaning than non-native speakers without access to subtitled videos in an online TBLL.

Table 4: *Comparison of Mean Percentage of Negotiated Turns to Total Turns across Groups*

Group	N (Dyads)	M	SD	T	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	99% Conf. Int. Lower	99% Conf. Int. Upper
Control Group	5	.17	.046	-4.48	8	.002*	-.23	-.033
Experimental Group	5	.30	.046					

*p<.01

CONCLUSION

Results from this study indicate that using subtitled videos to enhance students' familiarity with the tasks increases the amount of negotiation of meaning students engage in during TBLL. These results stand in contrast to the limited existing research on this topic that found either no benefit for interventions aimed at increasing task familiarity (Yule et al., 1992) or higher performance for a control group not receiving the intervention (Hardy & Moore, 2004; Robinson, 2001). On the other hand, these results are consistent with a growing body of research suggesting that the use of videos in language instruction can be successful for a variety of goals (Borras & Lafayette, 1994; Garza, 1991; Gass et al., 1999; Neuman & Koshinen, 1992; Révész & Han, 2006; Taylor, 2005).

Enhanced negotiation of meaning shows that task familiarity through subtitled videos freed up attentional and memory resources of students from language form and meaning, which resulted in paying more attention to

negotiation of meaning and formulating language needed to express ideas during task completion. This result is congruent with suggestions by Ellis (2003), Robinson (2005), Robinson (2001), Skehan (1996, 1998), and Willis (2000).

These results challenge the role that pre-task interventions can play in enhancing the effectiveness of TBLL. In particular, previous researchers have questioned whether interventions designed to enhance learners' familiarity with the task actually make tasks less cognitively demanding, reducing the need for learners to negotiate meaning and perhaps undermining other learning outcomes. Our findings suggest that the greater task familiarity achieved through subtitled videos may influence not only the amount of language produced but the willingness of students to pursue understanding through negotiation of meaning. Whether increasing task familiarity enhances students' confidence level so that they become more engaged or undermines the challenge of TBLL to the point where students have no need to negotiate meaning may depend on the nature of the task or type of learners. Additional research is needed to understand better the potential of interventions designed to increase task familiarity during TBLL for different types of tasks and learners.

Additional research is also needed to understand the best conditions for the use of subtitled videos in TBLL. The subtitled videos used in the study focused on similar tasks rather than demonstrating native speakers engaged in the same task as students. This decision was based on an assumption that the use of similar rather than the same tasks would help to maintain the complexity of TBLL; this assumption should, however, be tested empirically.

In the past, producing videos and teaching a second language through videos were cumbersome tasks. However, with the recent advances in technology, preparing videos and embedding them in online courses can be accomplished by any second language teacher and can easily be a component of any professionally developed language learning materials. A greater understanding of how to use this medium effectively within online language learning environments may help us to enhance learning from promising approaches such as TBLL.

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