A Near Peer Review Task for Japanese Language Learning

Hiroaki Umehara
humehara0324@rikkyo.ac.jp
Rikkyo University

Greta Gorsuch
greta.gorsuch@ttu.edu
Texas Tech University

ABSTRACT

Although much research exists on peer correction practices in ESL/EFL settings (e.g., De Guerrero &Villamil, 2000; Ikeda, 2002; Mendoca & Johnson 1994), little research focuses on this practice in Japanese language classes (Ikeda, 2002). Mendoca and Johnson (1994) expressed the need to explore what actually occurs during peer correction, particularly as second language learning tasks. In order to fill this gap in the literature, this study investigated a near peer review task, an extension of peer correction tasks. Here, intermediate learners of Japanese were recorded as they graded the written homework of their near-peers (high beginning learners) enrolled in a different class in a large university in the U.S. As they corrected grammar-focused homework of their near peers, the two participants used their L1s and L2s (Japanese) creatively to discuss linguistic issues raised by the beginning level learners' responses on the homework, and also to manage their affective interaction. While negotiating meaning, often in Japanese, they focused on specific linguistic forms, which is thought to be a condition in which second languages are acquired. Consistent with previous findings on the benefits of peer correction tasks, this study suggests the usefulness of near peer correction tasks, which integrate focus on form and meaning.

Keywords: second language learning tasks; peer correction tasks; Japanese as a
           foreign language learning; learner sociality rights; learner affect; focus on
           form

INTRODUCTION

During the last twenty years, language teachers have sought ways to increase student-to-student interaction in the L2 (e.g., The Interaction Hypothesis, Ellis, 1999; Gass, 1997; Gass & Mackey, 2007). At the same time, it has also been recognized that in order for L2 learners to learn, corrective feedback is needed (e.g., Li, 2010). Peer correction has been accepted by many as a means to achieve both increased learner interaction and opportunities for corrective feedback in classroom settings (see for instance The British Council English Teaching Knowledge Database, accessed April 26, 2012 at http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/knowledge-database/peer-correction). Although much research exists on peer correction practices in ESL/EFL settings (e.g., De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Mendoca & Johnson 1994), little research focuses on this practice in Japanese language classes (Ikeda, 2002). Mendoca and Johnson (1994) expressed the need to explore what actually occurs during peer correction, particularly as second language learning tasks.

In order to fill this gap in the literature, this study investigated a near peer review task, which we present as an extension of peer correction tasks. Here, intermediate learners of Japanese graded the written homework of their near peers (high beginning learners) enrolled in a different class in a large university in the U.S. In the recorded verbal interaction between the higher-level learners as they corrected grammar-focused homework of their near peers, it was found that the two participants used their L1s and L2s (Japanese) creatively to discuss linguistic issues raised by the beginning level learners' L2 responses on the homework, and also to manage their affective interaction. While negotiating meaning, often in Japanese, they focused on specific linguistic forms, a process which is thought to be a condition in which second languages are acquired (e.g., Ellis, 2001). In consistent with previous findings on the benefits of peer correction tasks, this study suggests the usefulness of near peer correction tasks, which integrate focus on form and meaning.

Peer Review Practices
There has been growing interest in second and foreign language education regarding how peer review or correction benefits L2 learners (Ohta, 1995). Overall, the literature suggests that peer review or correction tasks can encourage learners to develop their cognitive, linguistic, and socio-affective skills (e.g., Deen, 1991; Ellis, 1999; Gass, 1997; Gass & Mackey, 2007; Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Mendoca & Johnson 1994; Pica & Doughty, 1986). Many aspects of L2 peer review or correction have been explored and thus many names and descriptions of this process have been developed (see for example De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ikeda, 2002). For the purposes of this article, Topping's (1998, p. 250) commentary will stand as a working definition: "an arrangement in which individuals consider the amount, level, value, worth, quality or success of the products or outcomes of learning of peers of similar status." While peer review practice is often conducted among students who are in the same class (Hu, 2005), the current study focuses on near peer reviewers who commented collaboratively on the homework of students in another class (the names on the homework were covered and the near peer reviewers were not acquainted with those whose work they were reviewing).

Focusing on Learners who Do the Reviewing

It has been suggested that learners can learn by assessing other learners' work (Hu, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Topping, 1998). In order to assess peers' written products, learners access their stored L2 knowledge, and this allows learners to review, reconstruct, and reanalyze their existing linguistic knowledge (Gass & Mackey, 2007), which comprises conditions for scaffolding (Christensen & Warnick, 2006; Ohta, 1995). Peer review practices are believed to allow students to work collaboratively in order to achieve intersubjectivity to help each other to successfully complete the task, in this case correcting the homework of slightly lower-level students in another class. "Intersubjectivity" describes a situation where the participants who are engaged in the same task share an understanding of the situations and perspectives of the task (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994). This allows learners to engage in tasks collaboratively, provide help to each other, and share knowledge (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994).

Liu and Hanse (2002) surmised that in discussing their partners' products, learners share what they have learned, and get opportunities to apply and reflect on their acquired knowledge. Since peer review practice is not controlled and defined by teachers as in teacher-fronted activities, learners can control interactions and language for their own purposes (Ohta, 1995). Ferris and Hedgcock (2005, p. 226) pointed out that peer review practices in the classroom allow "students [to] engage in unrehearsed, low-risk, exploratory talk that is less feasible in classroom and teacher-student interactions." Ohta (1995) citing well-known commentary on the benefits of peer interaction on second language learning (e.g., Deen, 1991; Pica & Doughty, 1986) proposed that while engaging in peer review or correction, learners have more opportunities to speak, negotiate, and correct their own and others' errors, than they would in teacher-fronted tasks.

Peer Review as a Learning Task Potentially Integrating Meaning and Form

The idea of task-based language teaching (TBLT) has gained attention among SLA researchers, curriculum developers, and language teachers (Crookes, 1986; Ellis, 2003; Long, 1985, 2005; Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2006; Van den Branden, Bygate & Norris, 2009). Although the importance of learning tasks has attracted much attention, various definitions have been proposed, leading Van den Branden (2006) to state: "almost anything related to education activity can now be called a task" (p. 3). Frequently cited definitions, however, have emphasized that tasks provide a purpose for language use, as in Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 44) defining a language task as "an activity that involves individuals in using language for the purpose of achieving a particular goal or objective in a particular situation." Such definitions suggest that pedagogical tasks may lead learners to focus on meaning so that they can achieve goals (see Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2001). At the same time, one of the important features of tasks is the potential integration of meaning and form (Ellis, 2003; Long & Norris, 2000; Skehan, 1998; Van den Branden, 2006).

We suggest that peer and near peer review tasks can serve as valid language learning tasks (Mendoca & Johnson 1994; Sugiyama, 1999) and can result in learner-to-learner L2 interaction in which both meaning and form are focused on. This may occur particularly when learners of somewhat different levels engage in near peer review. Higher level learners benefit from their role in near peer review by having to think through collaborative, co-constructed explanations for their corrections (which focus on form), and questioning and consolidating their knowledge (see Manlove & Baker, 1995; Pospíšilová, 2008; Walters, 2000; Xanthou & Pavlou, 2008 for commentary on peer review tasks for mixed ability learners).

Clearly, though, it is important to know what precisely happens during learner interaction during task sequences (e.g., Ohta, 1995). Mendoca and Johnson (1994) have suggested the utility of peer review as a pedagogical task, although they warn that what actually occurs during peer interaction has not been fully explored. For instance, microanalyses of peer interaction during tasks conducted by Mori (2002) and Mondada and Pekarek Doehler (2004) suggested that tasks plan by teachers do not necessarily match how learners actually carry them out. Tasks developed by teachers are carried out by students as active agents on moment-by-moment basis. Accordingly, perhaps tasks need to be viewed more through the lens of a task-in-process. Therefore, naturally occurring data from such settings need to be gathered directly (Markee, 2000).

Investigating Peer Review as Tasks-in-Process

Recently, conversation analysis (CA) has attracted interest as an empirical research methodology. CA can illuminate many areas of interest to applied linguists such as second language acquisition, pedagogy, and curriculum (Lee & Gorsuch, 2012; Markee, 2000; Mori, 2007; Richards & Seedhouse, 2005; Seedhouse, 2005). CA is defined as "the systematic analysis of the talk produced in everyday situations of human interaction: talk-in-interaction" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 11). CA assumes that ordinary talk is highly organized, and is the product that conversation participants obtain by interacting. We note here that our purpose was not to position our work within the research agendas of those scholars engaged primarily in CA. Rather, our focus was on what an interative process of close transcription and undirected, reflective analysis would tell us about a near peer review task. We think that the distinctive contribution of a close transcription and analysis of learners' interaction to the study of learning tasks (including peer and near peer review tasks) may be to produce a detailed description of the processes thought to bring learning about, such as interaction and corrective feedback, and how the participants organize the learning process by mutually and collaboratively attending to the interaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigated the interaction that occurred during a near peer review task. Almost all current research exploring different aspects of peer review practices have been conducted among students who had similar language levels; thus, the present study investigated what would happen interactionally if higher-level students reviewed lower-level students' written L2 products (in this case, a near peer review of lower level learners' quizzes). Our research questions are:

1. How do the participants develop talk-in-interaction as they engage in a near peer review task?

For RQ #1, we were simply interested in what would unfold in the participants' interaction and thus we did not impose preconceived analytic categories on the talk. Rather, we described whatever we found meaningful or intriguing, much in the tradition of CA (see for example Mercer, 2010). We did not know what to expect when this task was set and when the participants are engaged in it. As our transcription and analyses unfolded, however, we formed a second research question:

2. How can we describe participants' interaction in such a way that may reveal some unique features of a near peer review task, such as goal-related L1 use as evidenced by devices used to maintain phatic contact, and L2 private speech?

For instance, as our work with the transcript proceeded, we concurrently noted previous literature on peer review studies which mentioned learners' use of the L1 according to their own goals and the use of private speech. We felt this might amount to scaffolding for L2 learning (e.g. Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994). As we found systematic use of the L1 and L2 by the participants we felt we should at least touch on issues such as this, especially because near peer review tasks are as yet relatively unreported on, and we had no real expectations of what features of interaction would emerge.

METHOD

Participants
The participants were two female students who were taking a second year Japanese course in Fall, 2011 in a large central U.S. university. Neither of the authors were teaching the participants at the time. One participant was 23 years old (Participant "C") and the other (Participant "R") was 20. Participant "C" was a native speaker of French although her English proficiency was high enough to engage in undergraduate study in the university. Thus we operated under the assumption that for this project, her L1 was English. Participant "R" was a native speaker of English. The participants were asked to grade the first year students' homework because we felt it would be a useful learning experience for them and because they had the L2 skills and knowledge to grade the homework fairly and appropriately. The instructor of the participants indicated that their Japanese proficiency levels were high in terms of performance in their   second   year   classes.

Materials and Procedure
The materials consisted of the audio recording and the resulting transcript of that recording. The interaction of two participants engaged in the near-peer review task was recorded for 100 minutes. Both participants understood that their interaction was being recorded. The researchers were not present during the task. The participants were not provided any instructions besides being asked to grade the homework without using any answer key. The interaction between the participants was

transcribed verbatim following the CA transcription conventions appearing in Wong and Zhang Waring (2010). The participants were not told to what language to use while reviewing the homework on their near peers.

The participants graded the homework of seven U.S. undergraduates in a first year Japanese class of the same institution. The homework was two sections from the workbook, *Genki I* (Banno, Ohno, Sakane, & Shinagawa, 2000) a text and workbook series commonly used for Japanese instruction in the U.S. The homework was comprised of translation items and the production of Japanese sentences based on some pictures. The names of the first year students were hidden for privacy purpose.

Analyses
To answer RQ #1, a fine-grained transcript was developed. The transcript was reviewed three times without looking for any specific communicative or interactive features. The transcript was developed carefully by listening to the audio file multiple times and adding emerging details about what was said and how. There was a one-month interval between each iteration of transcription and analysis. As the analysis went on, several features of the participants' talk became salient for us. Typically in CA studies, the turn comprises the basic unit of analysis, as in Crookes (1990), where a turn is a verbalized unit that is bounded by another interlocutor. However, many participants' turns mixed L1 (English) and L2 (Japanese) into what were clearly more like utterances within turns. Thus, we decided to accept both turns and utterances as a means of description. We used Sato's (1990) definition of utterance as a verbalized unit that is bounded by a pause. This mixing of description frameworks is not without controversy (see for example Crookes, 1990; Markee, 2000), but we felt that to capture a full picture of participants' talk-in-interaction while engaging in a task, we needed to study a broad range of L1 and L2 use phenomena. Thus the number of Japanese turns and utterances and the number of English turns and utterances were counted. To illustrate, this is a segment from the transcript:
01C: oh my go:d okay. She:: okay {E = 2}

02 R: <kore sore are {J = 1}

Line 1 contains two utterances. After the first utterance *oh my go:d okay*, there is a micro-pause, which separates the first utterance from the following utterance, *She:: okay*. Line 1 comprises a turn, and Line 2 comprises another turn because the interlocutor for each turn is different. The number in curly brackets indicates the number of the utterances in that turn; {J = 1} means that one Japanese utterance was made in that turn, and the number proceeded by "E" indicate the number of English utterances {E = 1}. Turns were classified as either English or Japanese turns on the basis of the ratio of the English or Japanese utterances in a turn. For instance, if over 50% of a given utterances was in Japanese then the turn was categorized as Japanese. If a turn was determined to be a Japanese turn, the turn number was underlined and typed in bold font (e.g., **02**).

It also became apparent during the analyses that the duration of pauses was strikingly different in specific interactional contexts. Two types of pauses seemed to emerge: Task-related pauses and non-task-related pauses. A task-related pause refers to any pause that occurred while the participants were engaged in the review task,

whereas a non-task-related pause refers to any pause that occurred while the participants are engaged in talk about task-irrelevant topics.

In order to answer RQ #2 the authors noticed and then paid special attention to several phenomena focusing on what functions the L1 and L2 played during the interaction. These included sequences in which the L1 seemed to be used to maintain phatic contact (intersubjectivity), in which it became apparent that the participants were sharing an understanding of the situation and were willing to work collaboratively (Seedhouse, 2005) as evidenced through humor, invitations for involvement, and use of the models *could* and *would* (implying suggestion rather than assertion). Instances of the L2 being used as private speech also became noticeable with utterances being made with a lower volume, and then being treated by the listener as not needing attention or a response.

RESULTS

RQ #1: L1 and L2 Turns and Utterances
While looking over the transcript, the authors noticed intriguing L1 (English) and L2 (Japanese) distributions in the interaction. See Table 1 below:

Table 1   L1 and L2 turns and utterances

	Turns in Japanese	Turns in English	Utterances in Japanese	Utterances in English
Participant C	38	71	54	102
Participant R	41	68	85	150

Participant R produced more utterances in both languages (85 utterances in Japanese and 150 in English) than participant C (54 utterances in Japanese and 102 utterances in English). Nonetheless, both participants shared a roughly 4 to 7 ratio of Japanese turns to English turns (38:71 for participant C and 41:68 for participant R). Considering the participants were not told to use Japanese (or English) during their engagement with the near peer review task, the amount of time they spent negotiating meaning in Japanese (the L2) was remarkable.

The pattern of L1 and L2 used can be explained by the structure of the overall interaction. The transcript revealed that the participants read the written Japanese sentences out loud from the homework to catch errors. We think that in doing this, participants were accessing their L2 knowledge. Generally, if a participant found an error in a sentence, she made a comment or stated the correct answer and then moved on to the next sentence in the homework. However, sometimes the other participant was listening and heard a possible error that the first interlocuter/participant did not treat as such (evidenced by the first participant moving on to the next sentence without correcting it). Sometimes the second participant in the sequence initiated a correction by partially repeating the error, as in:

108 C: [watashi no. watashi no watashi no senko mo (0.9) {J = 1}
109 R: senko [mo? {J = 1}

110 C: [senko mo (1.0) rekishi desu {J = 2}

111 R: oh wait isn't that my major is also. but like referring to m<u>aj</u>or also: (1.7) {E =

2}

In line 108, participant C read the sentence aloud, and participant R found the sentence possibly wrong at line 109. Carrying through the repair, participant R repeated the last part of the previous utterance in rising intonation (partial repetition of the trouble source).

In terms of L1 and L2 selection, the interlocutors read sentences in repair sequences such as this in Japanese first (the L2), and when they found possible errors, or thought of questions or something interesting, they started speaking in English (the L1). Confirming the correctness of the answers and asking questions seemed to force them to rely on English, and thus the participants needed more turns to clarify L2-specific questions and elaborate on any issues raised. This extending the task.

There are some other repair practice instances, such as lines 64 - 66, where a participant would conduct a self-initiated self-repair:

<u>64</u> R: ano to wh[::at. (2.0) {J = 1}

65 C: [(denwa arimasen)] (0.4) (J = 1}

66 R: OH tokei <u>wo</u> (J = 1}

In line 64, the R could not comprehend what the word was (*ano to*) as she said *wh[::at* followed by a two-second pause. After a small prompt from C, participant R showed her understanding in line 66 by saying *OH*. In this case, the participants stayed mostly in the L2, although this sequence showed participant R using the L1 to initiate a repair sequence (*wh[::at*).

RQ #1: Pauses
Also notable were the characteristics of pauses that showed different duration seemingly based on if they were task-related or non-task-related. Intuitively, task-related pauses would be longer than non-task-related pauses because in naturally occurring conversation (non-task-related interaction), silence is disliked and can lead to awkwardness. According to Wong and Zhang Waring (2010), turn-taking is structured in a way that minimizes gaps and silences in English. There were 151 pauses appearing in two categories: Task-related pauses (henceforth TRP) and non-task-related pauses (henceforth NTRP). Table 2 shows the number of pauses, the total length of pauses, and the average duration of pause.

Table 2   Task-related and Non-task-related Pauses   ]

	Total number	Total length (in seconds)	Average length (in seconds)

Task-related pauses	73	138.7	1.9
Non-task-related pauses	78	109.4	1.402

The average length of task-related pauses was longer than that of non-task-related pauses. The longest task-related pause was a full 11 seconds (line 160) while the longest non-task related pause was 5.5 seconds (line 268). One of the possible reasons why non-task-related pauses tended to be shorter is that the participants followed ordinary conversation norms where a listener can employ self-selection practices. Or, in the case where there are only two interlocutors, whenever the current speaker raises a question, the next turn could automatically be given to the listener, minimizing gaps and silences as in:

175 C: Does this [see ah ha like second week no third week (1.5)   {E = 1}

176 R: [just kidding what {E = 1}

177 R: ah: (1.0) {1}

178 C: give them time (0.6) {E = 1}

Task-related interaction in the transcript showed different pause dynamics. When participants were working on the task, gaps and pauses seemed more acceptable, as in:

51 R: [sono tokei↓wa >ikura desuka:.< kono what is this (4.6) {J = 1, E = 1}

52 C: lanlan (3.2){J = 1}

53 R: h[mm {1}

In line 51, participant R used what could be taken as a pre-announcement *what is this*. However, participant C did not treat it as a pre-announcement and failed to provide a second pair part of the pre-announce sequence, such as responding to the question request In some cases, seemingly to eliminate the obscure nature of the longer task-related pauses, participants sometimes explicitly asked questions or use address terms, as in:

197 R: to say that you are not Takeshisan. you say ↑jya:: ↓imasen right? (1.1)

198 R: jya <imasen?> (0.6) {E = 1, J = 2}

RQ #2: Maintaining phatic contact using the L1
The transcript provided many examples of how the L1 was used by the participants to maintain phatic contact, suggesting that the need to attain intersubjectivity was a salient concern of the participants. Humor played a big part. In fact, participant R started the recorded interaction by sharing a mistake both participants found funny:

01C: oh my go:d okay. She:: okay {E = 2}

02 R: <kore sore are {J = 1}

03 C: She: supposed to translates thi sentence but she: ah: :: a forgot alphabets { E = 2}

04 R: hhhh {E = 1}

05 C: $hahaha oh noo listen to me hah so hh what should I se

06 C: what should I do$ {E = 2}

07 R: $what is hash tha↑aat hhh {E = 1}

In line 22 participant R asked a rhetorical question with strong emphasis, perhaps as a means of coping with frustration:

21   R: obviously this person understands how to write it in hiragana. So wh:y would

22   you write in romaji. Like why why WH[Y Kelly tell me why (1.5) {E = 3}

23 C: [hahaha {1}

Some humor was shared in the L2, as in a sequence starting at line 28 where participant C shared an error that she thought a student made (substituting *kore wa* with *kono wa*):

28 C: [hh konowa watashino $jitensya desu$ hh {J = 1}

29 R: konowa. (0.8) {J = 1}

30 C: .hhhhh {1}

31 R: konowa. Konowa: {J = 2}

        Participants also used their L1 to invite involvement in a particular problem, as in:

129 R: okay (1.2) I just don just alway confused me. Cuz Like=

130   =Do you know what I mean though (1.8)

131 R: beca::se (0.5) {E = 4}

132 C: so wh how would you say it if you say watashimo=

133 C: =how would you say it. {E =1}

134 R: I don't know how you would say it (0.4) lik That's what I was askin (0.7) {E = 1}

In line 132 participant C asked R's opinion regarding a grammar point that had come up during the task. This may be explained by the immediate context. Both of them seemed frustrated since they could reach agreement on the grammar point. At line 131, the participant R showed hesitation to continue the discussion as evidenced by the incomplete utterance followed by the stretch of the sound *beca::se* and a pause. Noticing this, participant C attempted to encourage R to share her thought by saying *so wh how would you say it if you say watashimo* and *how would you say it*.

This same example also portrays participants' use of *would* to suggest their utterance was only a possible answer to a problem, not an assertion. In line 130, participant R asked a question inviting participant C's agreement. Following this utterance, participant C used *would*. Prior to line 130, participant C took an assertive role simply telling R what the right answer should be, as in where R keeps repeating in separate turns (lines 118, 123, 128) that the emphasis has to be on the part *major*:

118 C: [because it's my] ma↑jor. (0.8) {E =1}

123 C: <but my major is underlined (0.7) {E =1}

128 C: haha but my major {E =1}

Following R's utterances in lines 130-131 above, which contained long pauses**,** C picked up the cue of participant R's frustration, which made C pick up a more cooperative attitude. Thus participant C displayed her willingness to create a collaborative atmosphere to reduce the tension of disagreement, and maintain phatic contact.

RQ #2: Private Speech
The function of private speech is typically defined, in contrast to social speech, **"**as speech addressed to the self (not to others) for the purpose of self-regulation (rather than communication)" (Diaz 1992, p. 62). Examples of this emerged in the transcript, mostly in the L2. In the following segment, participant C used private speech in repeating the word *watashi*. Also note the long pauses which we noted in the Results above as seemingly typical of task-related talk.

99 R: [Takeshi san no senko wa. (1.7) Rekishi de:su a watashino watshi wata (2.3) {J = 2}

100 C:[nihongodesuka nihongo (2.0) Whats (3.0) oh tsukareta (1.6) {J = 2}

101 R: wha:t (2.5) hmm (2.0) so:: okay. its this sentence is Takeshi's major is

102   history=my major is history too. So Takeshi san no senko wa=>rekishi desu< {E = 3}{J = 2}

103 C: u hm {1}

104 R: would be watashi mo. {E = 1}{J = 1}

In line 99, the interlocutor C shows clear disfluency repeating the same word, as in *Rekishi de:su a watashino watshi wata*. Her trouble is also indicated by the long pause of 2.3 seconds following the problematic part and in line 101 in which she starts asking a question regarding the trouble source.

In another example, participant C tried to figure out the pronunciation of *toshokan* in lines 33 and 34 using private speech, but then participant R picked up on it and demonstrated how it should be pronounced. Following this, participant C repeated *Toshokan* in lines 36 and 40, in which she strongly articulated each syllable to reinforce this learning, again evincing private speech:

33 R: [arewa toshokan de tosho toshi to::shokan. how do yo is it (1.0)

34 R: to: to::shokan {E = 1, J = 2}

35 C: To[shokan {J = 1}

36 R: [tosho:kan {J = 1}

37 C: yeah Toshokan

38 C: not Tosh[o:kan. but Toshokan (E = 1, J = 3)

39 R: [either way this is wrong

40 R: To.sho.kan. {E = 1, J = 3}

DISCUSSION

This study investigated how conversational interaction unfolded while two participants engaged in a near peer review task. The recorded data was finely and iteratively transcribed and examined without being guided by preconceived theoretical assumptions or hypotheses (Mori & Zuengler, 2008). This study was a descriptive one, and revealed some details about this near peer review task as possibly an excellent task for bringing about learner-to-learner interaction, opportunities for corrective feedback, and extended opportunities for integration of form and meaning.

L1 and L2 turns and utterances, and pause dynamics.
Without being told which language to complete the task in, participants used plenty of L2 (see Table 1) during a lengthy, 100-minute interaction. It is true that more turns and utterances were produced in the L1. However, what L2 turns were taken by the participants were nearly as long in terms of utterances per turn as L1 turns (for participant C, 1.42 utterances per turn in the L2 versus 1.43 in the L1. For participant R, 2.07 utterances per turn in the L2 versus 2.20 in the L1). When using the L2, participants were generally not just saying single words but rather phrases and sentences.

Generally, choosing one language over another was related to the various types of repair practices that we observed. These instances of repairs suggested how much extended, continuous attention the participants paid to the task, and to L1 and L2 sentences uttered by each other. This suggests extended and meaningful student-

to-student interaction. Moreover, other-initiated repairs and self-initiated other-repairs enabled the participants to negotiate their interpretations of the sentences suggesting an integration of meaning and form. The participants used Japanese (the L2) to grade the assigned work until they found possible errors or encountered difficulties to grade lower-level students' work. Once they ran into these issues, participants generally switched to English to solve the problems (see Villamil & De Guerrero, 2006 for similar findings). Needless to say, the near peer review provided ample opportunities for corrective feedback.

The analysis of pauses suggested that task-related interactions were not the same as more ordinary, non-task-related interactions (see Table 2). In non-task-related talk, interactions were usually carried out in such a way as to minimize silence. Task-related interactions, however, seemed to create an environment in which participants seemed willing to tolerate silences and gaps. This suggests that the participants needed more time to fully process linguistic information to complete the near peer review task. This also suggested there is persistent cognitive engagement with the task. While we did not intend it, we think this suggests possible pedagogical implications for language teachers, namely: learners need to be able to spend longer times on tasks. Students chatting animatedly without pauses may seem like a "successful" task from a teacher's point of view. If learners on-task are overly supervised by teachers, and available time is restricted, the pause duration dynamics found in this unrestricted task might not occur. In this case, the participants allocated time freely to think through each problem in a manner of their choosing, resulting in the pause dynamics found here.

Intersubjectivity and the L1
These results suggested that the L1 served an important role in participants' maintaining phatic contact and attaining intersubjectivity. The participants used their L1 to create a supportive environment where they could provide assistance and corrective feedback without hurting each others' pride. The use of L1 plays a "strategic cognitive role" (Anton & DiCamilla, 1998, p. 319) to establish intersubjectivity and collaboration, suggesting that L1 use is beneficial and perhaps inevitable for language learning since it allows learners to establish intersubjectivity and construct scaffolding help. Participants' high use of L1 while working on the near peer review task might make some language teaching professionals uneasy due to the assumption that L2 exposure and L2 production maximizes language acquisition. However, this study shed light on critical functions that L1 served for the learners as they collaborated on an L2 task during an extended time.

Private Speech
Participants appeared to use private speech to organize and direct their thoughts, and to reinforce some learned lesson amongst themselves. Private speech appeared as repetitions of L2 words or phrases. Sugiyama (1999) observed that a Japanese language learner repeated L2 words in peer interaction. She interpreted this as the learner's method to practise and memorize newly learned vocabulary. Private speech has been observed to occur when people face unfamiliar or difficult tasks (John-

Steiner, 1992), yet private speech encourages learners to pay specific attention to form, which is an important process in L2 learning (Suzuki, 2008).

We believe that taken altogether, participants' interactions using the L1 and L2 for their own purposes constituted scaffolding in which they worked collaboratively to solve linguistic problems. Even while using the L1 to discuss L2 points, participants discussed L2 linguistic forms they already knew by accessing their previous knowledge and defending their points as part of the near peer review task. This interaction was extended and provided an opportunity for the participants to share what they had learned and to make decisions by applying their previous knowledge. This was true even when they disagreed on solutions to "the problem" of correcting the homework of other learners (Liu & Hanse, 2002). This suggests he near peer review task allowed the participants to develop and reinforce foundational linguistics skills and knowledge (Christensen & Warnick, 2006) thus enhancing L2 acquisition.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have probed into the intricacies of naturally occurring interaction as two Japanese intermediate learners graded the written homework of high beginning Japanese language learners. Clearly, we would like to see more studies focused on near peer review tasks, and learners' interactions as they engage in them. Though this small study was not conducted necessarily to provide pedagogical implications, some notable observations were made. Mori (2004) mentioned that "once an analysis that is faithful to the data is completed, we should be able to draw some practical implications, which may not be decisive but may still be productive, for designers, trainers, and practitioners of the type of instructional discourse examined" (p. 547). This study demonstrated that the participants used their L1 and L2 for different purposes, and both languages served critical functions for furthering the task, and for language learning. We also found that long, cognitively productive pauses between participants while engaging in the task might be affected by time constraints, which always exist in typical classroom settings. Considering how much the participants used, unsolicited, the target language collaboratively and how much linguistics knowledge they could apply and reexamine by conducting the near peer review, this type of task might be a great opportunity for second language learning.

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About the Authors

Hiroaki Umehara is an instructor at Rikkyo University. He has an M.A. in applied linguistics from Texas Tech University. He previously taught Japanese classes at Texas Tech University and English at different English schools in Japan. His research interest lies in conversation analysis, materials development, language pedagogy, and teacher training.

Greta Gorsuch (Ed.D., Temple University, Tokyo) is a professor of applied linguistics at Texas Tech University. She currently teaches applied linguistics and ESL courses for adult learners, and is interested in international teaching assistant education, theory-based L2 curriculum and materials development, and L2 reading fluency.