Sociocultural investigation of students' use of English in the Japanese language classroom during collaborative group work

by

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Glossary

L1	Mother-tongue language
L2	Second language. Can also refer to subsequent languages learned
Lingua franca	a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different
TL	Target language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition

Summary

Language classrooms in Australian universities have become more multilingual in recent years. This is because of an increase in the number of international students as well as students who were born outside of Australia, but were brought up in Australia because their parents have migrated to the country. These factors have contributed to an increasing diversity of students in language classrooms and as a result, they have brought a unique aspect to Australian classrooms – learners do not share the same first language. Although English is a common language in Australia, it may be a student's second or third language. English is, however, the only language that makes learners' communication possible in diverse classrooms.

My teaching area, Japanese language, has also attracted many international students. Although students' mother tongue is not English, their English competencies are relatively high due to university entry requirements. Therefore, English is used for instruction and as the language for communication between students from various backgrounds. Language teachers, however, tend to restrict students' English use because there is a common perception that ideally only the target language should be used in language classes and the use of a student's first language or an equivalent should be kept to a minimum.

Since the introduction of the sociocultural approach into language teaching, more language teachers have introduced learning activities that involve peer or group work in their language class. This change in classroom dynamics, namely from a teacher-centered to a student-centered classroom, has allowed students to have more autonomous learning opportunities. This has resulted in students' requiring smooth communication amongst themselves in order to complete an assigned task on their own, and a language that makes communication possible is an indispensible tool for learning. However, there is currently little understanding of the role of English and the benefits or problems of English in terms of language learning, and there is no detailed investigation on the use of English as a *lingua franca* in group work.

This study is an investigation of the use of English as a medium for communication while learners are working on a task collaboratively. The study was carried out over a period of ten weeks during a semester-long Japanese course. A group of students who

enrolled in an advanced language course at a tertiary level was assigned to work on a given task and their dialogue was recorded for further analysis.

The study focuses on how English is deployed by learners to address linguistic as well as cultural aspects of Japanese. It also focuses on how English facilitates the group work itself and is deployed to effectively coordinate and manage the production of the task in Japanese. The analysis identifies that English as a medium of communication is an important resource for second language learning.

Declaration

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, are clearly acknowledged.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

As the world has become more globalised in recent times, more people have become interested in learning a second or third language. Especially in Australia, we see many people who are able to speak more than one language since Australia is a multicultural society with many migrants from various countries and most migrants are competent in English as well as, of course, their native tongue. Not only do migrants learn English as a second language when they arrive in this country, but many Australian children also start learning a second or an additional language of their choice at primary school. As Australia is a multicultural and multilingual society, languages education plays an important role in Australian education and national policy initiatives have taken place in order to enhance and improve languages education. In fact, languages have been included as one of the key learning areas in the National Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians released in 2008 (MCEETYA, 2008) and the Australian Curriculum, for which the draft was released in 2011 (ACARA, 2011). This means that the Australian government regards languages as integral to education and an essential part of the learning experience of all students in Australian education (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). With the implementation of the new Australian Curriculum, it is anticipated that more students at school level will learn languages from Foundation to Year 12.

At universities, not only domestic students but also many international students enroll in language courses in order to learn a second or an additional language. According to data

from Australian Education International, in August 2013 there were 462,411 international students enrolled in all sectors of educational institutions in Australia and 222,528 of those took up courses in higher education (International student data, 2013). Moreover, the Australian Social Trend released in July 2013 reported that the proportion of students born overseas rose from just under one in three (30%) in 2001 to 33 per cent in 2011 (ABS, 2013). This data indicates that Australian classrooms are becoming more multilingual. My teaching area, Japanese, is popular with Asian background students particularly Chinese and Korean at high schools in Australia (De Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). Although there are no statistics available for the number of international students who take up language courses at universities, from my own experience, language classes, including Japanese, attract many international students. For instance I always have students from other countries in my Japanese class every semester and have taught Japanese to students from European and Asian countries through my teaching career in Australia. In some years, nearly 50 per cent of the students in my class were international students, although the number has declined in recent years with figures of approximately 20 per cent in 2013. In addition, there are quite a few students who were not born in Australia but who grew up here because their parents had migrated to Australia and speak English as an additional language. Recent census data found that 30 per cent of all Australians were born overseas (ABS, 2011). These factors have contributed to an increasing diversity of students in language classrooms.

Teaching languages in Australia has a unique aspect in this sense – learners do not share the same first language. Although English is a common language in Australia, it may be a student's second or third language. English is, however, the only language that makes communication possible between learners in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Through my experience as a language educator, I have noticed that language teachers do use English in foreign language classrooms for various purposes; giving instructions, explaining grammar and so forth in Australia. However, it often appears that teachers feel guilty about speaking too much English in the classroom. Moreover, I have often

heard teachers tell students not to speak English and to speak only in the target language even on occasions where real communication was necessary, such as when students were trying to clarify what they were supposed to do. These practices can make students feel awkward when they need to use a language other than the target language.

As a student majoring in Japanese teaching as a second language, I was taught that only the target language, in my case Japanese, should be used when we teach a language. The use of the target language only was strictly applied to my English classes where English teachers used English only whether or not students in class understood what was happening or were engaged in the lesson. I was one of those who were left behind and lost interest in the subject. On the other hand, the teacher in my Chinese class used Japanese where necessary. The students in the class seemed to be more engaged in the lesson and we felt we learned something new in every lesson because the use of Japanese was allowed when we asked questions and most of all we could understand the teacher. This experience had led me to believe that it is important to have a language that enables communication between teacher and students and amongst students.

Furthermore, language as a tool for communication in language classrooms has attracted attention since language teachers adopted activities that require interactions amongst learners. Recent applications of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory have brought different perspectives in language teaching and learning (e.g., Brooks & Donato, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Swain, 2000, 2006). The theory claims that language is an important tool for learning and learning occurs in a social context. This fundamental idea of learning has opened a new avenue for research in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by showing how particular types of student interaction in the classroom can facilitate language learning. This approach to learning has motivated many researchers to investigate peer or group work and advocate for its deployment in classrooms (e.g., Ohta, 1995, 2000; Pica, Kanagy & Falodun, 1993; Swain, 2000). As a result of such work, language classrooms have changed from teacher-centered to student-centered and pair or group work activities have been introduced. Students have more

opportunities to solve a problem by themselves in order to accomplish the assigned task. This means that they need to exchange knowledge with each other in order to be able to fill any knowledge gaps. This change has also allowed students to have more autonomous learning opportunities. As a result, learners require effective communication amongst themselves in order to complete the assigned task on their own.

As more studies of learners' interaction are conducted within the framework of sociocultural theory, the dialogue that learners produce during interaction has become important as a unit of analysis in order to investigate the process of learning in detail. In other words, a language used during interaction needs to be carefully looked at in order to understand what is happening in terms of learning during learners' collaborative interaction.

This study was inspired by noticing that there are occasions when English as a tool of communication plays an important role during learners' collaborative interactions in language classrooms. English is the common language in Australia and obviously is spoken by domestic students but international students who take language courses at universities also have high levels of English due to university entrance requirements. Therefore, English is a shared language in classrooms. The aim of the present study is to investigate in detail the roles of English as a *lingua franca* while learners are working on a task collaboratively.

1.2 Research rationale

There are numerous studies on second language acquisition and theories derived from those studies including the Input Hypothesis and the Natural Approach Theory (Krashen, 1980, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) which have influenced second language acquisition research. Researchers have been seeking to find effective ways of second language teaching and learning by investigating various aspects of SLA (See Ellis, 1985a, 1985b; Long & Porter, 1985; Pica & Doughty, 1985; Pica, 1987).

In recent years, the use of classroom interaction for more effective learning has been brought to the attention of many educators and researchers, and this idea is derived from sociocultural theory by Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1978, 1986) argued that all human learning is mediated by semiotic tools such as language and learning occurs through interaction with other people. The concepts from sociocultural theory were firstly adopted in the general education field. In that field, much of the research has focused on interactions between learners, and interactions between learners and teachers or instructors. The studies, including peer collaboration, instructional conversation and small group work, all found that interaction is an effective way of learning (Forman, 1992; Goldenberg, 1992; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Webb, Troper & Fall, 1995).

Since Vygotsky's notions of learning have become widely recognised (Bayer, 1990; Bredo & McDermott, 1992; Cole, 1985; Vygotsky, 1994), many linguists and language educators have carried out research into the relevance of his theories in second language learning and tried to apply them to the second language classroom. There have been a number of ways in which such interactions have been applied to second language classrooms over the past few decades, including simulations (Jones, 1981), task-based learning (Pica, 1987) and output hypothesis (Swain, 1993).

Much has been written about the effect of interaction and most of the research has concluded that it is positive (Gass & Varonis, 1985, 1994; Long, 1983, 1985; Pica, 1994; Swain, 1985, 1993, 1995). However, these research studies have usually examined only learners' 'input' and 'output' in the target language, and have viewed interaction as a provider of comprehensible input. They have not investigated the process of interaction itself, the detailed content of learners' dialogue and most importantly the language used during the interaction, that is, learners' shared language, usually their first language (L1). This is because most of the earlier interaction studies were conducted within the framework of the cognitivist SLA, that was highly influenced by Krashen's (1982, 1985)

comprehensible input hypothesis, which claims that language acquisition is triggered when input is made comprehensible to learners.

As the sociocultural approach in the field of language teaching and learning has become more popular, the research focus in studies of interaction has changed. Researchers in the sociocultural tradition have perceived interaction as a process of learners' cognitive development and of knowledge co-construction (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Hall, 1997; Ohta, 1995; Swain, 2000). Moreover, learning is seen as a mediated process in a social context and language plays a crucial role as a primary semiotic tool in this process. With such views of interaction, many studies have been conducted on interaction, and in order to investigate the learning process in detail, learners' dialogues have been used as a unit of data for analysis.

Despite the introduction of new research approaches to the study of interaction, the majority of studies have tended to examine learners' use of the target language only during their interaction. This is because traditional second language acquisition research has been based on the idea that learners need to be exposed to and to produce the target language in order to become competent users of the language (Crawford, 2004), and widespread adoption of communicative approaches to language teaching, which encourages classroom activities to be designed in such a way as to maximise learners' use of the target language (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). Moreover, based on Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) and the Natural Approach Theory (Krashen and Terrell, 1983), second language teaching methodologies in the classroom have been influenced by a predominant belief in 'input' to the detriment of all else. That is, the prevailing belief has been that second language lessons must be conducted only in the target language so that learners are always exposed to as much as 'input' as possible in order for them to be able to acquire the target language.

This concept has led many language researchers and educators to believe that the use of learners' first language in the second language class is a 'sin'. Despite the fact that the need to use English is apparent in classrooms, there is still a common idea that learners

should communicate only in the target language in language classes in order to acquire the language effectively (e.g., Crawford, 2004; Dickson, 1996; Madylus, 2001) and this idea has been restricting language teachers' and learners' language choices. The restriction of language choices may result in preventing students from engaging in conceptual learning. Liddicoat (2008) has argued that language learning is a conceptual activity, which involves discussion and reflection about the language, culture and learning. That is, conceptual learning is 'a process of dialogue and reflection based around language and the culture that is embedded in it and communicated through it' (Liddicoat, 2008, p. 19). In order for learners to have dialogue and reflection, there is a need for a language that is proficient enough to do so. In other words, where there is no such language, there is no language learning.

Even most Vygotskian researchers who have investigated peer interaction in the context of learning a second language have not particularly drawn attention to learners' language choices including L1 or their shared language, although use of other language(s) other than the target language was recorded in the collected data in those studies. (e.g., Antón, 1999; Brooks & Donato, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ohta, 1995; Shieh, 1997; Swain, 2000; Takahashi, 1998). In other words, use of other language other than the target language in the second language classroom has been recognised by SLA researchers, however there has not been much discussion about it (Levine, 2003). Consequently, learners' use of their own language including L1 or their shared language has been ignored and excluded in SLA research.

After many years of the learners' own language being ignored, some researchers have started investigating the use of L1 from different perspectives and have claimed that L1 in the second language (L2) classroom has a role to play and have argued for the re-examination of its use (Atkinson, 1987; Auerback, 1993; Cook, 1999, 2001; DiCamilla & Antón, 1997; Franklin, 1990; Knight, 1996; Nation, 1997). Cook (1999, 2001) claimed that L1 can be used by teachers to convey meaning, to explain grammar and to organise the class, and for students, it can be used as part of their collaborative and

individual strategy use. There is also research in code-switching recognising the role of L1 (Hancock, 1997; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2004). Moreover, most research focuses on the teacher's use of the L1 and does not look into the details of learners' dialogue. There is also little empirical evidence identifying the role of the L1.

To begin filling this gap, Antón and DiCamilla (1998) conducted a detailed investigation of learners' dialogue and L1 use during collaborative interaction and found that the use of L1 is beneficial for language learning. The study has identified three important functions of L1: construction of scaffolded help; the establishment of intersubjectivity; and the use of private speech which regulates the learners' own mental activity. They concluded that 'L1 use provides, through collaborative dialogue, an opportunity for L2 acquisition to take place' (p. 328) and suggested that the L1 should be considered as one of the many cognitive tools used for learning. Other studies that investigated learners' L1 use during their interaction also found that L1 plays an important role in language learning (e.g., De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2000; Ohta, 2001; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003).

Although their findings shed light on the use of L1 during collaborative interaction, there has been very little empirical study done on the use of learners' shared language in multilingual contemporary classrooms.

As described above, students' backgrounds vary and the classrooms which accommodate these students inevitably become multilingual. In multilingual classrooms, learners do not share the same L1, however, in the case of Australian classrooms, they do have a common language, which is English. Therefore, English can be used for the instruction as well as the language for communication between students from various backgrounds.

Despite the fact that teachers and students do use English in a foreign language classroom and English seems to be playing some important roles in language classrooms, to this date, there have been hardly any detailed studies of learners' English use in language learning. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the language practices of

language learners who do not share an L1, but who do have high levels of ability in a common language that they use as a *lingua franca* in language learning.

1.3 Aims and significance of the study

The major aim of this study, therefore, to investigate the role of English as a *lingua franca* during collaborative interaction. It focuses on how English is deployed by learners to address linguistic as well as cultural aspects of Japanese. It also focuses on how English facilitates the group work itself and is deployed to coordinate and manage the production of the task in Japanese effectively. This study therefore aims to investigate the use of English in the second language classroom in a number of ways:

1.1 The study documents the ways that English is used in facilitating group work from the viewpoints of learners' understanding and organising the assigned task.
1.2 The study documents the ways that English is used in learning both the cultural and linguistic aspects of the target language.
1.3 The study also documents the ways that English is deployed as a starting point for L2 structures

Secondly, the study seeks to identify the roles of English in terms of an individual's learning during collaborative interaction within the framework of sociocultural theory.

The significance of this study lies in the expansion of knowledge with regard to the use of English as a *lingua franca* in the second language classroom, and in capturing the process of interaction and learners' development in second language learning. Therefore, by conducting an investigation of students' dialogue, especially focusing on the language used during learners' collaborative interaction, this study aims to contribute to the opening up of a new style of classroom dynamic and new directions in investigating second language learning.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

In Chapter 2, the theoretical framework of the present study will be presented along with a review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 presents the research design and the methodology used to address the research questions. In Chapter 4, detailed results and analysis of qualitative investigation addressed to research questions are presented. The chapter will be presented in four sections that focus on where English was most used in the data: (1) the use of English and facilitating students' collaborative group work; (2) the use of English in evaluating linguistic aspects of L2; (3) the use of English in addressing cultural aspects of L2 and (4) the use of English as a starting point for L2 structures. Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings outlined in Chapter 4 with further analysis. The chapter will discuss the roles of English revealed in Chapter 4 in detail in relation to the students' language learning. It will be organised in terms of five constructs: (1) English as a resource for identifying and solving problems; (2) English as a resource for exchanging perspectives on linguistic or cultural issues; (3) English as a resource for effective collective scaffolding; (4) English as a resource for distributed cognition and; (5) English as a resource for developing L2 structures. Finally, Chapter 6 consists of a summary of findings, an explanation of the contribution made by this study, implications for language learning, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

2 Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of English as a *lingua franca* when students are working on a task collaboratively from the framework of sociocultural theory. This study focuses on how students use English as a medium to address linguistic issues as well as cultural aspects of the target language (TL) during collaborative group work. It also investigates how the use of English facilitates students' group work and assists students to accomplish the given task efficiently.

In order to address the focus of the present study, the purpose of this chapter consists of five major sections: 1) conceptions on language and second language acquisition in mainstream SLA; 2) culture and language learning; 3) the sociocultural approach to learning; 4) interaction research and the sociocultural approach; and 5) research on the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom. The chapter will begin with a brief review of literature from mainstream second language acquisition research in order to understand the traditional views on second language learning and to compare those views with the recent sociocultural approach in second language learning. The second section will review literature about culture and language learning and explore the importance of learning the culture of the TL in language learning. The third section will focus on the important notions of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in order to understand how Vygotsky's explanations of learning have been influential first in the educational field in general and later in second language learning. One of the fundamental ideas in the sociocultural theory is that learning occurs in a social context. Since the present study

will examine the role of English as a *lingua franca* during students' group work, the fourth section will review past studies on learners' interactions from the viewpoints of cognitivist SLA research and the sociocultural approach. The chapter will conclude with a review of the literature investigating the role of L1 use in the L2 classroom as the use of L1 is most studied amongst learners' own language use in language classrooms. The review of literature will identify the need for further studies in the area of language use as a medium of communication by learners during collaborative interaction.

2.1 Conceptions of language and second language acquisition in mainstream SLA research

There has been much research conducted in second language acquisition in the past and many theories have been suggested in the area. The common perception that mainstream L2 acquisition research holds is that L2 learning occurs at the individual level and it is an isolated cognitive activity when an autonomous learner encounters 'input'. Atkinson (2002) metaphorised the learner in much SLA research as a 'lonely cactus in the middle of a lonely desert' patiently waiting for rain to come (p.525). The life-giving sustenance rain is a metaphor for 'input' and once learners are showered by this long awaited 'input', they suddenly become active and 'we watch the learner miraculously grow and change' (Atkinson, 2002, p.525). In this perception, language is viewed as being isolated from any social interaction or social context (Atkinson, 2002; Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Takahashi, 1998). This means that there is no acknowledgement of 'the constitutive relationship between language development and social interaction' (Ohta, 1995, p.94).

This view in mainstream cognitivist SLA research has been highly influenced by Krashen's monitor model, which consists of the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1985). His hypotheses were among the most influential theories within the cognitive tradition of SLA. The most well-known hypothesis in his monitor model is the input hypothesis. Krashen (1985) claims that 'humans acquire

language in only one way – by understanding messages, or by receiving "comprehensible input"' (p.2). In other words, language acquisition is triggered when input is made comprehensible to learners. According to Krashen, comprehensible input is defined as *i* + 1, where *i* represents the learner's current competence and 1 represents the learner's next level of competence in the natural order of development. This concept links to Krashen's natural order hypothesis, which claims that learners move along an order of development that results from understanding comprehensible input. Krashen also claimed that if sufficient comprehensible input is provided, 'the necessary grammar is automatically provided' (p. 2). Under Krashen's influence interaction in SLA has often been seen in terms of a way of providing comprehensible input and research in interaction has largely focused on how interaction does this.

Another highly influential theory of Krashen is the acquisition-learning hypothesis. In this hypothesis, Krashen (1985) claimed that language acquisition and language learning are separate processes. According to Krashen, acquisition refers to the 'subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilise in acquiring their first language' (p. 1) and learning refers to the 'conscious process that results in "knowing about" language' (p. 1). That is to say that acquisition occurs as 'the result of natural interaction with the language via meaningful communication' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 45), whereas learning occurs as 'the result of classroom experience, in which the learner is made to focus on form and to learn about the linguistic rules of the target language' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 45). Moreover, Krashen claimed a non-interface position between acquisition and learning, that is, learning does not lead to acquisition. In other words, learning which requires formal teaching of grammar and other linguistic knowledge does not turn into acquisition. This claim has led to the relegation of grammar teaching in language classes and is quite controversial because of Krashen's vague definition of subconscious and conscious processes.

Krashen's hypothesis has many theoretical inconsistencies, including the definition of comprehensible input and lack of clarity about who is responsible for second language

acquisition. Although Krashen defined comprehensible input as $i + 1$, there is no clear explanation about how to determine level i and level $i + 1$. Moreover, he claimed language acquisition occurs when learners understand the messages or receive comprehensible input, but Johnson (2004) argues that understanding messages is an individual matter whereas receiving comprehensible input depends on learner's external environment. It is therefore difficult to identify what is the cause of a learner's inability to acquire language. In relation to the problems with this hypothesis, Johnson concluded that Krashen 'confuses two paradigms (cognitive and social)' (p. 51). Although Krashen claims that second language acquisition is a solely a cognitive process, Johnson argues that the hypothesis inadvertently raises a need for an examination of the relationships between the learner's internal realities and the learner's social context.

Despite its inconsistencies and issues, Krashen's theory has been widely popular and has impacted on many subsequent research directions in SLA, such as Comprehensible Output Theory (Swain, 1995), the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1983), the Noticing Hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) and Incomprehensible Input (White, 1987). Johnson (2004) made a conjecture that the reason for its popularity is because of the natural approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), which is a method of teaching English as a second language that was developed on the basis of input hypothesis.

In sum, Krashen's input hypothesis has contributed significantly to SLA research in spite of its controversial nature. It has motivated fruitful discussions in the SLA research area and has prompted much research on the role of input, output and grammar teaching (Johnson, 2004). Most significantly, his hypothesis and SLA research motivated by his hypothesis have set off new perceptions in SLA research - from the cognitive tradition to the dialogical approach. The dialogical approach was developed as a reaction to the cognitive tradition proposed by scholars like Krashen. In this tradition, scholars have attempted to develop a new approach that 'heals the Cartesian dualism and restores the proper balance between external and internal human realities' (Johnson, 2004. p. 16). The ideas of the dialogical approach originated from the work of Vygotsky and Bakhtin,

but the most widely used conceptualisation of the dialogic approach is called the sociocultural approach.

The sociocultural approach, based on Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, is one of the most powerful frameworks in SLA research in terms of dialogical approach. Sociocultural theory was initially applied widely to general education fields and later in the area of SLA in the early 90s. The sociocultural approach has opened a new avenue to SLA research and created an opportunity to look at the process of second language learning from a different angle. I will explain the fundamental ideas in sociocultural theory in detail in a later section. One of the fundamental principles of the sociocultural theory is that learning originates in social activity. This view of learning is completely different from traditional SLA research, which views acquisition as a completely internal phenomenon. Kramsch (2000) summarised the impact of this perception on understanding foreign language learning as follows:

> From this perception, the FL learner is not viewed not as an individual mind, who, like a computer, is intent on assimilating certain linguistic structures, but as a social and cultural being whose psychological processes are first experienced as social processes of interaction with others and are only later internalized as individual cognitive processes' (Kramsch, 2000, p. 318).

When the view of language learning is shifted from individual level to social context, it is inevitable that every aspect of a learner such as his/her social and cultural composition or interactions with native speakers and their social and cultural composition or an environment of the classroom, has to be taken into account in order to understand language learning (Kramsch, 2000). This concept has led SLA researchers to give more attention to investigating cultural dimensions of language study.

In this section, I have reviewed some key ideas in the cognitive tradition of SLA and the newer, dialogical approach, which has been developed in reaction to the cognitive tradition. This tradition typically considers language as a code, not as social practice, and ignores the importance of the learning process. It explains that language is acquired by an individual solely. On the other hand, the sociocultural approach, the most widely

adopted theory in the dialogical tradition, takes into consideration the role of social context, environment, individuality and culture in order to understand second language acquisition.

Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) claim that there is an indispensable relationship between language and culture and suggest the importance for learners to engage with culture of the target language. In the next section, I will review the literature in regard to language learning and culture, and explore the recent development of introducing the learning of the culture of the TL in the language learning classroom.

2.2 Language and culture

Learning a second language is not all about learning linguistic aspects of the target language such as grammar and phonetics. When people engage in learning a foreign language, at the very same time they are exposed to cultural aspects of the target language either consciously or unconsciously. For instance, when learning how greetings take place in the target language, learners learn not only the words or phrases for the particular purpose but also the manner or body movement appropriate for the situation (e.g., Japanese bow to each other when they greet and the degree of bowing posture varies depending on the status of one's interlocutor). To sum up, as Kramsch (1993) noted, every time we use language we perform a cultural act. Language and culture are inseparable, that is, these two are 'intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture' (Douglas, 1994, p.165). In America, the new National Standard in Foreign Education issued by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages acknowledged the need for learning about cultures and contrasting with other cultures in language learning (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999). On the other hand, more recently, Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) have suggested that there is a fundamental relationship between language and culture and

stated that 'the nature of the relationship between language and culture is central to the process of learning another language' (p. 18).

Despite this recognition of the relationship between language and culture, when it comes to defining 'culture', there is no clear definition of it. This might be because culture is not easily accessible to be noticed, analysed and taught. As Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) state, 'culture is embedded in language as an intangible, all-pervasive and highly variable force' (p. 116). Douglas (1994) noted that, 'culture might be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts, and tools that characterise a given group of people in a given period of time' (p. 164). However, culture is in fact beyond the sum of its parts as made clear by Condon (1973) who defines it as 'a system of integrated patterns, most of which remain below the threshold of consciousness, yet all of which govern human behaviour just as surely as the manipulated strings of a puppet control its motion' (p. 4).

Culture has been theorised as the inherent attributes, beliefs and attitudes that are common to particular groups – for example, Chinese culture or Western culture etc. Based on this concept, some anthropologists assert that cultural patterns of behaviour have seven universals;

> (1) they originate in the human mind; (2) they facilitate human and environmental interactions; (3) they satisfy basic human needs; (4) they are cumulative and adjust to change in external and internal conditions: (5) they tend to form a consistent structure; (6) they are learned and shared by all the members of a society; (7) they are transmitted to new generations. (Murdock, 1961, pp. 45-54, cited in Douglas, 1994, p. 164)

Contrasting with this inherent concept of culture, there is a sociocultural view that suggests culture originates in and is constituted by everyday shared practices and social routines (Gutiérres & Rogoff, 2003). According to Gutiérres and Rogoff, culture cannot be inferred from an individual's ethnicity or race but from the way people live their everyday lives in local contexts. The authors write, 'people live in culture in a mutually constitutive manner in which it is not fruitful to tote up their characteristics as if they occur independently of culture, and of culture as if it occurs independently of people' (p. 21). Individuals develop by observing, and participating in cultural practices in a

community. By doing so, they develop resources to interact with others, and attain a repertoire of practices which they deploy as appropriate under different circumstances (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). Moreover, Cole and Engestom (1993) claim that culture 'is experienced in local, face to face interactions that are locally constrained and heterogeneous with respect to both "culture as a whole" and the parts of the entire toolkit experienced by any individual' (p. 15). Therefore, cultural differences in their view 'are attributed to variations in people's involvement in common practices of particular cultural communities' (Gutiérres & Rogoff, 2003, p. 21; cf. Moll, 2000; Rogoff, Mistry, Göncü, & Mosier, 1993).

In addition, Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) attempt to define the cultural factor in learning from the point of view of Intercultural Language Teaching (ILT). They use Jayasuriya's (1990) and William's (1977) paradigm of culture to define the concept of culture relevant to ILT. According to Williams, 'culture is best understood as an interrelated configuration of *archaic*, *residual* and *emergent*' (Williams, 1977, p. 63, cited in Crozet and Liddicoat, 1999, p. 114, original emphasis). The archaic culture 'carries the past-historical patterns which have a symbolic value even if no longer relevant, the residual culture represents the current, still effective, lived patterns of behaviour, and the emergent culture represents new ways of being/thinking in culture' (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999, p. 114).

Although these concepts enable us to track the origins of an individual's cultural behaviour, in order to understand the relationship between culture and individual behaviour, we need to think of culture only as a blueprint for action (Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999). Visible culture in individual behaviour does not always represent an abstract form of its historical cultural tradition (Jayasuriya, 1990). In other words, cultural behaviour and language use are selective as Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) claim that 'although an individual's use of language is to a certain extent "bound" by her/his native cultural blueprint, s/he is also capable of creating a personal unique expression in communication' (p. 115). This concept sheds light on language teaching and teaching

associated cultures, and it coincides with Gutiérres and Rogoff's (2003) assertion, mentioned earlier, that is, that individuals develop their own unique culture in everyday life while living in a community and use their developed cultural resources in order to communicate appropriately with others in the community. Thus, teaching culture should not be just teaching stereotyped cultural concepts based on historical cultural tradition, but the cultural contexts that create meanings in the language.

The sociocultural approach to language teaching and learning not only influenced understandings of the concept of culture but also language itself. Conventionally, language was seen as a code, that is, language is a collection of lexicon and syntactic rules. In this conceptualisation, language teaching and learning is all about teaching and learning vocabulary and grammar. Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) argue that this view of language teaching and learning is a narrow one and it does not 'explore the complexities involved in using language for communication' (p. 16). In contrast, the authors suggest that language should be considered as social practice as 'language is something that people do in their daily lives and something they use to express, create and interpret meanings and establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships' (p. 16). In this conceptualisation, language teachers are encouraged to bring students to engage with language learning, that is, students do not merely learn a body of knowledge of the language, rather, they participate in the meaning-making and interpretation processes of the language. This involves learning 'how to use words and rules and knowledge of language and its use in order to communicate with the speakers of the language' (p. 16). In other words, it is essential for language learners to know 'how that language is used to create and represent meanings and how to communicate with others and to engage with the communication of others' (p. 16). In this learning process, cultural knowledge is crucial as 'creating and interpreting meanings is done within a cultural framework' (p. 18). They assert that both the learners' and the target language's cultures as well as both the languages affect the meaning making process.

For the majority of language learners, the ultimate goal of learning a second language would be to communicate with others. To be an effective communicator in a second language, learners need to develop an awareness of the ways in which culture interrelates with language whenever it is used (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003). Liddicoat (2008) argues that when people start to speak using their second language, they not only use their linguistic knowledge to construct sentences but also explore its meanings within a cultural context. In this sense, learners need to acquire cultural knowledge as much as linguistic knowledge in their second language. When language learning is viewed as a meaning-making process in the cultural context of the target language, learning culture plays an important role in second language learning.

In addition, as discussed above, culture is seen as a repertoire of practice and nonverbal aspects ought to be included in the repertoire for conducting smooth communication. However, there has been little interest in the acquisition, or appropriation of nonverbal forms by L2 learners (McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000). According to Douglas (1994), nonverbal communication includes gestures and body language, eye contact, artefacts, kinaesthetic dimensions and olfactory dimensions. These nonverbal aspects should not be underestimated in communicating in L2 (Douglas, 1994; McCafferty & Ahmed, 2000) and more studies need to be conducted in the area in order to develop learners' communicative competence.

In this section, I have reviewed literature that has attempted to define the concept of culture and to explore learning about culture and language. The recent adoption of the sociocultural approach into the area of language teaching and learning has found that learning the culture of the TL plays an important role in learning the language. This is because language learning is perceived as a meaning-making process within a cultural context. The next section will explore some key ideas of sociocultural theory and their application to the field of education in general and SLA.

2.3 Sociocultural approach to learning

In recent years, the sociocultural approach to learning has been widely recognised among many educators and educational researchers, and it presents an innovative movement in teaching practices including 'Collaborative Group Work' (Norman, 1992), 'Instructional Conversation' (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore ,1988) and 'Scaffolding' (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976; Bruner, 1986). These approaches are based on a theory derived from the writings of Lev Vygotsky, that is usually called sociocultural theory. In his writings, Vygotsky (1978, 1986) explained how individual development occurs in social contexts and also highlighted the importance of two tools, cultural tools (language, number systems and representational systems) and cultural processes such as teaching, play, work and other social activities for individual development.

The sociocultural approach has also opened a new avenue for SLA research and created an opportunity to look at the role of interaction from a different angle. What follows next is an overview of the principal notions of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and various studies based on those concepts in the educational field.

2.3.1 Vygotsky's notion of learning in the Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky claimed that the development of any higher level cognitive functions are socially mediated. For instance, many people are aware that children learn language unintentionally in their daily life through the interaction with people. Vygotsky saw in this phenomenon evidence of the social origin of learning. He argued that there are two psychological stages in children's cultural development, in which 'every function in the child's cultural development appears twice, on two levels. First, on the social, and later on the psychological level; first between people as an *interpsychological* category, and then inside the child, as an *intrapsychological* category....all the higher functions originate as actual relations between human beings' (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57, emphasis added). To put this statement into individuals' learning, through joint problem solving

activities with the assistance from more knowledgeable peers, unskilled individuals acquire interpersonal knowledge or skills and eventually appropriate those into intrapersonal knowledge or skills. To be more specific, unskilled individuals are at first regulated by more knowledgeable peers during collaborative tasks, but gradually assume more responsibilities over newly acquired knowledge or skills and finally become capable to function independently or self-regulated. That is to say, sociocultural theory sees successful learning as 'involving a shift from collaborative inter-mental activity to autonomous intra-mental activity' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 195). Moreover, from a sociocultural point of view, learning is a mediated process by mediating tools including algebraic symbols, diagrams, gestures, and most importantly language, which I will discuss in the next section.

Vygotsky argued that the guidance of more competent others operated in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and defined the ZPD as:

> the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

In other words, the concept of the ZPD is the area between a level of knowledge or skill which children have already reached and the one which children are able to reach or have the potential to attain by good learning (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky, children have a basic knowledge or skill which enables them to recognise and comprehend. Children can reach this first stage by solving problems by themselves. Through problem solving under the guidance of someone who has better skills and knowledge, such as an adult, or in collaborative work with more advanced learners, children can reach an even higher level. This distance between the two stages in growth is defined as the ZPD.

In relation to the concept of the ZPD, the metaphor of scaffolding is another important notion in sociocultural theory. Scaffolding is a dialogical support given by more

knowledgeable or skilled people in order for novices to achieve something beyond his or her independent efforts (Wood et al., 1976).

The concept of ZPD has been widely adopted into the field of early childhood education in order to investigate children's cognitive development and many pedagogical theories have been suggested within the framework of the ZPD (cf. 'Instructional conversation' by Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and Gallimore and Tharp (1990); 'Situated cognition and cognitive apprenticeships' by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989); 'Guided participation' by Rogoff (1990); and 'Scaffolding' by Wood et al. (1976)). The concept of the ZPD has been modified, expanded and interpreted in different ways as researchers and educators have attempted to apply the notion to their own field of research or practice. The idea of the ZPD prompts educators about how to guide their students in order for them to develop their abilities beyond their current level because the ZPD does not stay still and continuously changes as learners constantly achieve their goals.

In sum, sociocultural views on learning and the notion of ZPD has been revolutionary and significant in the educational field to understand how learning occurs and it gives different perspectives on understand about learning. It has also been adopted into the area of SLA and has shed light on SLA research, especially the interpretation of the role of interaction, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

2.3.2 Language as a tool

Vygotsky (1978) claimed that language is not merely a tool for communication between people, but as a psychological tool, something each of us uses to make sense of experience. Language is also a cultural tool, which enables people to think together. Wegerif and Scrimshaw (1997) have claimed that psychologists and educationalists have neglected to investigate the sociocultural environment and have not referred to the language used when they have focused on human development. As Tharp and Gallimore (1988) point out, word meaning is a thread by which society weaves itself into one cloth.

According to these concepts, in which language is a powerful mediating tool in human development, it becomes evident that discourse is an essential aspect in the acquisition of knowledge of any kind. Bruner (1986) highlighted the importance of talk, arguing that 'children solve practical tasks with the help of their speech as well as with their eyes and hands' (p. 72), reflecting Vygotsky's perception of the importance of talk. Bayer (1990) has also drawn ideas from Vygotsky's theory and has proposed the collaborative-apprenticeship learning model, which stresses the use of exploratory talk, expressive writing in learning, peer collaboration, and meaningful problem-solving tasks. In this model, students are encouraged to socially construct knowledge beyond what they could do independently (ZPD) through peer collaboration. Moreover, students work collaboratively to make connections between new ideas and newly learned knowledge and use language as a tool for learning, and as a result they develop language and thinking competencies. In the process, the teacher does not play a traditional tutor's role but rather acts as a collaborator to facilitate their collaborative learning. Bayer's collaborative-apprenticeship learning model is an application of the notion of the ZPD, the use of language as a tool and learning in a social context, which are the principal ideas of Vygotsky's theory, to an actual classroom practice. This model has some similarity to language approaches to education (Warschauer, 1997).

Furthermore, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and Gallimore and Tharp (1990) took notice of the importance of dialogue and suggested an approach called 'instructional conversation'. They believed that instructional conversation is 'a medium, the occasion, the instrument for rousing the mind to life' (p. 109). Competent speakers, such as caregivers, assist children to complete and clarify the meaning of their utterances. This process, which is really language learning and teaching, usually occurs unintentionally in daily life, and is implemented through the use of actual dialogue. Gallimore and Tharp (1990) assert that 'adult dialogue provides meaning and significance to incomplete and truncated utterances of the child' (p. 96). As the caregiver responds to the child's attempts at conversation, he or she will correct or expand on the child's speech. From the child's point of view, language occurs when and where there is something to

communicate. Language learning is not the goal. The child learns language as a tool to achieve other tasks. The caregiver and the child 'create an intersubjectivity' (Gallimore & Tharp, 1990). As they exchange ideas, they learn from one another. The child learns more of the language and the caregiver learns more about the child's level of understanding. Gallimore and Tharp believe that the interchange of speech between two people is of enormous significance in language learning and literacy.

More in the general educational field, Mercer (1995, 1996; Mercer & Fisher, 1992, 1997, 1998) has been an advocate of exploratory talk and extensively studying the importance of such talk for children's learning in the classroom. Based on the idea of language as a tool for learning, the author argues that 'talk is now recognised as more than a means for sharing thoughts: it is *a social mode of thinking*, a tool for the joint construction of knowledge by teachers and learners' (Mercer, 1996, p. 374, original emphasis). Thus, exploratory talk is not only useful for individuals to reform or elaborate their inner thoughts but also for group members to assist in solving problems because they share ideas in collaborative interaction (Mercer & Hodgkinson, 2008). In order to explain how talk assists learning, Mercer and Fisher (1997) have identified three important roles that talk in classroom plays. They are: (1) providing information about determining a learner's ZPD; (2) being a main medium for scaffolding between the teacher and children or amongst children; and (3) evoking temporally distant contexts to link present experience and past knowledge, which learning and teaching usually requires. Their identification of roles of talk follows Vygotsky's principal ideas in learning, and is quite persuasive in arguing for the importance of talk in the classroom.

Vygotskian perspectives have consistently stressed the importance of language as the medium of learning. His theories viewed language as being more than the medium to exchange information between individuals, but the means of also providing the discourse which incorporates both cultural and social aspects. According to Vygotskian perspectives, at the core of peer collaboration are the interpsychological processes which occur through discourse with others. In the area of SLA, these perspectives have

prompted researchers to view and analyse learners' interaction and their discourse in different perspectives.

2.3.3 A Vygotskian approach to second language acquisition

The key ideas of sociocultural theory have influenced the view of how SLA takes place and how research on SLA should be conducted. Although sociocultural theory does not directly discuss SLA, the principal ideas including how learning takes place and children's language development have been well examined by scholars of SLA (e.g., Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Appel, 1994) and applied to the field of SLA. For instance, Vygotsky argued that children acquire their first language through meaning-making processes in collaborative activities with adults in their given culture. In the same way, second language learners develop their competence of the target language through collaborative activities. According to Vygotsky (1978), language learning is seen as an important cognitive function and is achieved through a socially mediated process by using mediating tools including language.

Another important idea Vygotsky suggested that is relevant to SLA is the idea of 'scientific concepts' and 'everyday concepts'. Vygotsky suggested that 'everyday concepts' were rich in personal meaning and embedded in everyday contexts of usage, whereas 'scientific concepts' were abstract and therefore more consciously and strategically acquired and required a higher level of learning.

Vygotsky (1986) asserted that first language acquisition was equivalent to the acquisition of everyday concepts, which he regarded as acquired 'unconsciously' without volition, attention or analysis. Second language acquisition, in contrast, was equivalent to the acquisition of scientific concepts that are acquired consciously and strategically. Vygotsky also suggested that learning a foreign language was a process that is conscious and deliberate from the start. It uses word meanings that are already well developed in one's native language, and the knowledge of one's own language such as grammar and

other linguistic knowledge also plays an important role in acquiring a foreign language. That is to say, it uses the semantics of the native language as its foundation. The argument Vygotsky makes is that students learning a second language must be aware of the underlying structure of the language. One of the benefits of second language learning is the growth of the awareness of the structures within one's native language.

The view that learners' first language affects the acquisition of their second language has led to the development of new ideas in the area of SLA. For instance, a recent study by Brooks, Swain, Lapkin and Knouzi (2010) has applied the concept of Vygotsky's scientific and spontaneous (everyday) concepts to language acquisition and has demonstrated how learners' development of voice in French (a scientific concept) involved making connections with voice in learners' first language (an everyday concept) through their talk about the concepts they were learning. The study by Brooks et al. (2010) found that talking about the concepts they were learning assisted learners to mediate between their existing concept (the everyday concept) and the new concept of voice in French (the scientific concept), and as a result learners were able to reshape their existing knowledge of language. In opening up such possibilities for research, Vygotsky's framework allows SLA research to be more holistic and the findings from the studies to be applicable to the real language teaching classroom.

2.3.4 Summary and conclusion

In summary, key ideas of sociocultural theory have not only influenced the general education field, but also the area of second language acquisition. The most significant aspect for SLA is that sociocultural theory views language learning taking place in social contexts. This changes the meaning and roles of interaction in SLA. What follows next is the comparison of interaction studies conducted both from cognitivist and sociocultural approach and it's implication to the SLA study.

2.4 Interaction Research and the sociocultural approach

The role of interaction has been at the centre of the study of second language acquisition. Many studies on interaction have been conducted in SLA research in order to examine the role of interaction and the relationship between interaction and second language acquisition. Early interaction research was prompted by Krashen's (1982, 1985) Input Hypothesis. Krashen's theory argues that second language acquisition results only from input and acquisition takes place automatically once learners are exposed to comprehensible input. Influenced by this view, the research emphasis on the role of interaction was on how interaction makes input more comprehensible, which, Krashen argues, facilitates second language learning.

The best known work in this area is the 'Interaction hypothesis' proposed by Long (1980, 1981, 1983). Long perceives interaction as a source of input and examined how learners could make the input they received more comprehensible through interaction. Swain (1985, 1993, 1995) criticised Krashen's emphasis only on input in language acquisition and proposed the 'Output hypothesis', which claims that comprehensible output is also required in second language learning. These theoretical claims have inspired researchers in SLA to conduct many empirical studies on interaction and second language acquisition (cf. Doughty & Williams, 1998; Schmidt, 1990; White, 1987). The common characteristics of these studies are that they focus only on the cognitive dimension of learning and ignore its social dimensions, and as a result the analysis of the data is usually quantitative, focusing on the amount of input and output. As a result, such research fails to examine the developmental processes found in the interaction itself (Firth & Wagner, 1997).

The theoretical and methodological shortcomings of interactionist research have attracted much criticism, especially since sociocultural theory was introduced into the field of SLA by Lantolf in the mid-1990s (cf. Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf & Appel, 1994). Advocates of sociocultural perspectives in SLA have criticised interactionist research as failing to investigate the learner-and-environment from a holistic perspective and to study

developmental processes as they occur moment-by-moment during interaction (Ohta, 2000). Ohta (1995) evaluated the views of researchers utilising sociocultural theory in order to research interaction in SLA (i.e., Brooks & Donato, 1994; Coughlan & Duff, 1994; Lantolf, 1995) and argues that, with the application of the framework of sociocultural theory, the analysis of L2 interaction studies changes:

> ….analysis moves beyond properties of individual learner language to examination of the creation of context, construction of task, coordination of goals, affective variables, learners' cognition, and learner collaboration in order to better understand how learners socially construct the shared understanding through which language is acquired. (Ohta, 1995, p. 96)

The adoption of sociocultural theory into L2 interaction studies has opened a new avenue for investigating the role of interaction and learners' developmental processes in a social context. The scholars in this tradition have suggested the incorporation of sociocultural perspectives into interactionist research on L2 interaction so that not only cognitive dimensions but also social aspects could be looked into in order to understand the processes of L2 acquisition in interaction. They also called for a methodological change, that is, the adoption of qualitative research into interaction studies in order to capture the learner's developmental processes that take place at each moment. Researchers have argued that introducing sociocultural perspectives into the study of L2 interaction complements interactionist study by overcoming some of its theoretical and methodological shortcomings (Lai, 2002; Ohta, 1995, 2000; van Lier, 2000).

In the next section, I will explore the study of L2 interaction according to these two traditions – the cognitive framework and the sociocultural framework – in order to understand how the study of L2 interaction has developed over the years and contributed to second language teaching and learning.

2.4.1 Interaction research in cognitivist SLA

Interaction research in cognitivist SLA was highly influenced by Krashen's (1982, 1985) comprehensible input hypothesis, which claims that language acquisition is triggered when input is made comprehensible to learners. Inspired by this hypothesis, a number of studies have been conducted on input. Early interaction research perceived interaction as a means of modifying input, and through interaction input becomes comprehensible and that leads to second language acquisition (cf. Gass & Varonis, 1985, 1994; Long, 1983; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Long & Porter, 1985; Pica, 1994).

One of the best known studies on L2 interaction in this tradition is the Interaction hypothesis suggested by Long (1983). Long investigated the interaction of 16 native speaker-native speaker pairs (NS-NS) and 16 native speaker-non-native speaker (NS-NNS) pairs while they carried out oral language tasks, such as informal conversation, giving instructions for games and playing a game. The study found that although there was little difference in the resulting discourse in terms of grammatical complexity between NS-NS and NS-NNS pairs, there were significant differences when the discourses produced by the two sets of group were analysed from the perspectives of conversational management and language functions. That is, the discourse produced by NS-NNS pairs showed conversational tactics such as repetitions, confirmation checks, comprehension checks or clarification requests in order to solve communication difficulties. Long argued that these collaborative efforts made by competent and less competent speakers of the language may be very useful for second language learning research because these modifications of the interaction to solve communication problems make the input more comprehensible and that more of the input becomes available for acquisition. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) state:

> Modification of the interactional structure of conversation….is a better candidate for a necessary (not sufficient) condition for acquisition. The role it plays in negotiation for meaning helps to make input comprehensible while still containing unknown linguistic elements, and, hence, potential intake for acquisition. (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p.144)

There were other types of input studies of interaction that appeared at the same time as Long proposed his Interaction Hypothesis. Swain's (1985, 1993, 1995) work on interaction led her to propose the Output Hypothesis, which claims that not only is comprehensible input necessary for second language acquisition but also comprehensible output. Her study of French immersion students showed that despite extensive amounts of comprehensible input over six to seven years, their level of language production, that is, writing and speaking skills, did not achieve a native speaker level. This finding led her to rethink Krashen's comprehensible input theory in which output is seen as a result of acquired competence and hence does not play any roles in any way for language acquisition. She then proposed that output also plays a role in acquisition. Following studies of students' language production, Swain (1995) concluded that the production of comprehensible output leads learners to notice a gap between what they know and what they do not know, and this pushes learners to have a desire to improve their language skills.

Swain (1995) identifies three functions of output: 1) noticing a gap in their interlanguage; 2) testing hypotheses; and 3) a metalinguistic function. The first function means that, through problems in their production of the language, learners may realise a gap between what they already know and what they do not know which otherwise may not be noticed. The second function is derived from research by Corder (1967) who claims the language learner has to test hypotheses about the language in order to acquire the language. Swain argues that producing the target language provides evidence of whether or not learners' hypotheses about the language are valid and whether the language produced according to these hypotheses is comprehended by interlocutors. Therefore, output enables learners to test what works and what does not work in the target language. The third is the metalinguistic function, through which output gives an opportunity for learners to reflect on the form and structure of the target language, which allows learners to take better control of the target language and internalise it. Swain's Output Hypothesis claims that because of these three functions output plays a significant role in acquisition of a second language.

Developing cognitivist studies of acquisition further, White (1987) argued that incomprehensible input might also be vital for second language learning. According to White, when learners encounter input that is incomprehensible because their interlanguage competence cannot evaluate the emergence of new forms of the target language, they have to modify those interlanguage rules to understand the structure. White claims that incomprehensible input gives learners negative evidence that facilitates language learning, that is, the incomprehensibility of some parts of the language input for the language learners draws their attention to particular features that need to be acquired. In this way, incomprehensible input can work in similar ways to comprehensible input to help learners' notice gaps in their current knowledge and so can influence their acquisition.

Noticing a gap in current knowledge is important for acquisition and Schmidt (1990, 1993, 1994) has argued that 'noticing is the necessary and sufficient condition for the conversation of input to intake for learning' (Schmidt, 1994, p. 17). This view is called the Noticing Hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, in order to acquire a language, learners must attend to and notice linguistic features of the target language otherwise input does not become intake for language learning**.**

Research on the role of interaction in SLA led Long (1996) to reformulate his Interaction hypothesis, referring to the series of studies of input and interaction. In his Updated Interaction hypothesis, Long has placed more emphasis on 'linking features of input and the linguistic environment with "learner-internal factors "' (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 174) and how such linkage could facilitate learners' language development. Long states:

> It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity, and that these resources are brought together most usefully, although not exclusively, during *negotiation for meaning*. Negative feedback obtained during negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of L2 development, at least for vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax, and essential for learning certain specifiable L1-L2 contrasts. (Long, 1996, p. 414)

Long has argued that learners do not simply need input, but they also need negative feedback in order to develop their language and that such feedback is not a usual part of comprehensible input. He has also introduced the concept of selective attention, with which, he argues, assists input to become intake. In his view, interaction plays an important role for language learning because interaction provides a way for learners to get such negative feedback as well as to give an opportunity for selective attention.

Apart from the studies on input and interaction which I discussed above, interaction researchers in the cognitivist tradition in SLA have studied various aspects of learner-learner or learner-teacher conversations during interaction, including negative feedback, selective attention and focus on form (cf. Ellis, 1985a, 1985b; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Gass & Varonis, 1985, 1994; Loschky, 1994; Pica & Doughty, 1985; Pica, 1987). The core concept of such studies, however, has remained the same – the focus is on how L2 input is negotiated by learners and how it becomes comprehensible, in other words, how interactions allow input to become intake for SLA. Interaction is seen as important because it facilitates comprehension of input (Pica, 1994). The process through which input is modified to a comprehensible form is referred to as negotiation, which Pica (1994) defined as 'modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility' (p. 212). Having this view, the role of interaction in this tradition is perceived only as a provider of comprehensible input and the research focuses only on cognitive aspects of learning, in line with the core theoretical assumptions of cognitivist theories of language acquisition.

Because of the focus on input, from the methodological point of view, the analysis of the data has been purely quantitative and focuses on the amount of input and output and as a result, studies of interaction have failed to examine the developmental processes found in the interaction (Firth & Wagner, 1997). Moreover, most of these studies have tended to be conducted in experimental settings and have been centred on investigating the mechanisms or constituents of the interaction. That is, as Ohta (1995) has stated,

'language is viewed as separate from its sociocultural context, as a culturally and affectively neutral bearer of propositional context' (p. 95). Atkinson (2002) criticised the view of language in cognitivist SLA by stating that 'language is intricately but dramatically interwoven with human's other means of ecological adaptation and activity, and removing it from that context comes at a real cost' (p. 536) and thus 'any approach to language and its acquisition which ignores or dismisses the basic functionality of language for human beings in society is lacking descriptive and theoretical adequacy' (p.535). This means that studies of interaction for second language acquisition need to attend more to the ways in which interaction works to mediate learning rather than focusing only on language as input for learning.

In recent decades there has been growing criticism of the view of the language, language learner and research approaches in cognitivist L2 acquisition. These criticisms have come mainly from researchers who are working within the framework of a sociocultural approach to learning such as that proposed by Lantolf and Appel (1994). They have criticised the view of learners in cognitivist SLA, that they are given only a passive role as processors of input and producers of output (Ohta, 2000). Lai (2002) has also summarised the view of cognitivist SLA on learners as 'deficient communicator and passive processors of fixed knowledge they received from their interlocutors' (p. 14). In terms of research on interaction, the perceived shortcomings of cognitivist studies has led researchers in SLA to attempt a different approach to investigating learners' interaction and the language development process in a social context. Researchers like Donato (1994) and Ohta (1995, 2000) have proposed that a sociocultural approach in studying interaction will complement the shortcomings of interactionist research by providing different perspectives on language learners, language and the role of interaction in SLA.

2.4.2 Interaction research within a sociocultural framework

As I discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, sociocultural theory views learning as a mediated process and language plays a crucial role as a primary semiotic tool in this

process. The theory also claims that all the learning occurs twice, first between people and later within the individual, and learners are not passive receivers of comprehensible knowledge or skills, rather they are treated 'as active and creative participants' (Hall, 1997, p. 303) during the learning process. Researchers in the tradition of the sociocultural approach have applied these core concepts of the theory in order to investigate SLA including the study of interaction. From the viewpoint of the sociocultural approach, interaction is perceived as a process of learners' cognitive development. Unlike research on interaction in cognitivist SLA, in which interaction is seen as important because it facilitates input becoming comprehensible, interaction studies in the framework of the sociocultural approach treat interaction as a process of knowledge co-construction (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994; Hall, 1997; Ohta, 1995; Swain, 2000). That is, by actively participating in linguistic problem-solving tasks, language learners are able to co-construct knowledge collaboratively. Here interaction is a powerful and significant means for language learning.

Vygotsky (1978) proposed a new method for the investigation and analysis of human psychological development. According to Vygotsky, the relevant form of analysis is an analysis of the processes of learning rather than an analysis of the object learned in order to capture the very moment of human mental development, which in his words is to 'grasp the process in flight' (p. 68). Vygotsky explained that his reasons for proposing this new approach were because 'any psychological process… is a process undergoing changes right before one's eye' and 'the development in question can be limited to only a few seconds, or even fractions of seconds' (p. 61). Wertsch (1985) refers to this domain as microgenesis and its study as microanalysis.

In terms of SLA research, Wertsch (1985) argues that language acquisition is the internalisation of the language through social interaction from the interpsychological plane to the intrapsychological plane and occurs through the process of microgenesis and, therefore, a microanalysis of learners' interaction would facilitate investigating the learning process. Hall (1997) also stresses the importance of investigating the process

not the object as what counts as data 'is not the endpoint or outcome that is of interest. Rather, it is the process of appropriation itself that is theoretically compelling' (p.81), since in sociocultural theory it is understood that learners appropriate and internalise new knowledge or skills through collaborative interaction. Furthermore, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) argue that 'the study of development…is the study of how meditational means are appropriated by the individual as a result of dialogic interaction with other individuals' (p.467).

In summary, the study of interaction in a sociocultural framework perceives the role of interactions as a knowledge construction process and the dialogues during interaction should be used as the basic unit of analysis to document microgenesis in order to study learners' language development.

The next section reviews previous studies of interaction conducted within the framework of sociocultural theory and some of the important concepts derived from Vygotsky's ideas, such as the concept of 'languaging' proposed by Swain (2006) and 'collective scaffolding' proposed by Donato (1994).

2.4.2.1 Dialogue and languaging

The sociocultural approach starts from the assumption that interaction and meaningful language exchanges are crucial for individual learning. It is for this reason that Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993) have asserted that a second language is best learned and taught through interaction. They argue that:

> In interaction-based pedagogy, classroom opportunities to perceive, comprehend, and ultimately internalise L2 words, forms, and structures are believed to be most abundant during activities in which learners interact with their interlocutors, whether teachers or other learners, can exchange information and communicate ideas. Such activities are structured so that learners will talk, not for the sake of producing language as an end in itself, but as a means of sharing ideas and opinions, collaborating towards a single goal, or competing to achieve individual goals. (Pica, Kanagy & Falodun, 1993, p.11)

In their view, interaction is perceived as a means of cognitive development between learners and the result of interaction – that is discourse – has been acknowledged as a central feature of the learning process. Using Vygotskian terminology, discourse provides the interpsychological context for development. Through different types of discourse, then, it becomes possible to facilitate different intrapsychological processes within each individual. Vygotskian perspectives have consistently stressed the importance of language as the medium of learning. His theories viewed language as being not only the medium for exchanging information between individuals, but also providing the means of incorporating both cultural and social aspects of language learning.

With this perspective on the role of language, interaction studies within the sociocultural framework have investigated the process of individual learning such as a learner's dialogue during interaction. Brooks and Donato (1994) have investigated learners' speech during interaction to determine what learners are accomplishing during a face-to-face activity in the classroom. The data consisted of the students' speech from a secondary-level course in Spanish. The way Brooks and Donato collected and analysed the data for their study was different from cognitivist SLA interaction research. The authors stated that 'Vygotskian analysis of second language verbal interaction can extend beyond the encoding-decoding framework of second language research by providing specific examples from student production during a two-way information gap task that reveal the interrelatedness of speaking and thinking' (p. 264). They looked at speech activity from three specific instrumental functions identified by Ahmed (1988): (a) speaking as object regulation; (b) speaking as shared orientation; (c) speaking as goal formation. Speaking as object regulation refers to how learners think about, comprehend and control the task itself through their talk. Speaking as shared orientation means that learners establish a joint perspective on the task, which Rommetveit (1979) calls 'states of intersubjectivity' (cited in Brooks & Donato, 1994, p. 266). Speaking as goal formation is the way learners construct individual or common goals or plans during interaction. Brooks and Donato's data revealed that 'when learners interact verbally

during a task, they do more than simply encode and decode messages about the topic at hand' (p. 271). According to their investigation, learners actively engaged to control the problem-solving task verbally by orienting themselves to the task, establishing shared perspectives on the task and constructing common goals or plans in order to accomplish the task. During interaction, non-relevant task talk was also observed, but Brooks and Donato claim that such talk was crucial in 'mediating the participants' control over the language and procedures of the task' (p.271). Vygotsky (1986) called this control 'regulation'. He believed that human cognitive processes such as thoughts and memory are firstly regulated by others, and as cognitive development proceeds, it transitions from other-regulated to self-regulated. Being self-regulated means that acquired knowledge has been internalised, in other words, learned. Therefore, what appears to be non-relevant task talk is important for learning and language plays a critical role in regulation.

In relation to the transition of learners to being self-regulated, Brooks and Donato (1994) found that students were engaged in a form of 'metatalk', that is, talk about the task. Such talk plays a central role in learning because it enables 'learners to establish control of the discourse and the task by explicitly commenting on their linguistic tools used in its construction' (p. 268). In Vygotsky's theory, metatalk is metacognition that is constructed through semiotic tools such as language. This type of talk also contributes to learners establishing shared understanding or intersubjectivity on and about the task, which is a basis for further learning (Mercer, 1996). In accordance with the study by Brooks and Donato, the metatalk was often done in their first language, English. It is natural for learners to use their first language in order to develop shared understanding and metacognition because of the greater command they have over the language. This finding is relevant to the research question of the present study. Brooks and Donato claimed that this type of data - learners' dialogue in their first language - is irrelevant to the task and would have been ignored in research on interaction in cognitivist SLA because of the use of the L1 and their theoretical position that 'language learning activity must be viewed as cognitive activity and not merely the rehearsal and eventual acquisition of linguistic forms' (p. 273). Their study allowed them to look into the

learning process in detail and capture what was happening amongst learners moment by moment while they were engaged in a problem-solving task.

In order to investigate the developmental process of SLA focusing on emergence of learners' ZPD, Ohta (1995) collected and analysed the speech of students who were participating in pair-work tasks in a classroom. The study found that meaningful interaction assists students' development in their ZPD. That is students who were engaged in pair-work tasks were able to perform at a higher level of competence. Furthermore, she concluded that peer interaction 'provides learners with the opportunity to apply their developing competence to their own language use through self-correction and refinement of their own utterances' (pp. 116-117). In other words, learners transitioned to the self-regulated stage, that is, knowledge was internalised and language development occurred. This is further evidence of learners' speech playing a crucial role in regulation and language development during collaborative interaction. Ohta also found that students with different levels of competence were able to help one another through prompting and correcting errors. This action is what Donato (1994) called 'collective scaffolding', which I will discuss in the next section.

These examples of past studies of interaction within the sociocultural paradigm show that the focus on the research has moved beyond the input-output interaction studies to the process of learning, and the unit of analysis is learners' talk or dialogues. The analysis and findings from these studies have presented interesting insights in second language learning. Firstly, learners' dialogue or talk during interaction is found to be aiding several important aspects in second language learning including establishment of learners' intersubjectivity, transition to self-regulation and production of their metatalk. Secondly, talk during meaningful interaction helps the development of learners' ZPD. Thirdly, learners are capable to assist each other to solve problems through talk. The data has brought out learners' active engagement with problem-solving by orienting themselves to the task and establishing intersubjectivity about the task and common goals and strategies for completing the task. This shows that the learners are neither passive

receivers of input nor do they produce output simply for the sake of doing it. Furthermore, not only the talk about tasks but their non-task relevant talk also assists learning because such talk leads learners to self-regulate their newly acquired knowledge. This metatalk, which is talk about the task, contributes to developing shared understanding and is often done in learners' first language. Moreover, peer-interaction prompts learners to move from one side of ZPD to the other side of ZPD by learners' providing scaffolded help to each other. Hall (1997) asserted that researchers need to investigate what teachers and students are doing with their talk rather than what they are talking about (p. 305) as talk is a primary pedagogical tool and interaction plays an important role in 'defining and guiding learners' development of communicative competence' (p. 305).

Further to Hall's (1997) suggestion and findings from other studies, Swain (2000) highlighted that dialogue assists language development and is thus an essential feature in SLA. She argued that collaborative dialogue between language learners is a 'knowledge building dialogue' (p. 97) and defines it as follows:

> It is dialogue that constructs linguistic knowledge. It is what allows performance to outstrip competence. It is where language use and language learning can co-occur. It is language use mediating language learning. It is cognitive activity and it is social activity. (Swain, 2000, p. 97)

This quote explains the role of dialogue in SLA within the Vygotskian perspectives. She acknowledged that language use in dialogue mediates language learning, which follows Vygotsky's belief that all human cognitive development is mediated by tools such as language.

Swain's (2000) definition of the role of dialogue and language in SLA quoted above results from many studies of interaction. Swain has conducted several interaction studies in similar settings and discovered some limitations in studies carried out within the earlier framework. Swain's investigation of instances of dialogue where students talked about the language is called a language-related episode (LRE) (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 1998). According to Swain and Lapkin (1998), an LRE is 'any part of a dialogue where

language learners talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others' (p. 326). This is what Brooks and Donato (1994) called 'metatalk' and as they found in their study, dialogue between students including LREs serve as a tool both for L2 learning, and for communicating (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). The students used both L1 and L2, and language was used as a tool to regulate students' cognitive activity. The authors especially noted that L1 use helped students to consider L2 equivalent words/expressions and was a tool to frame the produced L2 as an object so that students could make necessary changes and reflected upon it. L1 is also acknowledged as an important meditational tool in self-regulation as found in the study of Brooks and Donato.

Swain (2000) has broadened her approach to analysing learners' dialogue from within a focus specifically on language related dialogues to investigating all the dialogue that was produced by learners, which allowed her to examine learners' language developmental processes in an in-depth way. She stressed the importance of collaborative dialogue because it prompts learners to construct new knowledge. This concept is based on the perspective of mind found in sociocultural theory, in which 'internal mental activity has its origins in external dialogic activity' (p. 113). This approach to investigating learners' dialogue has led her to propose a new conceptualisation of learners' output as 'languaging' (Swain, 2006; Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki & Brooks, 2009). Languaging is defined as 'the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language' (Swain, 2006, p. 89). In defining languaging, Swain (2006) has argued that it articulates and transforms learners' inner thoughts into artifactual forms and this means that these thoughts become a resource for reflection. Languaging mediates learners' further reflection, and results in their understanding and creating new knowledge. In other words, examining learners' languaging can shed light on the mechanisms of second language acquisition and, as a consequence, may be able to suggest a more effective way of language teaching.

Using the concept of languaging, Swain et al. (2009) conducted a study of university students who were learning French as a second language. The study found that languaging plays a key role in the internalisation of the grammatical concepts of the L2. They concluded:

> by externalizing their thoughts (i.e., by using language to mediate their cognitive processes), students came to understand what they did and did not know, what information they had to seek out to complete their understanding, and what inferences they needed to make to have a coherent conceptual understanding. The more they externalized their thoughts, the more able they were to monitor and self-assess them, transforming them from a surface understanding to a deeper conceptual one. This deeper understanding, internalized through languaging, provides a strong basis for its application. (Swain et al., 2009, p. 21)

The notion of languaging perceives interaction itself as an actual cognitive process, and thus, taking a part in languaging means learners are in fact actively participating in the learning process. The concept of languaging has promoted other studies of learners' dialogues and SLA (cf. Brooks et al., 2010; Knouzi et al., 2010) and these studies have further illustrated how languaging mediates second language learning. Brooks et al. (2010) conducted a study focusing on Vygotsky's distinction between everyday concepts and scientific concepts. The authors found that learners were able to make a new connection between language forms that learners were familiar with both in their first language (everyday concepts) and their L2 and the grammatical concepts of the L2 (scientific concepts) through languaging. This means that languaging contributes to conceptual learning, which Vygotsky described as, '*a complex and true act of thinking* that cannot be mastered through simple memorization' (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 169, original emphasis). Knouzi et al. (2010) also found in their study that languaging mediated conceptual development of learners and assisted learners' internalisation of new knowledge about the L2. The authors also suggested that languaging is a tool for self-scaffolding that is used for solving cognitive conflicts, mediating mental processes and constructing meaning in general. It can be said that the concept of languaging has shed new light on the study of interaction in SLA within the framework of sociocultural theory.

In studies of languaging, learners have been seen as assisting each other through their dialogue. As a result, researchers have begun to consider how such interactions relate to the concept of 'scaffolding' and have come to argue that through interaction students scaffold learning for each other. This type of scaffolding has been called 'collective scaffolding'. This idea will be discussed in the next section.

2.4.2.2 Collective scaffolding

'Scaffolding' is one of the essential concepts in sociocultural theory. It is often discussed together with the concept of the ZPD to explain the mechanism of learning. The term and concept of scaffolding was widely disseminated by Wood et al. (1976) as a metaphor for a mother's verbal efforts to maintain a conversation with a child and, indirectly, to promote language acquisition. This metaphor was first extended in educational psychology in order to apply it to interactions between tutors including teachers and less skilled people such as students engaged in a problem solving task and their relationship to learning. The most noticeable form of scaffolding is expert-novice interaction that 'involves the expert taking control of those portions of a task that are beyond the learner's current level of competence, thus allowing the learner to focus on the elements within his or her range of ability' (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998, p.235). According to Wood et al., successful scaffolding help provided by an expert to a novice is characterised by six functions: (a) recruiting the tutee's attention; (b) reducing degrees of freedom in the task in order to make it manageable; (c) keeping direction in terms of the goals; (d) marking critical features; (e) controlling frustration; and (f) modelling solutions. All of these activities have a role in shaping the action of problem solving as an interactive accomplishment of learning.

Michell and Sharpe (2005) conducted a study on instructional scaffolding and discovered that there are two perspectives about scaffolding in classroom interaction research conducted within the framework of sociocultural theory. These perspectives are scaffolding as 'task-enabling support' and scaffolding as 'language-mediated co-

regulatory activity' (p. 32). According to Michell and Sharpe, many researches have emphasised that scaffolding is not just a simple support or guidance by a teacher to a student, rather it should be considered as 'provision of task-enabling support' (p. 32). They quoted a definition of scaffolding by Maybin, Mercer and Stierer (1992) as follows:

> (Scaffolding) is help which will enable a learner to accomplish a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own, and it is help which is intended to bring the learner close to a state of competence which will enable them eventually to complete such a task on their own. (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer, 1992, p. 188)

Experts including teachers often assist learners to accomplish tasks which are new or difficult and the way experts provide learners assistance is considered as a type of scaffolding. Therefore, Michell and Sharpe (2005) have suggested that scaffolding can be understood as 'assisted accomplishment of new or difficult tasks' (p. 32). Through completing tasks with the scaffolded help by experts, novices are able to co-construct knowledge within their ZPD. In other words, scaffolding has an important role in an individual's learning and in order to provide effective scaffolded help to a novice, an expert ought to be aware of not only how the task should be completed but also what to expect while the novice is performing in order to complete the task. This means that successful scaffolding depends on how skilfully the expert manages the interaction between the task and the demands of the novice (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000).

The second perspective on scaffolding derives from Vygotsky's (1978) conception of language as a semiotic tool. During the interactions between a teacher and students in a particular classroom, dialogue between them mediates the individual's understanding of the content of the lesson and the objectives set by the teacher. Michell and Sharpe (2005) argue that 'participation in such dialogue affords students opportunities to appropriate new ways of doing, speaking and thinking' (p. 34). Thus, scaffolding can be seen as a 'language-mediated co-regulatory activity' (p. 32).

The idea of scaffolding has been applied to the field of second language acquisition and much research has been done in order to understand the connection between classroom

interaction and second language development and ultimately to seek an effective way of teaching a second language. De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) have identified scaffolding in L2 as one of 'supportive behaviours, adopted by the more expert partner in collaboration with the L2 learner, that might facilitate the learner's progress to a higher level of language development' (p. 53), referring to the concept of the ZPD in L2 development put forward by Ohta (1995):

> The ZPD is the difference between the L2 learner's developmental level as determined by independent language use and the higher level of potential development as determined by how language is used in collaboration with a more capable interlocutor. (Ohta, 1995, p. 96)

Research on scaffolding in L2 interaction first focused on tutor-tutee scaffolding, which is similar to the tradition in educational psychology (cf. Adair-Hauck & Donato, 1994; Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) studied negative feedback given by a tutor and found that the amount of negative feedback should be carefully considered because each learner's ZPD varies and giving too much intervention inhibits learner's self-regulation. Adair-Hauck and Donato (1994) also conducted a study applying the concept of scaffolding between tutor and learner. The study investigated discourse strategies and responsive instruction by the teacher within learners' ZPD. The study found that the tutor gave less directive and explicit instructions to the learner as the learner gained task control in the progress of the lessons. Both studies suggest that the amount and type of scaffolding should be carefully monitored as learners transition within their ZPD.

Studies of scaffolding have also examined the nature of learner to learner interaction (e.g., Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Takahashi, 1998; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996). These studies found that activities that are similar to those found in interactions between experts and novices can also be identified in interactions between learners. Donato's (1994) study of peer interaction and scaffolding investigated how students' mutual assistance influences each other's language development during their collaborative work. He found that regardless of their linguistic

abilities, students were able to provide scaffolded help to each other and that help contributed to develop their language abilities to go beyond their independent level within ZPD. Moreover, Villamil and De Guerrero (1996) investigated peer-peer revision activities on their written scripts of Spanish speaking students in an ESL class. The study found that students used five different mediating strategies in order to facilitate the revision process including providing scaffolding. To be more specific, students provided scaffolded help to each other to overcome problems by using sub-strategies that the authors identified. The sub-strategies which appeared most were advising and responding to advice, eliciting and responding to elicitation, reacting, and requesting clarification. Although the pairs were formed in a way where the reader (slightly more capable) gave assistance to the writer (less capable), their mutual help moved to and from readers and writers. They were able to achieve the goal of the task as a result. A study by Takahashi (1998) also illustrated that learners were capable of providing mutual scaffolding in order to accomplish a task. Takahashi conducted a qualitative observation of a Japanese FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary School) program for three years. The study revealed that learners became more capable of providing mutual assistance during classroom activities as their language competencies developed. It also found that the way learners gave mutual assistance reflected the way teachers helped learners. Takahashi argued that this indicates that 'the learners' learning and development were largely influenced by the social interaction established in the given classroom environment' (p. 392). The findings in these studies in peer scaffolding have shown that peer scaffolding, which Donato calls 'collective scaffolding', can be an effective way to learn a second language, as each member of the group contributes different skills and areas of expertise to the task and knowledge shifts between the group members (cf. Antón, 1999; Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Davin & Donato, 2013; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ohta, 1995, 2000, 2001; Shieh, 1997; Swain, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 1995; Takahashi, 1998; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996).

In terms of the relationship between L1 use and scaffolding during learners' interaction, Anton and DiCamilla (1998) have found that the use of L1 is an 'indispensable device

for students in providing each other with scaffolded help' (p. 314), because it enables certain types of interaction to occur which would not be possible in the L2. The findings in their study showed that the L1 plays a key role in accessing linguistic forms, and has a metalinguistic function when learners have to produce or understand complex linguistic structures. The L1 was also used in evaluating and understanding the meaning of L2 texts while learners were providing scaffolded help. Furthermore, De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) have argued that the L1 in scaffolding is a tool for task control and facilitates students' interaction. They also found that the use of the L1 to talk about the task was considered as valuable because it 'promoted achievement of the goal and stimulated reflection, reconsideration, and restructuring of the L2' (p. 64).

In summary, these studies show that the L1 is an important tool in order to facilitate the mechanism of scaffolding. Although the focus of the present study is not the use of L1, the students used English like their L1 as English was their most proficient language and English was the only language that enabled them to communicate without any linguistic constraints. Therefore, the findings from past studies should be applicable to the present study. I will further look at past studies on L1 use in L2 interactions in the later section of this chapter.

2.4.2.3 Creating intersubjectivity and SLA

A review of studies suggests that interaction studies within the sociocultural framework allow us to gain new insights about the learning process of learners and to understand the mechanism of second language acquisition. During interaction, learners use language, both L1 and L2, as an important semiotic tool and assist each other by providing scaffolded help in order to accomplish the given task. There is, however, another important element that is essential for learning to occur during interaction, that is, the establishment of shared understanding, or what Rommetveit (1979) called intersubjectivity, between learners and between the teacher/instructor and learners. Without shared understanding, little group learning can take place and therefore shared

understanding is considered crucial for the quality of learning in interaction (Mulder & Swaak, 2002).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that learning occurs firstly in a social context and language learners' development occurs as a consequence of participating in a joint problem solving activity. Furthermore not all social interaction necessarily contributes to human higher mental development, and in order for growth of thought to occur for any individual, interactions need to operate within the ZPD of that individual. Only when individuals interact within each other's ZPD, can intersubjectivity be attained (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997). According to Tudge (1992), intersubjectivity is achieved when:

> [I]individuals come to a task, problem, or conversation with their own subjective ways of making sense of it. If they then discuss their differing viewpoints, shared understanding may be attained….in the course of communication, participants may arrive at some mutually agreed upon, or intersubjective, understanding. (Tudge, 1992, p. 1365)

This quote explains that individuals with their own perspectives may reach intersubjectivity as a result of collaborative interaction. Antón and DiCamilla (1998) also explained intersubjectivity using Wertsch's (1985) claim that intersubjectivity is attained 'when individuals working in collaboration define the objects (both concrete and abstract), events, and goals of a task in the same way' (p. 236). In this view, whether interaction is between teacher and students or between learners, without attaining intersubjectivity, participants in interaction cannot give or request appropriate support and, as a result, development does not occur. It is crucial for individuals' growth of thought within the ZPD that group members reach mutual understanding of the topic during any collaborative group tasks (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997). Antón and DiCamilla have argued that effective interaction that leads to learners' development within their ZPD must 'not only achieve the functions of scaffolding but also establish and maintain levels of intersubjectivity' (p. 236) because intersubjectivity may be established at many different levels as learners work though the task.

In a study of teacher-learner interactions, Adair-Hauck and Donato (1994) found that the teacher was able to establish intersubjectivity with the learner during instructional scaffolding, and that this led the teacher to give appropriate responsive feedback to the learner within the learner's ZPD. The authors observed how intersubjectivity between the teacher and the learner were established and one indication of emerging intersubjectivity was that the teacher and learner were at first using two separate subjective words, 'I and you', but as the ZPD lesson progressed the word changed to 'we', reflecting a greater level of sharing of ideas and concepts. De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) studied peer scaffolding and analysed dialogues produced by learners. The study illustrated how two learners engaged in pair-work gradually established intersubjectivity while working on a set task, which involved revising a narrative text written by one of them. As the task progressed, the learners were tuned into what needed to be done and reached the stage where they could work on the task without discussing what to do. De Guerrero and Villamil argued that 'intersubjectivity is an essential ingredient of work within the ZPD, because it signals a state of mutual cognition propitious for the attainment of self-regulation' (p. 59). They also noted that establishment and maintenance of intersubjectivity is not unidirectional but mutual. In other words, learners need to make efforts, have good disposition and attitudes, and also openness and willingness to give and receive help in order to establish and maintain a shared focus and understanding throughout the interaction.

As reviewed earlier in this chapter, Brooke and Donato (1994) have argued that metatalk contributes to the establishment of intersubjectivity and it is natural that this talk is produced in the learners' first language, English. De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) agreed with Antón and DiCamilla's (1998) claim that L1 plays a critical role in learners establishing and maintaining intersubjectivity, hence, inhibiting the use of L1 in an L2 classroom may not be a wise approach pedagogically because it 'discourages the employment of a critical psychological tool that is essential for collaboration' (p.64).

In summary, shared understanding or intersubjectivity during interaction is an important element for learning to occur and all the participants need to be proactive in order to establish and maintain intersubjectivity. L1 plays an important role during the process as a critical psychological tool that facilitates learners' working collaboratively.

2.4.2.4 Theory of distributed cognition

Vygotsky's ideas of human cognitive development have also inspired research to extend the study of the social aspects of cognition. One of the significant elements of this research is the concept of distributed cognition. Distributed cognition theory was developed by Hutchins (1995) and his colleagues (Hutchins & Klausen, 1996; Hollan, Hutchins & Kirsh, 2000) in order to understand the human cognitive system more broadly. In traditional theories of cognition, human cognitive processes have been seen as isolated and individual activities, whereas, this theory 'extends the reach of what is considered *cognitive* beyond the individual to encompass interactions between people and with resources and materials in the environment' (Hollan et al., 2000, p. 175. original emphasis). In a sense, this approach is related to sociocultural approaches to cognition that see cognitive development as a product of human activities and that 'context, language, and subjectivity… must be understood holistically and interdependently' (Thorne, 2000, p. 236). In the framework of distributed cognition, Hollan et al. (2000) describe three kinds of distribution of cognitive processes:

> 1. Cognitive processes may be distributed across the members of a social group;
>
> 2. Cognitive processes may involve coordination between internal and external (material or environmental) structure;
>
> 3. Processes may be distributed through time in such a way that the products of earlier events can transform the nature of later events. (Hollan et al., 2000, p. 176)

When these concepts are applied to language learning in group work settings, cognitive processes can be seen as occurring in each individual who works with others in a collaborative task and is involved in interactions between learners and their environment.

The theory of distributed cognition focuses on how knowledge is transmitted between people who participate in a particular task and how it is propagated through and across artefacts (Rogers & Ellis, 1994). In collaborative work, knowledge shift between people is understood as a cognitive process. For this reason, the distributed cognition approach has been applied to the field of educational psychology, where cognition and learning are treated as similar constructs. For example, Greeno, Collins and Resnick (1996) argue that 'learning is the process by which knowledge is increased or modified' (p. 21). Because knowledge transfer is a central element of increasing or modifying knowledge, the processes that the theory of distributed cognition describes as 'cognitive processes' can also be understood as 'learning processes'. Considering these processes of learning, a distributed cognition approach makes a general assumption about the knowledge that an individual possesses, that is, 'individuals working together on a collaborative task are likely to possess different kinds of knowledge and so will engage in interactions that will allow them to pool the various resources to accomplish their task' and 'much knowledge is shared between different individuals' (Rogers & Ellis, 1994, p. 123). These concepts of the state of an individual's knowledge and interaction as means for creating a pool of knowledge are all applicable to language learning because the concepts derived from a Vygotskian framework such as ZPD, LRE, languaging and collective scaffolding all contribute to language learning, as has been discussed above. In fact, Atkinson (2010) has proposed that the theory of distributed cognition needs to be adapted to SLA because it may assist conceptualising SLA from a different perspective. He suggests that the theory focuses on the 'inseparability of mind-body-world ecologies, process of adaptation to complex environments, and dynamics of alignment through which humans effect interaction' (cited in Thorne, 2013, p. 195). There is therefore a need for more studies within the framework of this theory to be conducted in the future and to contribute to understanding SLA.

2.4.3 Summary and Conclusion

In summary, I have reviewed interaction research within the framework of sociocultural theory in this section. The past studies have illustrated that learning through interaction promotes conceptual learning and during that process, language and dialogue play a critical role in learning a second language. In terms of language use, many studies acknowledged that not only the TL but also other languages including learners' L1 is an important instrument in facilitating learning in many ways. In the next section, I review the past studies of L1 use in the L2 learning situation and their findings in order to identify the need for further studies on the roles of language used by learners as a medium for communication during collaborative interaction.

2.5 Research in the use of the first language in the second language classroom

The majority of early studies on interaction focused only on the target language used by either the teacher or learners as data, and did not focus so much on the learners' use of other languages including their L1. This is because traditional second language acquisition research has been based on the idea that learners need to be exposed to the target language in order for learners to become competent users of the language (Crawford, 2004), and has encouraged the widespread adoption of communicative approaches to language teaching that encourage classroom activities to be designed in such a way as to maximise learners' use of the target language (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). As the study of interaction has moved from the perspective of input-output models to that of learning processes under the influence of sociocultural views of learning, learners' use of L1 has become an element that cannot be ignored. Brooks and Donato (1994) noted in their study of Spanish classes that English was used by the students on a number of occasions during data collection. The use of L1 (English in their case) occurred in metatalk and they explained this phenomenon in terms of Vygotskian theories of awareness and volition. Metatalk is metacognition 'out loud' and it is

constructed predominantly through language. It is therefore natural that learners' native language is used and it is a 'normal psycholinguistic process that facilitates L2 production and allows the learners both to initiate and sustain verbal interaction with one another' (Brooks & Donato, 1994, p.268). As Brooks and Donato noted that further analysis of L1 was ignored by many researchers of SLA because the researchers were concerned only with production in L2 in the data of their study.

Recently, researchers have been urged to reconsider the role and to acknowledge its usefulness both for teachers and students in the language classroom (e.g., Atkinson, 1987; Auerback, 1993; Cook, 1999, 2001; Franklin, 1990; Knight, 1996; Nation, 1997). However, citing the studies of Macaro (2001) and Turnbull and Arnett (2002), Levine (2003) suggests there is 'little empirical evidence as to the amount or nature of TL versus L1 use upon which to make sound pedagogical and policy decisions' (p. 344).

Among the few empirical studies addressing this issue, Duff and Polio (1990) investigated instructors' use of L1 in 13 different university-level foreign language classes to address: (1) the ratio of English use to L2 use by teachers in FL classrooms; (2) the factors related to the use of English and the L2; and (3) teachers' and students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of English in the FL classroom (p. 154). The study found that the ratio of English to L2 used by teachers ranged from ten to 100 per cent and the authors suggested that this might be caused by various factors such as language type, departmental policies on TL use, lesson content and objectives. The authors also noted that teachers tended to use English for administrative purposes. Moreover, Polio and Duff (1994) found that instructors tend to use L1 when communication breakdowns occurred and they were hesitant to use the TL when they explained grammar or managed the classroom. Duff and Polio were concerned that teachers'/instructors' use of L1 takes opportunities away from students to be exposed to the TL. This view that teachers' use of L1 minimises students' exposure to the TL is also shared by Crawford (2004). In her survey study, Crawford found that many teachers use extensive amounts of the learners' L1 (English in her study) and as a result 'the

majority of learners will continue to complete their language studies with very limited experience of the language as a means of communication' (p. 17). The study also found that teachers use English as it was perceived to be an effective medium for teaching grammar as well as being an appropriate medium for cross-lingual, cross-cultural comparisons (Crawford, 2004). Crawford argued that teaching strategies needed to be changed in order to increase the use of the TL by teachers. Despite the concerns of researchers, the study by Duff and Polio found most students were satisfied with the status quo regardless of the amount of teachers' TL use.

Macaro (2001) also studied teachers' use of L1 and conducted a quantitative case study of six student-teachers in secondary schools to investigate their code switching between the L1 and the TL. The data revealed relatively low amounts of L1 use in the L2 classroom by the instructors or the learners, and the quantity of student-teachers' L1 use hardly affected the quantity of L1 or L2 use by the learners. The reason for student-teachers' code switching to L1 appeared to be for the sake of efficiency and practicality or for classroom management. Macaro concluded that despite the low proportion of L1 use recorded in the study, 'future research needs to establish some principles for code switching in FL classrooms by understanding its function and consequences' (p. 545). Levine (2003) who conducted an Internet-based survey on the use of target language and L1 in university-level foreign language classes also suggested the need for concrete, theoretically-motivated guidelines that indicate which sort of code switching behaviours facilitate SLA and which behaviours are detrimental to language teaching and learning.

As seen above, early studies of the use of L1 were conducted from the view point of the L1 use verses the use of TL mostly by the teacher/instructor. Although these studies suggested that the use of learners' L1 is beneficial for some aspects of language learning, they indicated that the maximum use of the TL should be considered as the teacher is the only source of input in the TL for the students in the classroom.

Recently, the sociocultural framework has provided a new pathway for examining the use of learners' L1 in language teaching and learning and many studies of interaction

have taken notice of learners' L1 use and analysed it in order to find its role in language learning (e.g., Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2000; Ohta, 2001; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996). In sociocultural theory, language is viewed as a powerful semiotic tool and all human learning is mediated by semiotic tools such as language. Learners' L1 should thus also be viewed as an important tool for learning. In fact, the findings from interaction research suggest that L1 may be a useful instrument for learning second language learning having several functions during learners' interaction. For instance, Antón and DiCamilla (1998) conducted microgenetic research on learners' discourse during collaborative interaction. They observed five dyads of students while they were completing a writing task in a university-level Spanish language class. Their data revealed that the L1 serves three main functions: 'construction of scaffolding help, establishment of intersubjectivity, and use of private speech' (p. 337). They concluded that 'L1 use provides, through collaborative dialogue, an opportunity for L2 acquisition to take place' (p. 328). This detailed qualitative analysis showed that the relationship between the L1 and L2 in the classroom cannot be viewed in simple terms of the amount of TL versus L1 used, but rather, the L1 should be considered as one of the many cognitive tools used for learning.

The finding that L1 plays a role in learners' establishing intersubjectivity or shared understanding has also been discussed in studies by Brooks and Donato (1994) and De Guerrero and Villamil (2000). Brooks and Donato argued that students used their L1 for metatalk, which is actually verbalising their inner thoughts in order to construct metacognition. According to Vygotsky (1978), human metacognition is constructed by semiotic tools, including language and 'verbal thinking mediates one's relationship with new language with language itself…and it is quite necessary and natural' (p. 268). By using the L1, which is a shared language amongst learners, learners are not only constructing their metacognition but also able to 'initiate and sustain verbal interaction with each other' (p. 268). De Guerrero and Villamil also reported similar uses in their study of a peer revision task involving Spanish learners of English. Like Brooks and

Donato, they also argued that the L1 facilitates learners' interaction and allows scaffolding to occur because 'intersubjectivity is an essential ingredient of work within the ZPD, because it signals a state of mutual cognition propitious for the attainment of self-regulation' (p. 59). This finding, that the L1 is a beneficial tool for the construction of scaffolding help, reflects similar findings in the study by Antón and DiCamilla (1998). The findings in these studies have therefore indicated that the L1 is a useful tool in learners' development within their ZPD because it assists intersubjectivity to be established and maintained, and enables learners to give scaffolded help to each other.

In relation to learners' ZPD, Storch and Wigglesworth (2003) found in their study of adult ESL students that the use of L1 may contribute to extending learners' ZPD because the L1 may assist learners' gaining control of the task. This may enable learners to work on a task at a higher level than they could by themselves using the TL. Other researchers have also identified that use of the L1 plays a role in task management functions (e.g., Brooks, Donato & McGlonem, 1997; Nakaone, 1999; Ohta, 2001). Storch and Wigglesworth noted, however, that this is possible only if learners are able to establish shared understanding, in other words intersubjectivity, about what they have to do in performing the task.

From the point of view of the acquisition of L2 forms, it has been found that the use of the L1 assists learners accessing L2 linguistic forms (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 1998). Swain and Lapkin (1998) analysed the dialogues produced by two Grade 8 French immersion-students while carrying out a jigsaw task. The study found that the L1 played a role as a meditational tool that assisted learners 'to regulate their own behaviours, to focus attention on specific L2 structures and to generate and assess alternatives' (p. 333). This is a similar finding to that of a study by Py (1996) who identified that use of the L1 plays a central role in learners' reflections on and conceptualisations of the L2. Moreover, Brooks et al. (2010) conducted a study using Vygotsky's distinction between scientific and spontaneous (everyday) concepts and examined whether languaging played a mediating role for both types of concepts in order

for learners to develop the concept of voice in French. The study found that spontaneous (everyday) concepts, which are the ones that exist in the learners' L1, mediated scientific concepts, the ones that existed in French, and as a result, the learners were able to develop emerging knowledge of the concept of voice in French. More recently, Rayati, Yaqubi and Harsejsani (2012) investigated learners' L1 use from the perspective of constructing language related episodes in an EFL classroom. The study found that the functions which L1 played including sharing ideas about linguistic problems, providing explanations for the suggestions and making sense of the utterances were all seen to be assisting learners' TL development.

Furthermore, from a bilingual or multilingual point of view, there are growing numbers of scholars who propose the acceptance of the use of more than one language including the L1 in the language learning classroom (e.g., Belz, 2003; Cook, 1999, 2001; Crozet & Liddicoat, 1999; Kramsch, 1998). These scholars assert that some fundamental concepts of SLA set a goal for adult learners to achieve a level that is based on that of a monolingual native speaker, although many people are aware that most learners will never come close to it. Cook (1999) stated that adult language learners are treated as deficient communicators in TL because of this perception. Instead, Kramsch (1998) proposes that we should instruct learners as multi-competent, intercultural speakers. Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) also suggest that language learners should be given a 'third place' which manifests a bilingual 'linguaculture'(p. 115).

Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2004) conducted a study of code-switching patterns between English and German as comprising a bilingual practice using the framework of bilingual studies. The results revealed code-switching can serve several important conversation functions such as reinforcing the content of a speaker's utterance, preventing a breakdown in communication and maintaining conversation, facilitating community-building by affecting the footing of a conversation, initiating conversational repair, or elaborating on or explicating conversational content. These functions identified by Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain support early findings on the role of L1.

The literature has revealed that the use of L1 is beneficial for language learning and the researchers who have conducted the studies described above have suggested teachers should not prohibit L1 use in the classroom although they acknowledge that further investigation needs to be done on this topic.

The present study does not focus on the role of L1 specifically but rather the role of a shared language in facilitating learning. It investigates the roles of English as a medium of communication while learners are collaboratively working on a task in an advanced level Japanese language class. Japanese classes at university attract many international students and, as a result, in group interactions such students interact with students who may not share the same first language. Although the first language of international students is often not English, their English competencies are relatively high due to university entry requirements. Therefore, English is used for instruction as well as the language for communication between students from various backgrounds. Even though there are theoretical grounds for considering the usefulness of learners' L1 and several important findings about the role of L1 during learners' interaction, there are hardly any empirical studies on the use of English as a *lingua franca* in language learning. Thus this is a topic that remains virtually unexplored and requires further investigation to gain an insight into understanding of the roles of students' repertoires of language in language learning and ultimately to develop more effective ways to teach additional languages through interaction.

3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The present study examines the role of English as a medium of communication amongst learners while working on a task collaboratively. The focus of the study is to examine how English is deployed by learners in order to address linguistic as well as cultural aspects of Japanese. It also focuses on how English facilitates the group work itself and is deployed to effectively coordinate and manage the production of the task in Japanese. In addition, the study explores the role of learners' English use in terms of language learning overall. Sociocultural theory and its application by researchers in SLA (e.g., Antón and DiCamilla, 1998; Lantolf, 1994; Swain, 2000, 2006; Swain and Lapkin, 1998, 2000; Ohta, 1995, 2000, 2001) serve as a basic framework for this study.

3.1 Design of the study

The present study was longitudinal as it was carried out over a period of ten weeks during a semester. The sample was from a group of students who were studying Japanese language as a foreign language in an advanced course at a tertiary level. It should be noted that the term, 'advance course', does not refer to the language proficiency assessed by official proficiency tests such as ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of the Foreign Languets) and JLPT (Japanese Language Proficiency Test). The course is called 'advanced' as it is offered as a third year level course. Students enrolled in this class are most likely to be at intermediate level in terms of the language

proficiency. The data analysed in this study were students' dialogues during their group work. The students were to work on a given task, which was to make up a story and perform it in front of their peers in class. The data collected and used for the study was all qualitative data in order to conduct a detailed analysis on any incidents that assisted students' learning in terms of English being a useful tool. This method follows Vygotsky's (1978) statement that using learners' dialogues as the unit of analysis makes it possible to witness 'any psychological processes undergoing changes right before ones' eyes' (p. 61).

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were a group of students who enrolled in an advanced level Japanese course called '3531LAL Advanced Colloquial Japanese 1' at Griffith University's Gold Coast Campus. There were seventeen students enrolled in the course and fourteen of them agreed to participate in the present study. There were eleven female and six male students, and students' backgrounds were all different (see table 1). Of the Australian-born students (9), two had no in-country experience and seven had spent some time in Japan. Even though one student was born in Australia, his parents were Asian and they spoke an Asian language at home. Of the students who were not born in Australia, one had come to Australia in early childhood and two had come at high-school age. Two were international students who had come to study for an undergraduate degree in Australia. Even though their backgrounds varied, the students were all quite competent in English due to the university entry requirement (e.g., a minimum overall band score of 6.0 on IELTS (Academic)).

Table 1: Participants

	Birth place	Family	Age	Gender	In-country experience in Japan	Previous formal language study
1	Australia	Both parents are Taiwanese	21	M	3 short visits (7-10 days each trip)	5 years at high school and 2 years at university
2	Australia	Australian parents	25	M	1 short visit (15 days)	2 years at university
3	Australia	Australian parents	39	F	never	2 years at university
4	Taiwan	Both parents are Taiwanese. Came to Australia at the age of 12	20	F	never	2 years at university
5	Hong Kong	Came to Australia as an international student.	22	M	2 short visits (7-10 days each trip)	3 years at high school
6	Australia	Australian parents	20	F	3 weeks on a high school trip and 11 months as an exchange student at university	5 years at high school and 2 years at university
7	Australia	Australian parents	45	M	never	2 years at university
8	Australia	Australian parents	35	F	Married a Japanese man and stayed in Japan for 6 years.	2 years at university

9	Australia	Australian parents	34	F	Married a Japanese man and stayed in Japan for 8 years	2 years at university
10	Australia	Australian parents	19	M	1 year as an exchange student when he was at high school	4 years at primary and 5 years at high school
11	Australia	Australian parents	19	F	3 weeks on a high school trip	4 years at primary, 5 years at high school and 1 year at university
12	Taiwan	Both parents are Taiwanese. Came to Australia at the age of 12	19	F	3 weeks on a high school trip	5 years at high school and 1 year at university
13	Taiwan	Came to Australia as an international student	18	F	2 short visits (7-14 days each trip)	3 yeas at high school
14	Turkey	Both parents are Turkish. Came to Australia at the age of 12	36	M	1 short visit (21 days) and 11 months as an exchange student at university	2 years at university.

At the beginning of the semester, students were advised to prepare for one of the assessment items of the course, a drama assignment, which was the task of making a story and to perform it in Japanese in week 12. Students were required to form a group of four or five to work on the task. Five groups were formed as a result and the data was collected from four groups who had agreed to participate in the study. These groups consist of four to five students and they were all mixed gender groups, which was the normal case when they formed groups in Japanese courses at the university. Although the data was collected from all four groups, one group was selected for the data analysis.

The reasons are: 1) this group had the most regular meetings where all the group members were present throughout the semester; 2) the members of the group all had different backgrounds and so English served as a *lingua franca* for the group rather than being the first language of all the participants; 3) the data from this group provided over 30 hours of interaction that could be used for the study; and 4) focusing on one group allowed for a more micro-level analysis of their language use over time than would have been possible using all of the groups.

The selected group had four members, P, D, H and S. P (participant number 12) was a nineteen year old female student who had migrated to Australia from Taiwan when she was at high school age. She had studied at a high school in Australia and had been to Japan for three weeks on a school trip. D (participant number 13) was an eighteen year old female international student from Taiwan and was in her first year of study at Griffith University. D also had in-country experience i.e. she had visited Japan twice for short visits. H (participant number 11) was a nineteen year old Australian student who spoke English as her first language and had spent three weeks in Japan when she was at high school. S (participant number 14) was a thirty-six year old male student who migrated from Turkey when he was twelve years old and learned English after his arrival in Australia. S had spent eleven months in Japan as an exchange student the year before. All the members were, needless to say, interested in Japan, and therefore familiar with Japanese language and culture through various methods including comics and information from the Internet other than classroom learning.

Although all students were studying advanced Japanese they were at different stages in their university career. It was the first semester for D, the third semester for P and H and the fifth semester for S in their study of Japanese at Griffith University. D, P and H had been studying Japanese since high school, but S came into the Japanese program as a beginner student.

3.3 Course description

The Japanese courses at Griffith University's Gold Coast Campus at the time of the study recognised four macro skills in language - speaking, listening, reading and writing - and offered two separate courses, one for developing speaking/listening skills and one for developing reading/writing skills at each level. The reason for the separation was that it was often the case that students were skillful in speaking, but weak in reading or vice versa and they struggled to cope with their weak macro skills when they were forced to enroll in a more generic course. The system introduced at this campus enabled students to choose appropriate courses depending on their proficiency levels.

Advanced Colloquial Japanese 1 aimed to develop students' speaking and listening skills. The more specific aim for the course was to develop skills for understanding colloquialisms through spontaneous conversation, popular films and television dramas. This course was designed to familiarise learners with colloquial Japanese that may be encountered on radio, television and with informal discourse, and enabled learners to use these expressions in appropriate contexts. Students developed the use of basic colloquial expressions in their own conversations. Upon successful completion of this course, students were to be able to comprehend casual conversations in Japanese, have a basic understanding of natural Japanese television dramas, and be able to carry out conversations with Japanese native speakers on a casual level.

There was neither lecture time nor practice about Japanese culture scheduled in this course. However, students were encouraged to incorporate any cultural knowledge they had into their drama assignment. Students had had opportunities to be exposed to Japanese culture though Japanese TV broadcasts and TV drama videos. In other words, culture was not taught explicitly through this course, although some cultural knowledge was assumed.

There were usually fifteen to twenty students enrolled in this course. There were several assessment items in the course and one of them was the task that was used for the present study. There were no written examinations assessing students' grammatical knowledge,

rather assessment items focused on students' speaking or oral communication skills and listening comprehension skills by conducting speaking and listening tests. Hence, students were encouraged to practise speaking in pairs or in groups in class.

In the Japanese courses, pair work and group work were often employed while students were working on a task or for their assessment from the time they were first year students. The university also encouraged group work to develop interpersonal and team work skills as part of generic skills that the university aimed for the students to have achieved when they graduated. Therefore, the students often worked with their peers in other courses and they were familiar with group work.

In group or pair work in the Japanese courses, teachers did not assign students to particular groups. Students usually found a partner or formed a group with a person they felt comfortable with since students usually had to work with the same group members through the whole semester. In this study, the same policy was applied to group formation.

3.4 The task

As I described briefly in the previous section, students were required to make up a drama story and perform it in groups, with each group consisting of between four and five people. The topics were:

1. *A boyfriend and girlfriend are about to go to Japan. One is Australian and the other is Japanese. They discuss their fears about going to Japan to meet the parents. On arrival in Japan, they meet the parents and discuss future plans. You will need to consider the type of language each person will use with one another.*

2. *You are about to go to Japan to study in a Japanese university. You have a close Japanese friend who came from the university and is currently studying at your*

university as an exchange student. You ask him/her for some advice such as subjects to undertake and student life over there. You talk with some of the lecturers or other friends in the university about preparing for life in Japan as well.

3 *Free choice of topic (some of you must act as Japanese people)*

Although three topics were suggested for this task, all the groups chose topic 1.

Although this assessment was held late in the semester, week 12 (the teaching semester at Griffith University was 13 weeks altogether), the students were encouraged to form a group to become familiar with the group members, to start working on the script and to practise acting from early in the semester. There was no time set aside for the preparation of this task in the class schedule, and hence the students were expected to work on the task outside of the classroom. The overall performance needed to be about 20 minutes long and was to be performed in front of their peers. Students were advised that each member's spoken contribution was to be approximately the same length during their performance.

The criteria for this particular assessment were fluency and naturalness, accuracy, range of expression, content and overall performance. Students were encouraged to include any cultural knowledge they had in their task.

3.5 Data collection

Taking into account the notions of research methodology as well as the perceptions of the role of interactions, when it comes to interaction research in SLA, it can be said that dialogues between learners while they are collaboratively working on a task are dynamic and powerful data. Ohta (1995) has summarised the characteristics of research into L2 interaction within the framework of sociocultural theory as follows:

> When the framework of sociocultural theory is utilized in research on L2 interaction, analysis moves beyond properties of individual learner language to examination of the creation of context, construction of task, coordination of goals, affective variables, learner cognition, and learner collaboration in order to better understand how learners socially construct the shared understandings through which language is acquired. (Ohta, 1995, p. 96)

In terms of data collection, Hall (1997) has suggested that data should be collected on 'site and over time' (p. 304). It is important to examine communicative moments as units of analysis, 'as they provide the context where both individual behavior and the sociocultural processes by which it is shaped can be studied' (Wertsch, 1991, cited in Hall, 1997, p.304). Sociocultural theory assumes that development is socially mediated and so 'no moment is treated as context-free, that is, "uncontaminated", or isolable from the specific context in which it occurs' (Hall, 1997, p. 304). This way of data collecting is quite different from research in cognitivist SLA, where the data is collected in controlled and experimental settings. The present study followed this trend.

Initially the researcher planned to be present and monitor group work while students were working on the task. It was also going to be fully video-taped from the beginning to the end, by a video camera located approximately three meters away from the group working area so as not to distract students' attention from the task. However, after observing the first meeting, it was found that the presence of the researcher and a video camera distracted the participants from their group work. Students appeared to be nervous and tended to ask questions to the researcher when they came across any problems instead of negotiating by themselves. Therefore, from the second meeting, the researcher set a voice recorder at the beginning of the session and came along once or twice during the session to monitor the groups' work. In this way, students were able to discuss freely and work on the task without interference, which enabled the researcher to capture the natural dialogue amongst students in the process of completing the task.

Each session was recorded on a digital audio recording device located close to the students. Students were asked to turn the device on and off when they started and finished their meetings.

The data was then transcribed by the researcher with the assistance of a native speaker of English as English was a second language for the researcher and there were unclear sections to transcribe for a non-native English speaker.

3.6 Analysis

The ultimate goal of the present study is to investigate the roles of English as a medium of communication in terms of learning learners' second or additional language, Japanese. As discussed in the literature review chapter, there have been hardly any studies conducted on the area of present study. The analytical framework was derived from the sociocultural theory of learning and development. According to Vygotsky (1978), for the analysis of human cognitive development, a basic unit of analysis has to be established rather than simply analysing its component elements (Lantolf & Appel, 1994). The minimal unit that Vygotsky proposed was the words used in inner speech, however, Lantolf and Appel indicated that this is problematic because it is difficult to observe 'functions such as planning, voluntary attention, and voluntary memory in word meaning' (p.22). In order to solve the problem, Zinchenko (1985) suggested 'tool-mediated action' as the minimal units of analysis and Wertsch (1998) also proposed 'mediated action' following Zinchenko's suggestion. Lantolf and Appel argue that these proposals are advantageous because such actions are both intermental and intramental, and the study of such things enables the researchers to observe activities such as planning and memory.

Nevertheless, one recognised form of analysis within the sociocultural framework is the detailed analysis of interaction between participants as learning is actually taking place. Wertsch (1985, 1998) claimed that this microgenetic approach is 'the way to document empirically the presence (or absence) and degree of transition from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning' during interaction within the ZPD (p. 253). This approach can shed light on the mechanisms of learning or cognitive development of learners. Many researchers who apply sociocultural theory in L2 acquisition employ a

microgenetic approach to examine the learning process and to investigate cognitive development during collaborative interaction rather than merely investigating learners' 'input' and 'output' (e.g., Antón, 1999; Antón & DiCamilla, 1999; Brooks & Donato, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ohta, 2000; Takahashi, 1994). Microgenesis focuses on learning and development as it occurs moment by moment in social interaction (Ohta, 2000). Antón (1999) noted that 'the microanalysis of classroom discourse allows researchers to witness how language is used as a mediation tool in the language process" (p. 304). In this study, I adopted a microgenetic approach to analyse the interaction produced by students as they worked collaboratively.

I aimed to examine the collected data with an open mind, that is, without a set form of coding so that the ideas and issues could emerge from the data. In order to achieve the goal, I looked at the transcripts to firstly identify where students used English in their group work. After thorough study of the transcripts, I identified patterns in the use of English and categorised them according to the functions they served. They were: the use of English in facilitating students' collaborative group work; the use of English in assessing linguistic aspects of L2; the use of English in addressing cultural aspects of L2; and the use of English as a starting point for L2 structures.

To be more specific, in the first category, the use of English in facilitating students' collaborative group work, English was used to understand the task itself as well as to organise students themselves to work on the task. In other words, students used English to clarify the task and discuss how they should tackle the task in order to accomplish it successfully and efficiently.

In the second category, the use of English in assessing linguistic aspects of the L2, three sub-categories were identified. They were use of English in clarifying the meaning of vocabulary; use of English in discussing expressions; and use of English in modifying sentences based on students' grammatical knowledge. In the data, students used English when they asked each other the meaning of vocabulary instead of referring to a dictionary. With this function, English was used as a quick and easy tool to access the

meaning of words. Moreover, when students attempted to adopt new expressions that they had learned in class into their drama script, English allowed students to have a deeper discussion on whether or not those expressions were appropriate in the context. Furthermore, other than matters on vocabulary and expressions, students discussed more general and broader linguistic issues including pronunciation or word order in the TL. In these situations, students used English in order to resolve problems, to create or modify dialogues so that the scripts were able to carry the meaning that they intended to.

With regard to the third category, I identified that students not only talked about linguistic issues but also exchanged cultural knowledge they had possessed using English. English allowed them to externalise their inner knowledge and enabled them to share it with their peers.

English was also used as a starting point for L2 structures. In the early stage of their meetings, students decided to create their drama script in English first and then translate it into Japanese. This decision enabled students to explore ideas that were more complex and made it easier for them to construct situations without being limited by their proficiency in the target language. On the other hand, this way of creating the script also created problems including issues of cultural inappropriateness when English ideas and expressions were translated into Japanese and issues of capability with the script sometimes being beyond their competence in Japanese.

The categories described above were determined from the collected data for further analysis. I chose this method instead of pre-establishing categories beforehand to analyse the data.

After transcribing the data, identifying the functions of the use of English and categorising them, I referred to past studies of interaction and the role of L1 within the sociocultural framework for detailed examination of the interaction between students and the role of English. I also adopted the principles of Vygotsky's ideas including ZPD,

importance of language, scaffolding and most importantly learning in social context in my data analysis.

Although researchers have recognised the important roles that L1 plays in collaborative interaction and studies on the use of L1 have been conducted by SLA scholars including Antón and DiCamilla (1998), there has been little empirical research on the role of English as a medium of communication in learning second or additional language. Furthermore, there is no detailed research on the role of L1 or English in terms of students' exchanging and comprehending cultural knowledge of the target language. As I described in the literature review section, the use of L1 in metatalk about linguistic features has been studied in interaction research within a sociocultural theory framework, however, cultural aspects have not been observed or analysed in the literature that I have reviewed to date. Indeed, it may be necessary to construct a new data analysis framework for this area. As Macaro (2001) stated in his study of L1 use, researchers need 'a framework that identifies when reference to the L1 can be a valuable tool and when it is simply used as an easy option'.

In summary, the analysis of the dialogues of the students during their group work focused in detail on:

(i) how English facilitates the group work itself and is deployed to effectively coordinate and manage the production of the assigned drama assessment piece in Japanese;

(ii) how English is deployed by speakers in order to address specific linguistic as well as cultural aspects of Japanese;

(iii) how English is deployed as a starting point for L2 structures.

4 Students' use of English in group work

4.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the results and findings of the main analysis used to address the research questions for the present study. The focus of this section is how and when the students used English during collaborative interaction.

The present study investigated the role of English as a medium for communication during students' collaborative group work. The task was to make a drama script on a situation given by the course convenor and to perform the drama in front of their fellow students in class. For the purpose of completing the task, the students had a series of meetings and created their own original drama script. The particular group from which the data was collected met twelve times and the total time they spent on the meetings was approximately 420 minutes. The content of the meeting was, however, not always focused on the task, but nevertheless the group did have discussion on various issues including how they should work on the task, understanding the task itself, the storyline, linguistic issues, etc. The data illustrates the process of them making their own drama script and how they overcame issues raised in order to complete the task. In the data, the students did not use Japanese in extended interactions, except where they were rehearsing parts of the dialogue. This shows that students chose not to use Japanese as a tool for mediating their learning. While some of the discussion may have been within their abilities as speakers of Japanese, the students showed a strong preference for using English as the main meditational tool in their group work.

The present study focused on how English was deployed by the students to address linguistic as well as cultural aspects of Japanese. It also focused on how English facilitated the group work itself and was deployed to effectively coordinate and manage the production of the task in Japanese. In order to address these questions, the results and analysis will be presented in four separate sections: The use of English and facilitating students' collaborative group work; the use of English in assessing linguistic aspects of L2; the use of English in addressing cultural aspects of L2 and; the use of English as a starting point for L2 structures as these were the areas where English was most used.

4.1 The use of English and facilitating students' collaborative group work

While working on the task, the students were often seen using English as a communication tool when they talked about the task. In order to understand the task properly and to organise how they were going to tackle the task, English played a role as an indispensable tool. It is important for students to understand the task in order to work on and accomplish the task. If students do not understand or misunderstand the task, students will not understand the nature and purpose of the task and may fail to accomplish it as required. As a result of a lack of understanding, the task may not achieve the learning purposes and their work on the task may not lead to the learning desired. Cabral (2004) argues that 'developing a clear understanding of the task facilitates their own engagement with the activities they are required to do' (p. 1) that is, the more clearly students understand the task, the better students engage with it and the more likely the task will contribute positively to their learning. It is natural for the students to use English when they talk about the task because English is the only common language in which they could communicate to each other without much trouble.

In this task, the students were required to create a drama script based on the situation they chose and to perform the drama. This was the first time for the students to do this

type of assessment and none had clear ideas about how they should carry out the task. The only information the students had to refer to was the assessment information sheet given by the course convenor. The information sheet explains the nature of the task such as length, topic and criteria and it was written in English. The course convenor explained the task when the information sheet was given and the students had an opportunity to ask questions about it. However, when they formed groups and started group work, they needed to understand the task more clearly in order to work on it. They needed to clarify what was required for the task – the topic, length, criteria and so on – in order to receive the highest mark possible. Moreover, even though the mark was given individually, they were required to make up a story and to act it out as a group, therefore, it was essential for each group member to understand the task in detail and the nature of their own contribution to it. These discussions regarding the task were mostly done using English.

They also needed to talk about how they would tackle the task so that they were able to carry out the task smoothly and efficiently as a group. They discussed and negotiated the way they would work on the task during group work, and English was seen being used to facilitate students in organising their group work.

This section will describe the process of how the use of English facilitated the students' understanding of the task and their organisation of group work.

4.1.1 Use of English in understanding the task

As mentioned above, the students needed to have a thorough understanding of the task in order to complete the task efficiently and effectively. The first excerpt was recorded when the students met for the second time. They had discussed a brief storyline in their previous meeting and assigned who would play each character for the drama performance. The characters are: Hanako – a Japanese girl who lives in Australia, Bob – Hanako's non-Japanese boyfriend, Hanako's mother and father, who live in Japan. In

this excerpt, they are confirming the criteria of the assessment while establishing Bob's character and constructing his dialogues in English. The criteria for this assessment were fluency, accuracy, range of expression and content, pronunciation and naturalness, which is explained in the information sheet given by the course convenor. Marks were to be given equally for each criterion.

Excerpt1:

1: P	But just wondering what are we getting marked on? Fluency of Japanese or just the content?
2: D	I think fluency is important.
3: S	Fluency, the content, the storyline…
4: P	Because we haven't given him enough topics, he would be marked down.
5: D	Yeah, true.
6: H	It will be firstly the content, fluency and naturalness, grammatical accuracy, blah blah. (while reading out the information sheet) I can speak English accurately, ha ha. And the range of expressions and vocabulary.
7: D&P	Ok.
8: P	Individual or group?
9: D	Group, I think.
10: H	I think it's a group mark.
11: P	In other words, he doesn't have to talk too much then. He just does…
12: D	But I think you have to have a good allocation of time.
13: S	Yeah.

While P is taking notes on what they have decided and writing a plot on behalf of the group, she asks the group members for confirmation about what criteria they will be marked on. In response, D and S at lines 2 and 3 provide the information on the criteria according to their judgment. At line 4, P explains her concern that Bob's dialogue has not included many of the new expressions they learned from the textbook and that this is problematic. What P meant by the word, 'topic', seems to be 'expressions' in the sense that the task had to be about a number of things to show a range of vocabulary and expressions. There are eight topics in the textbook for this course and each topic

introduces several expressions which are commonly used in Japanese, and P's equation of 'topics' with 'expressions' seems to be motivated by this. In line 5, D shows the same concern as P and in line 6, H consults the information sheet and reads out the criteria for this task to the group, that results in P and D to assure what is required for this task in terms of the criteria. H's reading responds to the proposals made by both D and S and confirms their understanding of the criteria for the task. In line 8, P raises a further question about whether they would be marked individually or would receive a mark as a whole group, because she was concerned that S who plays Bob's role may not be able to have much dialogue. In earlier parts of this conversation, they were discussing Bob's character and had decided to cast Bob as an Australian carpenter who cannot speak Japanese well. In that case, Bob would not be able to produce much dialogue in Japanese and if the mark was to be given individually, S would be marked down. In response, D and H give an answer that the mark will be given as a group mark. After receiving the answer, P in line 11 interprets the meaning of group mark as that each member would receive the same mark equally regardless of the amount of their dialogue, and therefore it is not problematic for S to speak less. D, however, opposes P's interpretation and suggests that each cast member should have as equal an amount of dialogue as possible and S agrees with her in line 13. In this case, the group resolves the issue of S's participation in the role play, and as the consequences of decisions made about his character, the group uses this to develop their approach to creating the text for the role play.

This excerpt shows an initial attempt at collaborative problem solving in establishing an understanding of the first decision point they encountered. Initially they attempted to do this by activating their own existing schemata for assessment in the Japanese course developing a collaborative shared version of the expected criteria. Interestingly the starting point is not the information sheet on which the criteria are listed but rather their own perceptions of assessment criteria. The information sheet is used more to confirm interpretations and is particularly focused on the core problem, the range of expressions. Moreover, when they discussed the marking style, they did not consult with the

information sheet or confirm their understanding with the sheet or the teachers. This results in some confusion amongst the students, leading them to have further discussion later on, which will be illustrated in excerpt 3. Even though the meaning of the group mark was not clear at this stage, they established a brief strategy in creating a script – each cast member would have an equal amount of dialogue. This discussion was all done in English and being able to use English, they were able to work collaboratively to confirm the task requirements, to assure a shared understanding of the criteria for the task and to establish a strategy for incorporating their collective understanding into their way of working, that is, they focused on what Ohta (1995) called the construction of the task and the coordination of goals. This type of learners' discourse, talk about the task, is what Brooks and Donato (1994) referred as metatalk and it is often done in their first language (see Brooks and Donato on p.34 for a detailed review of metatalk).

The criteria given for the task were quite general and required interpretation. In the next extract, the students are trying to understand the meaning of 'the range of expression' in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 2:

1: S *Ikoo to omotta. Iin janai*?
2: P *Iin janai*. (repeats what S says while taking a note)
3: S Where is '*janai*'? (searching for the list of expressions) I got you '*janai*'. Is that the same '*janai*'?
4: P Yes.
5: S The more we have these things, the more marks we will get, I'm sure.
6: P Hopefully.

While S and P are working on the dialogues between Hanako and Bob, S suggests a contribution for Hanako in Japanese meaning 'I thought we might go somewhere. Don't you think that's a good idea?'. It becomes clear in line 3 that the reason why S has suggested including '*janai*' in the dialogue is that the phrase '*janai*' is one of the expressions listed in the textbook and he has used it in Hanako's dialogue to satisfy the

criterion of using a range of expressions. In line 5, S further explains to P his understanding of the criterion and P agrees with it.

This excerpt illustrates a small interaction in which the students were talking about their understanding of a particular criterion, in this example, 'the range of expressions'. Their understanding of the criterion was quantitative - the number of expressions used – and this shared understanding was jointly developed through collaborative interaction. In terms of language, English was the main language used for this interaction and it can be said that English played a facilitating role in understanding the criteria of the task.

As mentioned earlier, the students at this stage were primarily focused on the criterion 'the range of expressions' while making up their drama script. In the following excerpt, the students were negotiating the distribution of the expressions across the group members.

Excerpt 3:

1: S How about finally? Can we use the word finally?
2: P *Iyoiyo*… yeah we could use it again.
3: D We've already used *iyoiyo*, right?
4: P H hasn't. H hasn't.
5: H Oh, yeah.
6: S H hasn't got no words at all.
7: H I haven't. I haven't said anything.
8: P It doesn't matter if we used it. Everyone's marking is by ourselves… it doesn't….
9: H I need a few things. It's not a group mark I don't think.
10: D Ah, ok.
11: H It's gonna be individual.
12: S If you repeat the same thing over and over like *iyoiyo, iyoiyo, iyoiyo* then you don't get the mark for that.
13: P But if it is a different person…
14: H It is a different person…
15: P Yeah. You say it for yourself.
16: D Was it… who said *iyoiyo*?
17: P I did…
18: D You did?
19: P Ah, wait. Was it me or Bob?

20: D Would that sound too repeated?
21: P It sounds the same person saying it.
22: S It won't matter.
23: P Beside, we have to use it.

In this excerpt, the students are making some dialogue for Hanako's father – H is playing his role – when he meets Hanako and Bob for the first time. The students created this scene with Hanako's father being angry due to the delay in Hanako's arrival and they are trying to express his emotion through his dialogue. For this purpose, S is searching for a phrase that can add slight anger or frustration to the text from the list of expressions and suggests to the group members that they could include a phrase meaning 'finally'. P and D evaluate S's suggestion positively but D raises a concern that the phrase was already used, implying they should not use it again. In response, P and S point out that H has not used the phrase and H confirms she does not have many expressions in her dialogue. In line 8, P suggests a solution for D's concern: that it would not be a problem to use the same expression repeatedly because the mark will be given individually. In doing this, she is providing an interpretation of how the criterion of using a range of expressions is likely to be judged. H agrees with P in line 9 and states her opinion that as this task is not a group mark and they will be marked individually in line 11, her dialogue needs to include a few expressions to receive marks for 'the range of expression' criterion.

Notably, her opinion here is different from what she stated in their earlier meeting, which is shown in excerpt 1 in this section. That is, H stated earlier that the mark would be a group one and supported P's opinion that they did not have to be too concerned about the amount of individual dialogue. In this earlier interaction, D suggested each cast member should speak an equal amount and the students did not pursue the marking system further. In the current episode, the group's opinion seems to lean towards an individual mark, and as far as 'the range of expression' concerns, P and H have a view that each student needs to use the expressions in their dialogue to receive marks. P and H strongly believe in their view and even though S raises a concern in line 12 suggesting repeated expressions

may not receive marks, they continue to put the view that it would not be a problem if the expression is used by a different person. D provides a further concern relating to repeating the same expression which involves keeping track of who has already used an expression. In line 16 D also asks for clarification about who has a line with the phrase '*iyoiyo*' earlier in their script to make sure the phrase is not used by the same person so that the use of this expression does contribute to a good mark rather than creating a problem. However, P is not sure who used this phrase and D raises her concern that the dialogue may sound too repetitive. P agrees with D's concern, but S in line 22 does not seem to worry about who used the phrase and as a result P resolves this discussion stating they will use this phrase as a part of H's dialogue even if it was used earlier and no matter who used it.

In this excerpt, the students were discussing two separate issues at the same time – one is understanding how they would be marked, whether in terms of an individual or a group mark, and the other is negotiating the distribution of a particular expression amongst the students and how well this would address the assessment criteria. The first issue is a return to an issue which had already be discussed by the group. When the issue of the marking system was brought up by the group for the first time, as illustrated in excerpt 1, they decided that the mark would be a group mark, not an individual mark. At this time no one in the group referred to the information sheet or asked the teacher to clarify the way they would be marked. Instead, two students expressed their views and the discussion did not go further. Although the issue seemed to be resolved at this point, it seems that uncertainty about the marking system remained and needed to be clarified again when they discussed ways of including expressions in their script. The students were most concerned about the 'range of expressions' and they made great efforts to receive a better mark under this criterion. Therefore, it was essential for them to clarify how they would be marked in relation to this criterion: whether or not the number of expressions used would be counted for the whole group or for the individual and whether repetitive use of expressions would be appropriate. In this episode, the group came to a conclusion that the mark would be given individually and concluded that every student

must use a certain number of expressions to receive good marks and that expressions could therefore be used repeatedly as long as a different person used the expression each time. In this case, the students again failed to check with the information sheet or with the teacher to confirm their understanding and they rather based their negotiation about the distribution of expressions on their collaboratively achieved shared understanding. The students then concluded their understanding on the marking system based on their perceptions, reached a different conclusion from their previous discussion and did not seem to recall their earlier interpretation.

This excerpt shows that collaborative group work by students on their own may result in their making a wrong decision and create a problem later on when they do not have the information necessary to make an informed decision. However, whether or not students come up with the right answer is nothing to do with the tool, in this case, English. The language choice in order to solve problems is not the cause of their achieving the wrong answer, but it is because of the resources available to the group. The language process engaged in is an effective process and a good tool for learning, but it sometimes does not work properly, not because of problems with the tool, but because of limitations in the resources available. No tool can guarantee that the process will be a success. Nevertheless, English allows the students to work on multiple issues such as those shown in this excerpt and to work through issues relating to clarifying the task and their ways of working. As for the students, English is a tool to overcome the problems they are facing and assists them to progress their process in terms of completing the task. In other words, the success of the process involves other factors than the language of communication. The language, however, remains as an available resource to be used as effectively as possible.

Another topic the students discussed on many occasions in order to clarify their understanding of the task was the length of the drama performance. According to the information sheet, the overall performance needed to be approximately 20 minutes long. The students were often seen checking the length of the performance while making up

the script. The last excerpt is an instance where the group clarify the time required for the task.

Excerpt 4:

1:P	And then you can look at us and go 'this way please'. That's about a minute? Is it? It doesn't matter, anyway.
2:S	How long is it supposed to be? Maximum 20 minutes?
3:P	20 minutes. I don't think she wants us to go over. Under is ok, just don't go over.
4:S	I think we can aim for 15 to 20 minutes.
5:H	Needs to be about 20 minutes. Little bit over, little bit under is alright, but not too much.
6:P	As long as it doesn't go over 25 minutes or something. 'This way please'. And then we have change scenes.

While P is suggesting how to act out the scene to the group members, she asks for confirmation that the length of this scene is approximately one minute. In the script the students developed, 'this way please' is the last part of scene 2. In line 2, S asks for clarification of the length, especially the maximum length of the performance, and proposes his understanding of what this is. P in line 3 confirms that what S said was correct and argues that they should not exceed 20 minutes for their overall performance. Then S suggests a possible range of times for the performance which reflects his interpretation of the meaning of a maximum time of 20 minutes. In response to S, H in line 5 evaluates the opinions put forward by P and S and suggests her version of how long they should aim for in creating their performance. H disagrees with S's idea of 15-20 minutes and argues instead for an interpretation of the time as being closer to 20 minutes and possibly exceeding it by a little. P then resolves the discussion by concluding that it is possible to go over 20 minutes – ratifying H's interpretation of a maximum of 20 minutes rather than S's and reformulates the maximum length as less than 25 minutes. The talk then moves to another issue.

This excerpt illustrates how the students check the length of their performance as well as clarify the time required for their overall performance collaboratively. Other than this

excerpt, there are many occasions where the students stop creating their script and check how long it would take if they were to perform the script. This is because they needed to be aware of the length of their script to either expand a scene or add or delete lines from the script to satisfy the time required for the task. With regard to the time required, the information about the time requirement specified on the information sheet was treated as an imprecise requirement which had to be operationalised in some way and the students negotiated their own interpretation and came to a shared conclusion of what was required in order to satisfy the task requirement. The students used English to solve these simple questions, checking time and understanding the required length of the drama performance. It can be said that this is because English is their shared language and they chose English as an easy and quick resource to attain the answer quickly.

The excerpts described above show how the students use their English in order to develop a shared understanding of the task and what it requires by solving the various problems they encountered while working on the task collaboratively. Talking about the task, that is metatalk, plays an important role in learning because it assists learners to establish control of the discourse and the task (Brooks & Donato, 1994). Moreover, metatalk contributes to establishing shared understanding or intersubjectivity on and about the task amongst learners (Mercer, 1996). In fact, the excerpts illustrate that after the students discuss problems such as the criteria for the assessment in detail, the time required and their strategies for working on the task, they were jointly able to develop a shared understanding. Brooks and Donato (1994) claimed that such talk is usually done in learners' first language and other studies agree with this finding (e.g., Brooks & Donato, 1997; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ohta, 2001; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). In the current study, English enables the students to discuss these matters openly and easily and, as a result, facilitates their understanding of the task. Using the shared understanding the students developed jointly, they were able to continue working on the task. Without English, the process of solving the problems in understanding the task would have been slowed down and may even have prevented the students from being able to carry on the task further. In each case, the negotiation establishes a framework of

understanding through which students are able to understand their work and how they can move ahead with the task. Their solutions are not always correct as the interpretations reached may vary from session to session and may not agree with or even refer to, other information sources which could solve the same problem. The problem is not the language as a tool for their learning, but other resources upon which they are drawing. Especially, they are heavily reliant on their own knowledge which can resolve the problems but is not always adequate. Their language strategies are, however, effective strategies for problem solving when they have necessary knowledge and their shared ability in English is therefore a resource which can be used in learning Japanese.

In summary, the interactions conducted through English provide ways of creating a shared understanding of the task, but they do not guarantee that the resulting understanding will be correct unless the information used by the group in reaching their conclusions is accurate. These negotiations work locally in a particular context and at a particular time to deal with issues which emerge as students are working. The solutions they reach are treated as adequate solutions for the time being rather than as final and agreed versions of these understandings, and in their discussions they may return to the same point and continue to discuss and evaluate their conclusions.

4.1.2 English and organisation of the task

While working on the task collaboratively, the students were seen using English to discuss various issues in order to organise the group work as well as how they should tackle the task smoothly and efficiently as a group. The students were often observed using English when they organised the group work such as for time management and planning. They also used English when they discussed and negotiated to develop a strategy on how the group would work on the task.

It is important to consider how the students organise the task and how they will participate in the task because it is important for the usefulness of the task for their

language learning. Understanding the task is a pre-requisite for collaboration, thus group learning depends on developing a shared understanding of what needs to be done (Mulder & Swaak, 2002). In a group work situation, the group needs to establish for itself how the task will be addressed. Students need to negotiate how they organise their group work and how they carry out the task in order to complete the task properly and effectively. Effective group work depends on developing a shared understanding of the nature of the task that the group is undertaking. This allows for the group to set its own goals, to have a shared understanding of task demands, and to develop ways of working such as identifying their roles, determining needs and areas of focus. Discussion about the task allows groups of learners to formulate the context in which their work on the task will happen and so provides ways of structuring work for the group. In second language learning classes, it would be time-consuming and could cause learners to fail to develop a shared understanding if they are only allowed to use the target language. Consequently, the students' common language, English, becomes an important resource to develop shared understanding and therefore contribute to their language learning.

The first excerpt is an example of how the students planned and developed a strategy to work on the task. This was recorded in their second meeting and they were still seeking a strategy for how they would tackle the task in terms of which language the group should use to write the drama script. In this group, P had been using mostly English to write the dialogues in the script on behalf of the group while the group discussed and decided what each character would say. They had started to work on the script in this way on the basis of a tacit understanding, therefore, they needed to make it clear amongst themselves how they would create the script and which language they should use to complete the dialogue in order to carry out the task efficiently.

Excerpt 1:

1:S I think it's gonna get easier once we start doing this in Japanese.
2:all Yeah, definitely.

3:D Maybe, we just get the ideas out and…
4:S: And we try to play it out. See what it's like. Just an outline.
5:D We don't write down word by word. Just create the general ideas.
6:P I think we're better to write it.
7:H Write it down first. Look at grammar and something else later.
8:P Yeah, I'm not saying we have to translate it exactly. Like we're just writing down what we're gonna say.
9:H These are just ideas. We don't really have to translate it.
10:D Okey dokey. So I go, ' Dad dad, they are here'.

The group came across a problem in creating their drama script because they sometimes tried to translate each line of dialogue of a character from English to Japanese while discussing what the characters were to say, and this delayed the whole process of creating the entire script. When the group translated their ideas into Japanese, they had to consider whether or not the translation was correct and they realised that this was a time consuming way of working and that it stopped them from developing the story further and effectively. As a potential solution to this problem, S in line 1 suggests that if they did it all in Japanese, the process would be much quicker and D agrees with S. The group shares the same opinion as S, and especially it seems that S and D have the same idea about how they would like to work on the task, that is, write down brief ideas and discuss these in more in detail later. However, P in line 6 insists they should write it down in detail from the beginning and H supports P's way of working on the task in line 7. In line 8, P further explains what she meant, implying the group will still write each character's dialogue in English as an idea and its brief translation in Japanese. H in the next line supports P by adding that the dialogue they write at this stage is not the final product, therefore it does not all have to be correct. In this case there is a potential conflict about the process for developing the dialogue. These issues are not fully negotiated between the group members, rather D accepts the alternative proposal, that they record details, and proceeds to work according to that understanding. That is D appears to accept the proposals of P and H about how to work and that S does not indicate his position on this.

This example shows that it is not always the case that the group is able to reach an explicit shared agreement as a result of their problem solving, but rather that proposals may be accepted with little discussion. The decision to work from English demonstrates one potential role of English in this task that has both advantages and problems for students. These will be discussed in section 4.4 on 'The use of English as a starting point for L2 structures'.

The next excerpt is an example of the students' use of English to organise the group work. This excerpt was recorded when the group was about to start working on developing the final draft of the script. This was their sixth meeting and the students were getting ready to work on the draft of the script.

Excerpt 2:

1: S Ahmm.. Where are we? Scene 2. End of…
2: P No way. No way. Didn't we get scene 3?
3: D In the living room, right? We are going up to scene 4.
4: S I didn't get scene 3.
5: D I sent the words with scene 1. Scene 1 and 3.
6: S Ah, yes it is. Scene 1 and 3. Sorry.

In line 2, S seems to have lost track of which scene the group is working on and asks for assistance. Responding to S, P is worried because she was concerned the work they have completed in the previous meeting may have been lost. P then asks for confirmation from the group members that the group has completed scene 3. D in line 3 gives an answer and clarifies that they are starting work on scene 4. S in line 4 is still adamant that he did not receive the script for scene 3, but D insists she sent the scripts for scenes 1 and 3. S then finds them and accepts that he was wrong.

This is a simple example of how the students use English in terms of organising group work. A simple question, as in this instance, asking which scene the group is working on,

would become a difficult and time consuming question to solve if they were not using English for organisational communication. The use of English makes it easy for the students to confirm the progress of their work and clarify which section of the scene the group will work on in the meeting. This confirmation of their shared understanding of the work in progress is important for their learning. It allows them to set goals for future work, monitor progress to date and determine the focus of their work at a particular time. If they were not to develop a shared understanding of what section they are working on for the meeting quickly, they would not be able make much progress on the task and as a result, may have failed to complete the task on time. That is, the learning expected from the task would not have been achieved. This excerpt illustrates that English facilitates confirming the students' shared understanding and hence, it can be said that English is an important resource for learning in that it allows issues to be dealt with quickly.

In the next excerpt, the students were discussing the storyline they created in English and were trying to finalise the discussion of plans for the trip. The scene they were working on has Bob and Hanako at Hanako's parents' house in Japan, and they are telling her parents about their plans during their stay in Japan. The plan the group decided in their previous meeting was that Bob and Hanako would travel for a few days before they got married.

Excerpt 3:

1: S And then I just say and I get a big whack on the ribs and I go 'Oops'.
2: P You just say 'We are getting married…'
3: S 'Saturday' (expressing himself in pain)
4: H We hope to get married…
5: P: Ok, how was that…on Tuesday?
6: S: Umm, ok on Tuesday we're going to Tokyo.
7: D: I thought you started with Wednesday.
8: S: Oh, any day, any day you like. Pick a day. I'll go with it.
9: P: Wednesday to Tokyo…and then what?
10: S So, we are on Thursday now. Thursday we're going to Osaka. And Friday…oh we need Tuesday.

11: D Is it Osaka first or Kyoto first?
12: S Kyoto is first.
13: P Ok, we have Tuesday in Kyoto.
14: D Yeah.

P in line 5 asks for confirmation from the group that the trip starts from Tuesday. S does not seem to be sure if Tuesday is the correct day that the group decided, but carries on so that the group is able to complete a brief storyline. D however gives an alternative answer, Wednesday, in line 7 and the group work with the idea, but S realises in line 10 that the trip should start from Tuesday because Bob and Hanako plan to travel to many places before Saturday and they need more days. The group also discusses and negotiates the order of places Bob and Hanako will visit, and after exchanging ideas in the group, P in line 13 resolves the travel plan for the first day of their trip.

In this excerpt, the group is using itself as a resource to recollect their collective decision making. They use English to invoke their collective memory to identify what they had decided in their previous meetings so that they know where they are up to and are able to create the script further in the current meeting. Especially when their memory is not clear on a particular issue, they need to negotiate shared recollection to clarify it in order to make some progress on the task and eventually complete the task. English here again provides a quick and effective way of organising the task and the work that the students are doing on the task.

The next excerpt is a similar example to excerpt 3. In this excerpt, the students were using each other to recall what had being decided and planned collaboratively on the storyline for the task. This was also recorded during their sixth meeting. The students were working on the situation where Bob and Hanako arrive at her parents' home and are greeted by her mother at the entrance. The students had a dispute about whether or not Hanako's father should be at home when they arrive. D, who plays the role of Hanako's mother in the role-play, begins with her line.

Excerpt 4:

1: D ‘Come in first’.
2: P ‘Come in first. He is in the room’.
3: D He is not home yet?
4: P I thought he was home.
5: D I thought he comes back afterwards. Like after work and I come to the *genkan*.
6: P That’ll make things too long.
7: D Really?
8: H That would draw it right out, I think.
9: D Ok. So where is dad?
10: P In the living room or whatever.
11: D Ok.
12: P Doing as you said reading newspapers. I’m thinking of mum, ‘come in first’. Oh no, dad… ‘he is in the living room’. But..
13: H ‘But come this way. He is in the living room. Come on in. He is in the living room’ or something.

D and P are confirming the lines for Hanako’s mother when she greets Hanako and Bob at the entrance of their home. When P adds ‘he (father) in the living room’ in line 2, D questions P’s idea and asks for clarification. D’s understanding for the scene, based on what had been decided in their previous meeting, is that the father is not home yet when they arrive and father comes home later on. P in line 6 opposes her idea and her argument and H supports P’s suggestion in line 8. D accepts that the scene involves the father being at home and then asks P for more details: if the father is home, where should he be and what should he be doing? P suggests that the father is in the living room and reading newspapers, which D seems to have mentioned briefly in the previous meeting. P cannot finish the mother’s line completely in line 12, but H picks up on the dialogue and completes it for the time being in the next line.

This excerpt illustrates that the students use each other to access their shared recollection in order to structure the role-play they are going to perform. It also shows how they discuss and negotiate their opinions about how the scene should be conducted. English

facilitates them doing these activities and helps them to reach consensus and common agreement that leads them to complete the task.

While creating the script for the task, the students often stopped and reflected about what they had completed and planned what they would do accordingly. The following excerpt was recorded when they had almost completed the second scene, in which Hanako and Bob visit her parents' house. At the end of the second scene, after meeting both her mother and father briefly, Hanako and Bob were sent out for shopping by Hanako's mother because her father was too upset to talk in a calm manner.

Excerpt 5:

1: S	That's a long script. Isn't it?
2: D	4 minutes?
3: P	If it is 4 minutes, but remember if we're not gonna do that 2 scenes at the end, we've got plenty of time to add more stuff if needed.
4: D	Oh really?
5: P	I'm just saying we don't really need the last 2 scenes, still.
6: S	Parents talk to each other…
7: H	It's 11:30 now. If you guys are leaving now, we can just go on about…
8: S	This could be that part they're…
9: H	'I don't really trust him'.
10: P	Ah. That's right. And then while we're walking to buy stuff.
11: D	Yes.
12: P	Oh yeah, we can just make the scene where we're going to…
13: D	Just leave those 2 scenes and just if you are going out, we can…
14: P	Talk. That'll be your scene.
15: H	So you guys have got a lot of lines anyway.
16: S	We don't need any more lines. All we need is…
17: H	You guys don't need any more.
18: S	Definitely don't need any more lines.
19: P	Even here, we've got a bit more than you do.
20: H	What did she say? 'Sure mum…Soy sauce?'.

In line 1, S points out that the script for the scene may be too long, considering the entire performance should be approximately 20 minutes and there are many more scenes to

cover. D estimates it is four minutes. In response, P asks them to recall what they have decided, which is that some scenes they have already created may not be used and therefore it should not be a problem if the second scene is relatively long. P seems to have taken this action in order to get the group to concentrate on creating a whole storyline first rather than stopping creating the script and modifying what they have already made. S in line 6 appears to accept P's suggestion and asks for confirmation from the group what they should be working on adding to the end of the second scene. H, who plays the father's role, reads out the father's dialogue to reinforce S's suggestion in line 9. This utterance finally triggers the group to unite on the idea that they had decided to omit other scenes and just expand the second scene. The scene the group is going to create next seems to be between Hanako's parents and H's concern now is the length of dialogue or scene in relation to the requirements for the task. H in line 15 then points out that S and P who play Hanako and Bob have had enough dialogue so far and P and S agree with her. After reaching consensus, the group is able to restart creating the dialogue for the task.

This excerpt shows the group's attempts to organise their script and performance as well as working on the timing of the script. They have tried to frame the task in detail and understand what they had completed so far and how this material fits the requirements of the task. This enables them to plan their next task according to the constraints and requirements of the task in order to complete the whole task successfully. English allows them to do these activities freely and confidently without much misunderstanding of each other and as a result they are able to confirm what they are up to or what is missing and plan for their next task to fulfill the requirements.

The students were often seen confirming the length of the script they had created so far while structuring the storyline. The next excerpt is an example of the students' use of English to manage their time during group work. Managing time is important because the students need to work out appropriate amounts of time to devote to each element of

the task, and if they fail to manage the time, they will not be able to cover the whole task and therefore they will not be able to succeed in both the task and learning.

Excerpt 6:

1: S	By the way does anyone have a plan? Have to go somewhere?
2: D/P	No.
3: H	I have to go to work, but it's not yet.
4: D	What time are you going?
5: H	12:30.
6: D	So it's another hour.
7: H	But I might have to go earlier…
8: S	Let's try to finish this as quick as we can and then we can all go home and consider what we've written.

In this excerpt, S asks the group members their availability for the current meeting to plan what they should or will be able to do during the meeting. H is the only person who has to leave early, which is in an hour's time. S suggests the plan that they try to finish the scene within that timeframe and study what they have decided in this meeting at home. By working out the length of the time available for the meeting, the students were able to plan what they could achieve during the meeting in order to conduct group work effectively. English makes it easier for the students to have a common consciousness in terms of time management and helps them to work on the task effectively.

The excerpts described above illustrate how the students organise the task during group work and what sort of roles English plays in this. Organisation of the task by the group seen in these excerpts can be divided into two parts: reflecting on and confirming what they have completed and planning what they will do next. In order to plan what has to be done next, the students need to understand how much work they have completed. As seen in the excerpts, their memory or understanding varies and they do not always share the same ideas. They suggest their ideas to each other based on their own understanding in order to access a shared recollection which can be used to structure the role-play script

for the task. In short, they use each other as a resource to clarify their collective memory of previous work or decision-making and this enables them to move forward in the task. Once they have reached agreement and have a concrete idea of the completed work, they are able to plan what they need to or should do. They plan the script, performance and timing in detail in relation to requirements of the task. Planning also includes developing strategies to complete the task. The group works to complete the task successfully by repeating these two organisational actions – accessing shared recollection and planning for the next task. The interactions in relation to these organisational actions are mostly conducted in English and it can be said that English plays an important role in organising the task. When the students are able to organise the task quickly and effectively, they are able to work on other things to complete the task successfully and this means they are working to achieve the learning goals for the task. Therefore, the use of English in organising the task plays an important role in organising and structuring their learning.

4.1.3 Summary of results

The results show how the students attempted to understand the task, especially clarifying the nature of the task itself, and also how they organised the task in order to complete it effectively and successfully while working in a group. In the process of their resolving various issues, English was seen to play several roles in facilitating students' group work. Firstly, English was a useful tool to develop a shared understanding of the task even though their resulting understanding was not always guaranteed to be adequate. Mercer (1996) pointed out that talk is an important tool for developing shared understanding as a basis for further learning. In language learning, students need a shared language at an adequate level of proficiency to carry out such talk. For these students, English was the only available linguistic tool for developing shared understanding. English allowed them to work on multiple issues on occasion and assisted them to work through the problems so that they were able to move ahead to complete the task. Through the process, the students developed effective language strategies for problem solving by using necessary

knowledge and moreover their shared understanding in English became a resource which could be used in learning Japanese. Secondly, the use of English in organising the task played an important role in organising and structuring their learning. Curtis and Lawson (1999) identified organisational talk as one of the key activities in successful group work, and in this group work English provided a means of doing this sort of talk. In terms of organising the task, the students were seen repeating two organisational actions: planning what they would do next and accessing shared recollection to recall their previous decisions. In order to complete the task, learners need to construct common goals or plans (Brooks and Donato, 1994). The talk for this purpose is what Brooks and Donato (1994) referred to as speaking as goal formation, which was identified also by Ahmed (1988). Furthermore, De Guerrero and Villamil (2000) identified that learners' L1 is a valuable tool for task control and facilitating group work because it promotes learners' achievement of the goal. In the current study, the students used each other as a resource to reflect and confirm what they had completed or what they had decided on in their previous meetings and then planned for the future. In order to complete the task properly and effectively, they needed to organise the task in detail focusing on aspects such as timing, script and performance in relation to the requirements of the task. The students discussed such issues in English and the use of English allowed them to achieve the learning goals for the task.

In terms of language learning, understanding the task is essential in order to achieve the learning goals of the task since every task has purpose. Effective group work depends on learners' developing a shared understanding of the nature of the task. This allows the learners to determine their goals and to develop strategies to accomplish the task accordingly. Discussion of the task is fundamental for the learners to achieve the learning goals of the task and therefore it can be said that English contributes to their language learning.

4.2 The use of English in assessing linguistic aspects of L2

In the students' collaborative dialogue, English is deployed to clarify linguistic aspects of the L2. The students were seen using English when they discussed grammatical aspects of the target language, expressions or phrases they wanted to include into their script and features of oral production such as pronunciation. English was seen to have a key role in terms of correcting grammar and negotiating the appropriate use of phrases to convey meaning in a certain context. English mediates the students' L2 learning when they are engaged in accessing an appropriate phrase and then conveying the intended meaning. According to Vygotsky (1986), second language acquisition is equivalent to the acquisition of 'scientific concepts', and is thus acquired consciously and strategically. He also suggested that learning a foreign language is a process that is conscious and deliberate from the start. It uses word meanings that are already well developed in one's native language, and the knowledge of one's own language in terms of grammar and other linguistic knowledge also plays an important role in acquiring a foreign language. In short, it uses the semantics of the native language as its foundation. In the present study, although English was not the native language for some of the students in the group, it was their more proficient language and therefore it appears to have played a similar role to their native language in terms of learning a second language, Japanese.

Furthermore, collaborative group work provided an opportunity for collective scaffolding by the students. Donato (1994) found in his research on the group work of French learning students that learners were capable of giving guided help to their peers, and that scaffolding happened regularly while students were working together on language learning tasks during collaborative L2 interaction. He suggested that it would be useful to consider 'the learners themselves as a source of knowledge in a social context' (p. 52). Although his research did not demonstrate the linguistic development of each individual, it did indicate that collective scaffolding helped the linguistic development of individual learners.

The next section will examine how the students used English to internalise their second language, and how they provided scaffolded help to each other in order to solve linguistic problems during collaborative group work. It will be divided into three parts, which are based on the main use of English found in the data while the students were dealing with linguistic aspects of L2 in group work – clarification of the meaning of vocabulary, discussion of expressions to be adopted for the drama script and modification of sentences based on the students' grammatical knowledge.

4.2.1 Use of English in clarifying the meaning of vocabulary

While working on the task, the students were seen using English to clarify the meaning of vocabulary in the TL or using English to frame accessing equivalent words in the TL, which they wanted to include in their script. As seen in the example in the previous section, the students adopted an approach in which they developed a storyline using mostly English first, which they then translated into Japanese. In the process of translation, they encountered difficulties, that is, they came across many words that they did not know or were not sure how to express in the TL. They used English as a quick resource to solve these problems.

In the following excerpt, the group is working on their script and establishing Bob's character. The scenario indicates that Bob does all the housework at home and the students are discussing the details of the housework that Bob will do as per his dialogue.

Excerpt 1:

1:H I'm also doing laundry and ironing and vacuuming.
2:P *Souji* is cleaning, right?
3:S Yes.
4:D Washing is?
5:S *Sentaku*, I think.
6:P Sometimes cleaning and washing.

In line 1, H states what kind of housework Bob will do in English. In response to H's utterance, P says the Japanese word '*souji*' in line 2 and requests the group to confirm if '*souji'* means cleaning. This utterance by P suggests that she was aware of the meaning of '*souji*' but was uncertain about the accuracy of her knowledge. She then asks the group to confirm if her knowledge of the word '*souji*' is correct. In line 3, S confirms P is correct based on his own knowledge. Here, S and P both successfully pooled their knowledge to resolve P's problem. D then wants to access a word in the TL meaning 'washing' and asks the group for the word. In contrast to P's case, D does not have a Japanese equivalent word for 'washing' and attempts to use the group as a resource to supply a word in Japanese. In line 5, S suggests an equivalent word for 'washing' in the TL, but with less certainty by adding 'I think' at the end. No one gives a direct response to S, but P seems to accept S's contribution and validates it by adding an additional comment in English to what H suggested in line 1.

There are two patterns for eliciting the knowledge of others illustrated in this excerpt – pooling knowledge to resolve uncertainty of a word and using peers as a supplier of the meaning for unknown words. In the first instance, P did know the word in the TL, but was uncertain of her knowledge. This uncertainty triggered her utterance in which she looked to the group to confirm the meaning, and S, who was certain of the meaning, provided confirmation of P's knowledge. This process resulted in the pooling of their knowledge, and this assisted in resolving the problem raised by P. In the latter case, D had no knowledge of a word in the TL, and used her peers as a resource to supply the word. Both processes show the students were using their peers as a resource for confirming less certain knowledge or as a source of missing information. This resulted in knowledge which was lacking or only partially acquired being made their own, and being made available both to themselves and others.

In terms of English use, when the students ask the meaning of a word in English, English enables them to clarify or confirm the meaning quickly, and when they ask their peers to supply an equivalent word in the TL, English enables them to provide an answer even if

they are less sure of that answer. In such cases, the students provide the correct word to each other using their own language resources during collaborative group work, and this results in their creation of a pool of vocabulary knowledge. English thus plays a key role in creating this pool of knowledge and enabling the students to expand their vocabulary.

The next excerpt is another example of English being used while the students are discussing vocabulary. In this excerpt, the students are discussing what Bob's occupation should be when he is introduced to Hanako's parents.

Excerpt 2:

1:S	He could be a *Daiku*.
2:P	A *Daiku*?
3:S	A carpenter.
4:H	Ah. *Daiku*.
	.
	.
	.
12:D&S	*Daiku. Oosutoraria no daiku*?
13:H	What was a carpenter again?
14:P	*Daiku*.
15:H	Yeah, of course.

S introduces a Japanese word '*Daiku*' to the group members in line 1. P does not seem to know the meaning of the word and S provides an answer in English, saying that the word means 'a carpenter'. H says 'Ah' in line 4, which implies that she now knows something she did not know before – Heritage (1984) argues that change of state tokens such as *ah* and *oh* register a change in the state of knowledge of the speaker: the speaker now knows something that s/he did not know before. In producing this change of state token, H demonstrates that she has learned a new word '*daiku*'. When the word is re-introduced in line 12, H asks group members to say the Japanese word again. This indicates that '*daiku*' is a new word for her and she did not acquire the word the first

time it was introduced. By having the word supplied again, she uses the group as a resource to provide her with a new opportunity to acquire the word. In line 14, P supplies the Japanese word, which demonstrates she had acquired the word '*daiku*' when it was first produced and is able to activate this knowledge to help H. This shows P's self-regulation over her acquisition of the word, and by using her knowledge to help H, she is able to practise and confirm the new knowledge she attained during an interaction with S. Given the answer from P, H seems to be showing that the word *daiku* has become partially familiar and identifiable but is not actively available to her. Unlike P, she is able to confirm the familiarity of the word, although she isn't at this point able to produce it.

This episode illustrates that P has acquired new knowledge of a Japanese word as the result of collaborative interaction in English. S introduced the new term, which P did not know, and provided a definition. P then later used her new knowledge to help H who was also learning the word. P's learning of the word moved from the interpersonal context of her interaction with S to become intrapersonal knowledge which she could use to help H. H also learned the word interpersonally and was able to recognise it passively in an interactive context, but does not seem to have moved to the stage of having learned the word intrapersonally. H and P's learning reflects Vygotsky's (1978) argument concering human cognitive development and one of the principal ideas of sociocultural theory. Vygotsky has argued that the development first takes place on a social plane during social interaction, which he called 'interpsychological category', and then on an internal plane, which he called 'intrapsychological category' (1978, p. 57; see also Bruner, 1986; Cole, 1985). This means that individuals help each other construct meaning, which is eventually internalised by individuals. The group here is providing an important learning context with the English language providing opportunities for vocabulary learning, practice and reinforcement.

As illustrated in the two excerpts analysed above, collaborative group work does assist learners in acquiring new knowledge of vocabulary in the TL. English plays a

facilitating role in terms of pooling knowledge and providing learners with opportunities to practise and reinforce new knowledge they acquire during group work. The next excerpt, however, is an example of a rather negative impact that English had on students solving a problem.

The students were discussing Bob's occupation in this excerpt. Their intention was to provide Bob with an occupation that was insecure and unstable by Japanese standards, so that Hanako's parents would not easily accept their marriage. They also intended to make his job rather confusing to her parents by choosing an occupation that could easily be misunderstood. Leading up to this excerpt, S suggested that Bob's occupation be a '*Daiku'*, carpenter. The group accepted his suggestion and tried to make a dialogue using that word. Then S came up with another idea, which was that Bob be a 'Sunday carpenter'. It seems that the concept of Sunday carpenter comes from a direct translation of the Japanese phrase, '*Nichiyoo Daiku'*. '*Daiku*' is a carpenter and as such, a recognised occupation, whereas '*Nichiyoo Daiku*' is a person who does carpentry work around the house for their own family on the weekend. It is therefore not an occupation. S was the only person who knew of the word, but even he was not sure of the correct form of the word. The group had to have a long discussion on this topic in an attempt to resolve the problem.

Excerpt 3:

1:S *Nichi daiku*, a weekend carpenter. I think that's the term.
2:P *Nichi daiku*? Does that have another meaning apart from just a carpenter?
3:S *Nichi dai*. No, no. It's, I think, it's *Nichi daiku* or *Nichi dai*? This one. (showing something to other students). But that just means you only can do… you are a handyman not a carpenter. So Dad can say or Dad or Mum can say, 'Would that be good enough?'
4:P Maybe you're not actually a good carpenter or a proper carpenter. You just have a pretty good business, but Dad just assume you're a *Nichi daiku*.
5:S Weekend carpenter like a handyman.

6:D Ok, yeah.
7:S Not really a carpenter. He just goes to a hardware and gets the stuff on the weekend.
8:D Ok. If you are a *Nichi daiku*, that means you have another job to do.
9:S Yes, I have. You hope so.
10:D But you are… oh, and Dad assumes you're a *Nichi daiku*, actually you are a full time *daiku*.
11:S Or Dad or Mum misunderstand
12:P That'll be better. Just like Dad or Mum misunderstand. All right.
13:S I'll check that word and find out.

In line 1, S introduces the word '*Nichi Daiku'* in relation to his idea of Bob being a Sunday carpenter. The term '*Nichi Daiku'* is new to P and she asks for clarification of the meaning of the word. S in line 3 tries to correct the word itself – he is not sure exactly how the word should be said. At the same time, he explains the meaning of the word and the reason why the group should use the word that he has introduced. S seems to know the concept of the word clearly here and is confident that the word fits well into their storyline. In line 4, P makes an additional suggestion about Bob's occupation. This suggestion indicates that P understood *'Nichi Daiku'* as a kind of carpentry job, but as an unskilled carpenter. S tries to clarify the term *'Nichi Daiku'* in English, by translating it into the closest equivalent word in English 'weekend carpenter' or 'a handyman'. The term 'weekend carpenter' is almost a direct translation of *'Nichiyoo Daiku'*, but it does not make much sense in English. 'A handyman' is also an ambiguous and confusing way to describe the occupation, as it could be a proper job or could be just a person fixing things around his/her own house in their spare time. In line 7, S further explains the term by describing what a *'Nichi Daiku'* actually does. D seems to show her initial understanding of the concept of the term in line 8, by stating that *'Nichi Daiku'* is not a full time job, and S confirms that D is correct. In response, D expresses her understanding on how the group can integrate the idea of Bob's occupation being that of a *'Nichi Daiku'* into their dialogue, when Bob's occupation is mentioned to Hanako's parents. Judging from D's utterance, it seems that she has the idea of Bob's job being a full time carpenter as the group first discussed, despite S working towards Bob being a hobby carpenter. It is not clear how S understood D's suggestion, but he adds an

additional idea to D's – that Hanako's parents misunderstand Bob's job and P agrees with this. In line 13, S shows his uncertainty of the term and promises to clarify it.

This excerpt has two spontaneously competing projects – what Bob's occupation should be and the meaning of the term, *'Nichiyoo Daiku'*. The first project is an example of organisational talk that I have described in a previous section. The group tries to access their shared recollection regarding Bob's occupation in order to restructure the role-play. The problem here came about because the *'Nichiyoo Daiku'* idea was introduced before they had established a concrete shared group understanding in relation to Bob's job. Leading up to this excerpt, all the group except S had decided that Bob's occupation should be a full time carpenter, or *'Daiku'*, which was initially S's suggestion. Having decided this as per a previous discussion, S assumed the group understood the concept of the term and attempted to integrate it into the dialogue of the script, but it created confusion about Bob's job. This was because S could not explain the term to the group clearly as he himself was uncertain of the term, verbalising it as *'Nichi Daiku'* not *'Nichiyoo Daiku'*. The group was not able to resolve the problem and was side-tracked for a while. Then they came back to discuss it in order to resolve the problem again.

43:P	…… Ok, Mum comes back and we can have Dad going to Mum's ears… like repeating what I said. Like 'Bob Builder. He is an Australian'. And he can say *Nichi daiku* or whatever. A handyman.
44:H	He is already kind of being introduced, so I shouldn't say 'this is Bob' again.
45:P	No, just sort of, you know, Dad being mean by going, you know.
46:H	I should just say…
47:P	Repeating it, but making it sound bad.
48:H	I should just say, 'Bob is a *Nichi daiku*
49:P	Yeah, like making it sound bad.
50:H	'Did you know Bob is a *Nichi daiku*?' I knew that one.
51:P	*Daiku*. I'm sorry I'm kind of that word into very… another word, *Daiku*…
52:S	Umm. It's not the lesbian thing.
53:D	Is Bob a *Nichi daiku*?
54:S	No.
55:D	He is not?

56:S He is a proper carpenter.
57:D I think probably, ah, before the silence, ah, 'Is that so? So what other job are you doing?' and then Bob can just say, 'Oh, I am a full time carpenter'. And then Dad can go grumpy like.. just like, 'Oh'. Not very happy about his answer. 'Cos he assumed that you are *Nichi daiku*.
58:S But *Nichi daiku* is the bad one.
59:D But *Nichi daiku* means that you do other things for living, right?
60:S But you should have another job.
61:P So he is thinking you actually have another job. But Dad thinks you are a full time carpenter.

In line 23, P reformulates the problem the group has been discussing by summarising the dialogue for the scene in which Bob's occupation is revealed to Hanako's parents. P seems to have accepted to use the term '*Nichi Daiku'* although she is still not clear of the meaning of the word. From line 44 to 55, the group conducts organisational talk to establish Bob's occupation and create actual dialogues for Hanako's father who is being played by H. Judging from the discussion, it seems they are still not sure of the meaning of '*Nichi Daiku'*, but recognise that it carries a negative connotation. In line 51, P finally verbalises her problem, that is her uncertainty concerning both Bob's job and the meaning of the term. D in line 53 also reformulates one of P's problems – what Bob's occupation is. D uses the term '*Nichi Daiku'* when she tries to clarify Bob's job. S responds to D, 'No' and D seems to have been surprised by his answer. S then suggests Bob is a full time carpenter, which conflicts with what S has been proposing to the group during their discussion on the topic. D in line 57 restructures the storyline for the scene by creating dialogues for Hanako's mother and explaining the situation in English. According to D's explanation, she understands '*Nichi Daiku'* is a better occupation than a full time carpenter. In response to D, S tries to correct D's misunderstanding of the term, and D explains her understanding of the word and justifies that the use of '*Nichi Daiku'* is appropriate in the dialogue she has created. S seems to accept D's explanation and suggests that the group thinks of another job for Bob. In line 61, P tries to clarify the whole situation in relation to Bob's occupation, which is again different from what D suggested in line 57. P appears completely lost during the whole situation.

This discussion also illustrates that the group was still dealing with two projects. At first the group concentrated on making a storyline and creating lines for Hanako's parents to say in the dialogue. Then P and D reformulated another project, that is, the clarification of the term, '*Nichi Daiku'*. D showed some understanding of the term in regard to whether or not it was correct, but P was unable to comprehend the totality of both the *'Daiku'* and '*Nichi Daiku'* concept. She appeared to have no idea what the group was talking about because they were dealing with multiple issues at the same time. In this example, the group's main focus was organisation, and since they were dealing with other difficulties, P's problem was not noticed and resolved.

After P's utterance, the group is again side tracked for a short time. D then seemed to be frustrated with the situation that the group could not get a clear idea about '*Nichi Daiku*'.

68:D	Are we going to have any more to say at all? That *nichi daiku* and *daiku* thing.
69:P	Well, I think we'll have time to write it. I don't know… because if we… because this is a better sort of things to go on with than if we just randomly have father saying he looks bad or what ever. I mean this just actually tease him from somewhere sort of things. You know what I mean?
70:D	Umm.
71:P	Do you know what I mean? Instead of just starting to tease like bullying him out of nowhere, we actually have a reason now.
72:D	Ok.
73:P	To play him out for you whatever.

In line 68, D attempts to get the group's attention as to how they should deal with the situation with the unsolved '*Nichi Daiku*' issue. In line 69, 71 and 73, P suggests that they should not worry about finding out the correct meaning and form of '*Nichi Daiku*', rather they should just use the word as it is something that enables Hanako's father to pick on Bob. D accepts P's suggestion.

This excerpt shows that the group realised that their resource were insufficient and postponed the matter in order to resolve it later. They decided to use '*Nichi Daiku'* as Bob's occupation for the time being and to concentrate on creating dialogues for Hanako's parents until their teacher came into the room.

250. S: Weekend carpenter *wa Nichi daiku desu ka*.
(Is a weekend carpenter *Nichi daiku*?)
251. T: *Nichiyoo daiku. Nichiyoobi*, Sunday *no nichiyoo*. *Nichiyoo daiku.*
(It is *Nichiyoo daiku*. *Nichiyoobi* Sunday, so *nichiyoo* is from Sunday. Sunday carpenter.)
252. All: Ahh.
253. D: How about full time carpenter?
254. T: *Daiku*.
255. D: Ah, *daiku kaa*.
256. P: So there are *Nichiyoo daiku* and just *daiku*.
257. T: *Nichiyoo daiku tte iuno wa, hontoni nante iukana… Otousan ga…*
(*Nichiyoo daiku* means, let's see, when fathers do…)
258. D: Ah, *shumi dake de*?
(Is it only as a hobby?)
259. P: Oh, *shumi*.
(Oh, hobby.)
260. T: *So so. De, shigoto de shiteiruhito ga daiku san*.
(Yes, yes. Then the person who does it for living is *daiku san*.)
261. P/D: *Umm, Daiku san*.

S asks for clarification of the meaning of the term in a combination of Japanese and English in line 250. The teacher firstly corrects the form of the term – '*Nichiyoo Daiku'*. She also explains in Japanese where this term came from, that is, a direct translation of the term 'Sunday carpenter'. In line 252, the group shows their understanding by saying 'ahh'. D then asks for a Japanese word for carpenter as an occupation and the teacher gives an answer. In line 256, P formulates her current stage of understanding and expresses it in English. The teacher responds to P and tries to explain what '*Nichiyoo Daiku*' means in Japanese, saying '*Nichiyoo Daiku*' is what a father does. D is then able to comprehend the term very clearly and in line 258, she articulates her understanding by

suggesting '*Nichiyoo Daiku*' is a kind of hobby, '*shumi'*. P seems to be familiar with the word, '*shumi'* and that assists her to be able to associate new terms with her already existing concepts. Her utterance, 'Oh' in line 259 shows she has understood the concept of the word. The teacher continues to explain and this time she explains '*Daiku'* is a person who does carpentry as an occupation. D and P both say, 'Oh', as a sign of understanding the term.

The knowledge gap which persisted throughout the discussion of '*Nichiyoo Daiku'* involved the actual form of the word which had not been orientated to by the participants. This gap was finally resolved when the teacher intervened. As evidenced by their previous discussion, the students had realised they did not have enough resources to resolve the problem. By subsequently deciding to ask an expert for help, they were able to attain the correct form and meaning of '*Nichiyoo Daiku'* and '*Daiku*'. P used English to formulate her understanding, which she had not been able to do previously because she could focus on only one problem – how they would use the word. As she expressed her current stage of understanding and stated what she was thinking, she received a response from the teacher that assisted her in clarifying how they were going to use the term. This utterance could have been expressed in simple Japanese, i.e. *Jaa, Nichiyoo daiku to daiku ga arimasune,* and P should have been able to do so considering her Japanese proficiency. P, however, chose English for expressing herself because it gives her more flexibility in discussing ideas. English was chosen by her rather than Japanese so that she was able to put her idea forward with confidence. The problem was resolved as a result and learning has occurred.

This long discussion on the '*Nichiyoo Daiku'* issue illustrates other aspects of the use of English while students are interacting in a group. Firstly, English is used to formulate purpose, and these multiple purposes can be in conflict with each other. Although a great deal of discussion on the term '*Nichiyoo Daiku'* was carried out, some of it, in a sense, was short-circuited. The students discussed the term '*Nichiyoo Daiku'* as well as the use of the term in their script. Different sorts of tasks were embedded in each other

during the discussion, and as not all of the issues were clarified in the earlier parts of the discussion, this led to complexity of the discussion itself. This complexity in the discussion caused a contextual problem for P. The students were not just dealing with one problem at the time; rather, because English allowed them to multi-task, they were dealing with more than one in a rather complicated way. Secondly, it can be said that English is an important resource for learners because it allows them to be involved with more complex activities. However, such complexity also creates problems. When the students focused on only one issue, as we saw in previously, they were able to deal with and resolve the problem satisfactorily. Thirdly, English allows them to understand that they may not have enough resources to resolve problems by themselves. As seen in this excerpt, the group decided to postpone resolving the problem after a long discussion on the topic and instead to ask for an expert's help. Discussion in English allowed them to realise they did not have sufficient knowledge and expertise and that it would be a waste of their time to keep working on the topic. If this discussion had been carried out in their TL, in which they were all less proficient, they might not have been able to come to this realisation. Lastly, English allows them to formulate their current stage of understanding. Having been able to express how they understand the topic, the students were able to receive feedback from others, in this example, the teacher. Depending on the level of understanding, others are able to give appropriate feedback, which will help their learning within the ZPD.

In summary, the excerpts described above illustrate how the students discussed and negotiated while they tried to resolve vocabulary related matters and what role English played in that process. In the first excerpt, the students elicited the knowledge of others by pooling knowledge to resolve uncertainty about a word and using their peers as suppliers of the meaning for unknown words. They were able to create a pool of knowledge in vocabulary as a result and that knowledge which was lacking or only partially acquired was made available both to themselves and others. During this process, English was used as a resource to access the meaning of a word or an equivalent word in the TL. It can thus be said that English plays a key role in learners' creating a pool of

vocabulary knowledge and enabling them to use this pool to expand their vocabulary knowledge. It is a tool for making what is known collectively available to by each member of the group. It allows intrapersonal knowledge to become interpersonal knowledge and consequently available for learning (see Bruner, 1986; Cole, 1985; Mercer & Fisher, 1998; Vygotsky, 1978). The second excerpt illustrated how learning of a new word moved from the interpersonal context to the learner's intrapersonal knowledge and how English provided opportunities for vocabulary learning, practice and reinforcement. This is the next stage in learning from the last extract. That is, once knowledge becomes available interpersonally, learners need to work with that knowledge to allow it to be learned intrapersonally. English provides a tool for this sort of learning. In a Vygotskyan sense, this shows that knowledge becomes available from an individual (intrapersonal) by being communicated to others (interpersonal) and by being manipulated in discussion becomes knowledge for a new person (intrapersonal). In the third excerpt, English was shown to have four roles in students' learning of vocabulary: 1) formulating purposes, 2) allowing the students to be involved with multiple tasks, 3) allowing them to understand whether or not they may have enough resources to resolve problems by themselves, and 4) allowing them to formulate their current stage of understanding. As just described, it can be said that English is an important resource for learning vocabulary during learners' collaborative group work and is one of the tools they have available to develop their learning.

4.2.2 Use of English in discussing expressions

One of the criteria of the task the students were engaged in was to use a 'range of expressions'. This means that the students are asked to use as many as possible of the expressions they have learned during the course while performing their drama. The total number of expressions the students were introduced to throughout the course was forty-five, with five to six expressions per unit being introduced over the eight units in the textbook. These expressions included idioms, phrases particular to the Japanese

language, proverbs and so on. As explained earlier, the objective of the course is for students to carry out conversations with Japanese native speakers on a casual level and to attain competence in carrying out natural conversations by accessing appropriate language use. In order to achieve this objective, understanding and acquisition of expressions are essential for learners to widen their ability to express themselves in the TL.

The textbook used for the course explains the meaning(s) of each expression and its usage. It also shows some example sentences in Japanese, followed by an exercise section where the students practise using the expression with their peers. During class time, the teacher explains and teaches each expression and supervises students while they are working on the exercise section. However, some expressions are quite particular to the Japanese language, and the students often find it difficult to attain correct usage of these expressions by merely studying the English explanation and reading a few examples. Moreover, the students started preparing for this task early in the semester, meaning that at the beginning of the group task, they had not been taught all the expressions that would be required for completing the dialogue. The only resources available to the students to learn these expressions are the explanations in the textbook and perhaps, information in their dictionary. This makes it difficult for the students to include the required expressions correctly in their script. The students were seen discussing what expressions they were able to incorporate into their script and how they could use them to suit the story they were making. During these discussions, the language used by the students was mostly English. The following examples illustrate how the use of English mediates the students' L2 learning when they are engaged in accessing an appropriate expression and then conveying the intended meaning.

In the following two excerpts, the students are discussing the very first scene of their drama performance. As described previously, they are making a story centered around a Japanese girl, Hanako, who lives in Australia, and her non-Japanese boyfriend, Bob Builder. The scenario indicates that they have already been living together for some time

and that Bob does all the housework. In the first excerpt, the students are writing lines for Bob who is in the kitchen and Hanako who has just come home. It should be noted that the students had already had meetings three times prior to this meeting; therefore they have a draft copy of the scenario and lines to work on.

Excerpt 1:

1:P …. *Nani o shite iru no?* I'm just making dinner.
2:S Oh, can be a little bit sarcastic, so I'm gonna say…*Nani o shite ieba ryori o tsukuruno yo, da yo.*
3:P It sounds a bit weird, don't you think?.
4:S It does a bit, doesn't it? If you are asking what I'm doing…
5:P I thought that meant….
6:S Cooking dinner.
7:P I thought that meant, ah, while we are on the topic…
8:S Umm, actually….
9:P I'm doing this. (showing a draft scenario written on her notebook)
10:S Yeah, that works quite well actually. Can we be doing this?
11:P But Japanese, I don't know, but Japanese sounds really off.
12:S No. Ok.
13:P I don't know. I don't think we should..
14:S Can you do ah.. I wonder if you can say '*sore ni shite wa'*. Considering it's late. *Sore ni shite*…
15:P Sore ni shite wa?
16:S No, you can't do that either. *Shita bakari*.. Oh, I can use '*shita bakari'*. *Ryori o shita bakari desu*.
17:P Are we.. Is it up the Topic 6? The words.
18:S Un.
19:P We are. I just wondered where that expression is from.
20:S I just use that one. I just made dinner. *Ryori o tsukutta bakari.*
21:P Ah. Ok. I thought you are making dinner. If you say that, you just finish making dinner.
22:S That means you can just eat now……It fits in, I think. Because it doesn't change the conversation.
23:P Yeah, you can say '*ima'*…Let's just say we just finished cooking dinner.

In line 1, P provides the first line for Hanako in the TL the meaning of which is, 'what are you doing?' and Bob's answer to the question in English. In his response, S suggests that Bob's answer should be slightly sarcastic, and gives an alternative in the TL trying to use an expression '*tte ieba*' which means 'speaking of'. It appears that when S saw this expression and its meaning in the textbook, he thought that by using this expression, he could add a sarcastic nuance to the original dialogue. He then made the sentence in the TL, which was not quite correct, perhaps because he was actually thinking in English and therefore, the sentence he made in the TL was a direct translation from English. In line 3, P evaluates the structure of the sentence including this expression and makes a judgment that it is not quite right. P's utterance gives a chance for S to rethink the sentence he has made, and S develops and agrees with P's assessment in line 3. S then clarifies the meaning of the sentence he created in English to see if it conveys the same meaning as the sentence he made in the TL. Even though S originally considered the sentence was not appropriate, it appears that he believes that the sentence does convey the meaning that the group decided in their previous meetings, judging from his utterances in line 6, 8 and 10. P in contrast, continues to argue that there is a problem with S's sentence in lines 5, 7 and 9, and finally in lines 11 and 13 she clearly states that the sentence does not sit well in that context. P's opinion leads S to explore the possibilities of using other expressions for this scene as seen in lines 14 and 16 by looking for alternative expressions in the textbook. He evaluates each expression using its English meaning to see if he could use it in any way even if the meaning of the sentence differs somewhat from what the group originally intended. After evaluating alternatives, S proposes an alternative '*shita bakari'* meaning 'just finished doing', and makes a sentence with this expression in the TL, which changes the meaning of the original sentence completely. In line 20, S clarifies the meaning of the new sentence in English and further modifies the structure of the sentence in the TL so that it is grammatically correct. S's clarification of the meaning helps P to resolve her misunderstanding of this sentence, and she confirms her understanding of what S was saying. In line 22, S again evaluates whether or not the sentence fits into the scenario

and explains his judgment. In response, P resolves this discussion with the suggestion of adding a word, '*ima*' meaning 'just now', to the sentence.

This episode illustrates that English can play several roles during collaborative group work. Firstly, the students use English as a resource for accessing the meaning of each expression, which enables them to adapt the expression to the dialogue they are working on. Sharing the meaning of the expression in English allows the students to create sentences using that particular expression. By using English, the students are able to make sense of the form or meaning of a text in the TL, as has been found in previous studies (e.g., Brooks & Donato, 1994; Donato, 1994). It can also be said that English assists the students in accessing L2 forms and evaluating and understanding the meaning of a text in L2, as Antón and Di Camilla (1998) have also identified in their study. Although English plays a positive role in accessing and evaluating forms, as seen in the example above, the use of English may also cause problems as the TL structures may be affected when the students translate the sentence from English directly to the TL. Secondly, English is used as a resource for the students to evaluate the sentences they have created and to explain their judgment of the sentences in order to develop a shared understanding and consensus. Once the students have created a sentence, they can use English to discuss it to see if it conveys the meaning that they intended and to exchange opinions about the sentence. Moreover, the students use English when they propose alternatives during the discussion about the sentence. The following is another example of the students discussing how to incorporate particular expressions into their script.

In this example, the students are working on lines for the scene in which Hanako tries to persuade Bob to meet her parents. The scenario indicates that Bob is not eager to meet them, but Hanako takes the initiative in arranging a meeting with her parents.

Excerpt 2:

1:P *Sore wa ii kangae kedo demo iyoiyo*…then what…. *Iyoiyo watashi no ryooshin to… Demo iyoiyo watashi no ryooshin to…*

2:S Where are you?
3:P I'm just wondering..maybe.. perhaps it's time for you to meet my parents.
4:S So what did you say?
5:P I'm thinking. *Sore wa ii kangae kedo*, that's a good idea. *Demo iyoiyo*..
6:S Umm. *Kangae da kedo*…isn't it?
7:P What' s *iyoiyo* again?
8:S It says here 'At last or some kind of relief that action has reached or in reaching to completion', oh.
9:P It doesn't sound like I should be using it here.
10:S No.
11:H No. You should use…
12:P I think more like the other one… *demo moo ryooshin to*… *moo ryooshin to*… yeah… *watashi no ryooshin to*…
13:H Yeah, that's it.
14:P Umm, I'm thinking 'it's time to meet my parents' or 'it's about to…'. I don't want to use '*toki*'.
15:H What's time… time to?
16:P I don't know time… like *toki*… that sounds like…
17:H *Ryooshin ni aimasho*?
18:P *Watashi no ryooshin to*… (taking a note)
19:H *Aimashoo*.
20:P Or have to be, '*Moo ryooshin ni awanakya"*?

In line 1, P reads aloud Hanako's lines in the TL which the group had created in their previous meeting. Line 1 is an incomplete sentence meaning 'That is a good idea, but finally you …with my parents'. S seems to have lost where P is up to in the text and asks for an explanation in line 2. It appears that P is not confident about this sentence and tries to evaluate it by stating what the dialogue is supposed to mean in English. Having the English meaning of the sentence in mind, S requests P to repeat the dialogue in the TL so that he can also evaluate the sentence. P then repeats the sentence followed by an English translation, and S provides a possible alternative construction with the added word *da*, which he confirms. S's addition of *da* is not however taken up. Instead, P seems to have forgotten the meaning and the usage of '*iyoiyo*' and asks for assistance with the meaning from the group, using their distributed knowledge of Japanese to

compensate for a problem with her own knowledge. S refers to the textbook, and in line 8 he clarifies the meaning of the expression. S realises that this phrase cannot be used in this context – his 'oh' at the end of the reading of the definition indicates that he has discovered a problem. In line 9, P uses S's previous contribution to evaluate the sentence and states her judgment that this expression cannot be used in this context. S and H agree with this in lines 10 and 11. H begins to provide an alternative, but her talk is cut off by P who proposes her own alternative with '*moo*', meaning 'soon', in line 12. Although H accepts P's suggestion, P in line 14 is still not happy with her own suggestion and considers again what she wants to say, and in doing so rejects one possible Japanese form – '*toki*'. H and P both try to find an alternative word to suit the sentence, but fail to do so. Then in line 17, H provides a simple alternative by reframing the idea as '*aimasho*', meaning 'let's meet', which allows them to avoid using an expression or phrase they are not familiar with. P seems to have accepted H's suggestion, but in line 21, she proposes another alternative, '*awanakya*', which means 'must meet'. At this stage, the group has given up on using the expression '*iyoiyo*' and moved on to using a simpler, more familiar phrase. They have used English to evaluate possible alternatives. As a result they have identified problems with their current level of knowledge and developed alternative ways of constructing the dialogue within the limitations of their shared competence in Japanese.

In this example, the use of English plays a role in the metalinguistic function of enabling students to evaluate and adapt a complex phrase in the TL to develop their script. They confirm the meaning of the particular L2 phrase in English and establish a shared perspective on the phrase, that is, it is not appropriate in this context. The use of English allows them to take an analytical stance towards the TL which in turn, allows them to investigate meaning and match meaning to context. They provide mutual assistance during the discussion in order to construct the correct dialogue , evaluating the sentences, adding what is missing to the sentences, correcting the form, eliminating the sentences that are wrongly used and proposing alternatives. The students in this excerpt

collaboratively provide scaffolded help to each other using English and successfully construct the correct dialogue in the TL.

In the last excerpt, the students were discussing an expression, '*sore ni shite wa*', the English equivalent of which is 'considering the fact(s)'. This discussion was recorded while P was going through the script that the group had previously created in order to confirm the content. As mentioned earlier, P was the group leader and she also carried out the note taking role for the group. It was observed that sometimes P took notes according to what other group members said without paying very much attention, and later had questions on what or why they had decided on something in the script. The following example is one such incident.

Excerpt 3:

1:P	Yeah. Why do we use *sore ni shite wa* again?
2:D	I was thinking to put in *sore ni shite wa,* 'considering that you say you arrived on time but...', and then said these reasons.
3:P	Ah.
4:D	You should say you arrived on time first and then *sore ni shite wa.*
5:P	We didn't arrive on time though.
6:D	Oh, you mean the airplane. I thought you meant arrived at home. Ok.
7:P	Wait. Just checking…*sore ni shite wa* is…
8:S	*Sore ni shite wa* is considering that. That's why you're using *sore ni shite wa*, after saying all of that, taking into consideration all of that, we are only late 1 hour.
9:D	Ahh. Only late for 1 hour. So she is trying to say…

In line 1, P frames a problem to the group that she wants an explanation for regarding the use of the expression, '*sore ni site wa*' in a particular place in the script. It seems that D had suggested the idea that the expression be included there, and so she explains and justifies the reason by translating the whole dialogue into English. P says 'Ah' in line 3, which implies her level of understanding of the matter, and D in the next line offers a confirmation of the construction of the expression to reinforce her reasoning. However,

this explanation leads P and D to realise that they had misunderstood each other, since the concept of the dialogue they had in mind was different. In line 7, P reformulates the original problem and this time S offers an explanation by stating an English equivalent to the expression in order to justify the reason why '*sore ni shite wa*' should be used there. This explanation clarifies the meaning of the expression as well as the whole dialogue and the problem seems to be solved.

This excerpt also illustrates how English is used as a resource to facilitate the students' adaptation of new expressions into their role-play script. It shows that English plays two important roles while the students are engaged in creating dialogue for the script: Firstly, accessing and evaluating the meaning of the expression they intended to use; and secondly, explaining their justification of the sentence. Being able to access the English meaning both for the expression itself and the dialogue as a whole, they are able to share and comprehend each other's ideas, that is, they are establishing shared understanding or what Rommetveit (1979) called intersubjectivity. The development of shared understanding may be attained when learners discuss their different viewpoints (Tudge, 1992) and it is only attained when interaction is conducted within the ZPD of each individual. Establishing and maintaining levels of shared understanding or intersubjectivity is essential for the quality of learning (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Mulder & Swaak, 2002). In this excerpt, English allows them to exchange opinions freely and to justify their judgment of the sentence in order to develop shared understanding. In the process of completing the dialogue, the students evaluate whether or not the expression is appropriate to be used in that particular place in conveying the meaning that they intended. The shared understanding they develop enables them to evaluate the sentence they are working on and connect it to less familiar expressions and existing concepts they already have. As a result, they are able to complete the line in the way in which they intended, and after completion of the sentence, they are able to explain and justify it. English is thus a valuable resource in enabling the students to select appropriate language in the TL and justify its use in a particular context.

The three excerpts above illustrate the process of the students' attempts in adapting new expressions in the TL into their script and show several roles that English plays during that process. During collaborative group work, they mutually assist each other in order to construct the correct dialogue. They provide scaffolded help to each other by evaluating and correcting sentences or alternatives that are proposed by others, and as a result they successfully construct the correct dialogue in the TL. In the most noticeable use of the concept of scaffolding in the Vygotskian theory, scaffolded help occurs in the form of expert-novice interaction (Bruner, 1986; Wood, 1988; Wood et al., 1976). However, as seen in these excerpts, scaffolding also occurs between students during collaborative group work and they appear to be capable of providing guided support to each other for their L2 development. The result reflects research work by Donato (1994) on what he called 'collective scaffolding' in small group learning contexts. Donato concluded that 'second language learners appear quite capable and skillful at providing the type of scaffolded help that is associated in the developmental literature with only the most noticeable forms of expert-novice interaction' (p.52). Donato also claimed that learners themselves are a source of knowledge during collective scaffolding. In the current data, English plays several important roles in this process. Firstly, English allows them to access the meaning of each expression that they attempt to include in their script. Secondly, English allows them to evaluate the sentences they have created and explain their judgments about them in order to develop a shared understanding and consensus. In other words, English serves as a tool for establishing intersubjectivity, as Antón and DiCamilla (1998) have also identified in their study. It also allows them to propose alternatives if needed. English enables the students to exchange their ideas without any linguistic constraint, and eventually to construct sentences that convey the meaning they intended. Thus, it can be said that English is an important resource in terms of the students' adopting new expressions in the TL.

4.2.3 Use of English in modifying sentences based on students' grammatical knowledge

The last two sections analysed how the students worked collaboratively while creating their drama script and dialogue, particularly when they tried to resolve matters related to vocabulary and new expression. They gave scaffolded help to each other and developed shared understanding in order to create correct dialogues. During that process, English was seen to play important roles in students' learning. Other than merely dealing with vocabulary and new expressions, the students discussed more general and broad linguistic issues such as pronunciation or word order in the TL. This section will analyse excerpts relating to their attempt to resolve those problems and other aspects of English use when the students attempted to create or modify dialogue in order to carry the meaning that they intended.

The first excerpt was recorded when the students were discussing Hanako's mother's dialogue. In the storyline, Hanako's mother asks Bob what he does as an occupation and he answers that he is a part-time carpenter. Hanako's mother is not satisfied with his answer and asks again what other jobs he does. The script the group created in English was 'what other jobs do you do, Bob?' and P suggested that Bob's response to the question should be something funny such as he does washing and cleaning for Hanako. H agreed and suggested it would be even funnier to make Bob misinterpret Hanako's mother's question and simply state what he does on a day-to-day basis rather than what he officially does for a living. In order to achieve this, the students had to come up with a Japanese phrase that conveys the same meaning as the English script they created, but which also carries a certain degree of ambiguity so that it can be misinterpreted.

Excerpt 1:

1:P	In that way, that means we translate the Mum's sentence… we have to make sure we say it so that it is misinterpreted.
2:S	What about you, Mum? Got any ideas?
3:D	*'Hontou? Hokani wa nani no... nan no shigoto o suruno kana*?'

4:P So if you say *shigoto*… Do you know his work?
5:D '*Nani o suruno kana… hokani wa nani o suruno kana?*'
6:H Ah, what other things do you do?
7:D *Hokani wa*…
8:P Ah, maybe you want to use 'can you?'.
9:D Ah, '*hokani wa nani o dekiruno kana?*'.
10:P Yeah, 'what other things', then you have.. like what else can he do and … He is trying to impress the family.

In line 1, P frames the problem to the group that they need to translate the English line, 'what other jobs do you do' into Japanese that causes Bob to misinterpret the question and therefore give a humorous answer. D in line 3 suggests a possible line that is a direct translation of the original script using the word, '*shigoto',* meaning 'job, occupation'. P, in the next line, evaluates the translated line and raises a possible problem of using the word '*shigoto'*; that is, if they use it, the answer has to be specific to official jobs and it will therefore not cause misunderstanding or achieve what they intend. P's question seems to lead D to realise the problem with her first translation and she suggests another possible translation that uses '*suru*', meaning 'do' instead of '*shigoto*'. By not using the job-specifying word '*shigoto'*, the sentence is able to carry ambiguity and can result in Bob's rather unexpected and humorous answer. H in line 6 formulates and expresses how she understands the Japanese line by referring to its English translation. P in line 8 then suggests changing the word further from 'do you do' to 'can you do', and D in line 9 proposes another possible line in Japanese meaning 'what other things can you do?'. In line 10, P accepts the line and states the reasons by referring to its English translation. At the same time, she indicates that the line they produced in Japanese is ambiguous enough that it allows Bob to give a funny answer, such as he can do all sorts of housework, in order to show his enthusiasm and impress Hanako's family.

This excerpt is a good example of collaborative problem solving facilitated through the use of English. It illustrates how English is used while students are trying to translate their English script into Japanese. As seen in above example, they used English to both confirm meaning and justify an alternative suggestion, which allowed them to

successfully convey the ambiguity they were seeking in Japanese. They also used English to evaluate the appropriateness of the sentence in that context. In addition, the use of English allowed them to collaboratively resolve the problem of how to translate English script into Japanese with the same ambiguity as English.

The next excerpt is another example of collaborative problem solving amongst students and how English assisted them in resolving the problem they encountered. They were creating lines for the scene when Hanako and her parents meet for the first time and Hanako's mother questions Bob to find out what kind of person he is.

Excerpt 2:

1:H	Then we can do interrogation. 'How old are you, Bob? What is your occupation, Bob?' Are you gonna take care of my daughter, Bob?'
2:P	Ok. Should we say 'He is a carpenter from Australia' or 'He is an Australian and he is a carpenter'?
3:D	*Oosutoraria jin*.
4:S	'He is an Australian and he is a carpenter' because in Japanese it is very difficult to say two together.
5:D	Australian carpenter?
7:S	Australian carpenter. Oh.
8:D&S	*Daiku. Oosutoraria no daiku*?

In line 1, H suggests the list of questions that Hanako's mother should ask Bob in English and P attempts to provide a line in response to one of those questions. Here, she formulates a problem, that is, there are two patterns describing Bob and she is not sure which one is more appropriate. D in line 3 provides a word, '*Oosutoraria jin*' meaning 'Australian (person)' implying to the group that she supports the latter pattern of Bob's description. S further supports D's idea with his justification using his knowledge about Japanese language. In line 5, D then proposes an alternative in English and S seems to have just noticed this way of describing Bob and to be happy with the alternative. In line

8, D and S both translate the expression, 'Australian carpenter' into the TL and the problem is resolved.

This excerpt also showed how the students solved the problem collaboratively and English played facilitating role in order to create correct dialogue for the script. As seen in excerpt 1, they used English to confirm the meaning of the dialogue they had already created so that everyone in the group was able to share the same idea on the storyline. Then they produced a new line in English while considering how they could translate it into the TL. At the same time, they used their grammatical knowledge of the TL, which is in this case the difference in sentence structure between English and Japanese. When they created the line in English, they seemed to be thinking the Japanese sentence simultaneously. The students appeared to be all aware of the difference and S especially verbalised the rule to the group. Then D made a suggestion that was easily translated and conveyed what they tried to say and they were able to create an appropriate sentence. Therefore, it can be said that English allows them to analyse the sentence structure both in English and the TL and to enhance the grammatical awareness in the TL.

The next two excerpts are simple examples of the students were working together to collaboratively solve problems. The first example is when they came across a problem in pronunciation.

Excerpt 3:

1:P: Ahh, OK, and then Bob can just put in line saying '*Arigatoo*' or something.
2:D: '*Arigatoo*'? '*Doomo arigatoo*' sounds better.
3:P: Is it long, '*Doo*'?
4:D: Yes, '*Doo mo*'.
5:P: '*Arigatoo*'…oh wait. But then…oh '*Naka ni imasu yo*'. OK.

P suggests using '*arigatoo'* meaning 'thank you' as Bob's line and D evaluates the idea and proposes to add '*doomo'* in order to make it sound more polite. Then P asks about

its pronunciation regarding whether it has a long sound or not. D is confident of the pronunciation and the problem is thus solved through collaboration and knowledge sharing between the group members.

The next excerpt was recorded when the students were creating lines for Hanako, who, as mentioned earlier, is a female character in their drama script.

Excerpt 4:

1:D '*Osoku nai*'.
2:H You should use '*sonnani*'.
3:P '*Osokunai yo*'. Should I say '*yo*'. I am a girl.
4:D '*Osoku nai yo*'. Yeah yeah. '*Osoku nai yo*'. (repeating with emotion)

D comes up with a sentence meaning 'it is not late' and H suggests adding '*sonnani'* meaning 'not very' in a negative sentence. No one responded to her suggestion, instead P formulates a suggestion that the particle '*yo*' should be added at the end of the sentence to make the line sound more natural because Hanako is female. P's question in line 3 makes D recall that speech patterns differ considerably between males and females in Japanese, and she evaluates the line by adding the particle '*yo*'. D then accepts the suggestion and the problem is resolved, as in the previous excerpt, through mutual collaboration and knowledge sharing

These examples show how the students use each other as a resource to solve problems during collaborative group work. When they come across a problem, they seek access to the knowledge that each individual holds in order to resolve the problem. In all these examples a group member had knowledge of the problem brought up and collaborative group work triggered that knowledge and allowed it to be distributed to the group. Problem resolution thus allowed new shared knowledge to be created. This coincides with the concept of distributed cognition developed by Hollan et al. (2000) which claims 'cognitive processes may be distributed across the members of a social group' (p. 176).

Moreover, interaction allows different kinds of knowledge that individuals hold to be distributed across the members of the group and as a result creates a pool of knowledge (see Rogers & Ellis 1994). In this process, the student's formulation, discussion and resolution of problems in English was based on knowledge distribution, which was made possible by the medium of English or their L1. Hence it can be said that English played a facilitating role for the students in activating their knowledge and allowing this knowledge to be distributed to the group which resulted in the creation of pooled knowledge.

However, collaborative problem solving just amongst the learners does not always work positively. The next example illustrates how not having an expert in the group resulted in the students attaining wrong information. They were discussing a phrase meaning 'one hour late' in Japanese.

Excerpt 5:

1:P Didn't you say you would be here an hour ago?'
2:S: '*1 Jikan osokatta yo'*
3:D: '*Moo 1 jikan osokatta janai…osokatta n janai n ka'*
4:P: What was it again?
5:D: '*Moo 1 jikan okureta' kana?*
6:S: '*Okureta*'?
7:D: '*Okureta n janai n…*'
8:P: And what's the other word…
9:D *Jikan…*
10:P '*1 jikan osokatta*'?
11:D '*1 jikan okureta*'
12:P *Jikan o* or no *o*?
13:D '*1 jikan okureta*'… oh yeah, the particle. *1 jikan…*
14:P *Ni*?
15:D *Ni…* un...
16:S It's time, it should be *ni,* shouldn't it?
17:D Un.
18:P '*1 jikan ni okure…*' (taking a note)
19:D '*ta n janai*'

In line 1, P formulates a problem in English while going through the drama script they created in their previous meeting. S responds to P and suggests a Japanese sentence '*1 jikan osokatta yo*' meaning 'You are one hour late'. Based on S's suggestion, D in line 3 attempted to modify his sentence in a way that conveys the same meaning as what S suggested, but which also includes the speaker's feeling of annoyance implicitly. P in line 4 seems that she could not hear what S and D suggested clearly, so she asks them to repeat what they said. D provides a sentence using a different verb '*okureta*' meaning 'being late' in response. Having provided the sentence, D shows a slight uncertainty with her suggested sentence using '*kana*'. The word '*kana*' is a Japanese postpositional particle and it implies that the speaker has doubt about the proposition. In line 6 S repeats the word '*okureta*' with rising intonation suggesting that this word was new to him or it was unfamiliar to him. In line 7 D further attempts to modify the word '*okureta*' 'you are late' into '*okureta n janai n*' 'weren't you late' in order to suit it to the situation. As D only provided the verb not the full sentence, P asks for more information saying 'What's the other word?' and D provides a Japanese word '*jikan*' meaning 'time'. D in line 9 suggests the word '*jikan'* meaning 'hour' or 'time' to initiate the discussion and P in the next line completes the sentence. However, D evaluates it and suggests an alternative phrase that means the same as the one P suggested, but which sounds more appropriate for the situation. In response to D, P identifies a problem regarding whether or not there should be a particle after '*jikan',* and this makes her rethink the sentence structure. P suggests using '*ni'* and in line 15 D evaluates that suggestion but is not confident about it. Then S brings up a grammatical rule that supports P's suggestion that the particle for time is '*ni'* which D accepts. P resolves the problem by speaking aloud the phrase that they have agreed on as she takes notes and D makes a suggestion to add the phrase '*ta n janai'* which D has attempted to do so in line 7 to complete the whole phrase. The complete phrase '*okureta n janai*' means 'you were (one hour) late, weren't you?' and this makes the phrase into an accusation.

In this excerpt, the students worked collaboratively to complete a phrase in Japanese that they wanted to express. They used each other as a resource and in this case one student

recalled a grammatical rule in Japanese concerning particles and the group applied that rule to complete the sentence. The problem here was that the particle '*ni'* is certainly used for time, however it is not used for a period of time but for a point in time. '*1 jikan'* means 'for one hour' and, as that is a period of time, the use of *'ni'* is not appropriate. Unfortunately the group accepted S's mistaken understanding of the rule concerning the use of '*ni*' and as no one in the group realised the difference between 'a point in time' and 'a period of time' as it relates to the Japanese grammatical rule, they used an incorrect phrase as a result. The Japanese particle system is rather complex and it is helpful for students to apply their grammatical knowledge about particles when it comes to choosing an appropriate particle. The situation described in this excerpt could have been prevented if an expert was present or had been consulted about the problem. Without an expert there is always a risk that the students will create shared knowledge based on erroneous information and consequently pool incorrect knowledge during collaborative group work.

This shows a limitation of collective scaffolding compared with expert-novice scaffolding. As briefly mentioned in the section 2.4.2, there are two different kinds of scaffolding: expert-novice scaffolding and collective scaffolding between learners. In expert-novice scaffolding the expert has the available knowledge to construct learning. Whereas in Donato's (1994) idea of collective scaffolding there is no definite expert and that means no one actually knows what the target point is in the ZPD. This is not because of a problem with collective scaffolding itself but results from the limited resources available to the learners. Collective scaffolding may not be as effective as expert-novice scaffolding because participants in collective scaffolding may not have the resources to achieve the learners' goal without an expert's assistance. Scaffolding is most effective when an expert who has the required knowledge base scaffolds learning for the novice. Where scaffolding is collaborative between learners, the processes may work well to develop knowledge where the basic knowledge is available to the group but cannot create this knowledge where it does not exist. However, collective scaffolding

needs to happen in conjunction with expert-novice scaffolding to be an effective part of learning.

Nevertheless, the group resolved the problem in a way which they considered adequate because one student proposed an alternative supported by reasoning to the group and the group accepted it. In contrast, the next excerpt is an example of the group being unable to reach an agreement even though they had long discussion on the problem.

The students were discussing the scene in which Hanako and Bob explain the reason they are late arriving at her parents' house. They could not decide on a reason for being late nor which expression they should use for the line where Hanako is making an excuse for their lateness. As mentioned earlier, the students were very concerned about the number of expressions each student had to use in the dialogue while creating the script. Leading up to this example, the students had suggested various reasons for Hanako and Bob's delay as well as confirming how many expressions they had included to date and checking the list of expressions to be used. While negotiating alternatives, P suggested a line with '*bakari'* which is used to express an action having just been completed. However, the group was focused on developing ideas for the reason for the delay and did not evaluate P's suggestion further. P noted that the expression '*bakari'* cannot be used appropriately for the reasons the group was negotiating.

Excerpt 6:

1:P	No, I just want to use that. I'm just gonna say we… it's not like we were..
2:D	Oh, you wanna use *bakari*?
3:P	Yes. I'm not gonna say like 'Oh it's not like we delayed the plane' or anything. 'We got there early, but something was wrong with the plane, so was delayed'. Something like that.
4:H	'We didn't do that on purpose'. If it does make sense, but... yeah.
5:S	What about that you are just held up at the customs or something? We know the word, customs, don't we?
6:P	Yeah, it's probably easier.
7:S	We learned it.

8:D *Kanzei, kanzeijo?*
9:P What's traffic jam?
10:D *Michi ga konde ta.*
11:P We could say that. 'Oh we got off the plane early, but..'
12:S Gets through customs, here we go. I even got it here. (with dictionary) *Zeikan o tsukusuru.*
13:P *Tsukusuru?*
14:S '*wa jikan kakatta yo*'. Ah, you wanna say.. you wanna use…
15:P Ah, ah because I…
16:S '*Zeikan o tsuuka suru'.*
17:P Can I have a look? '*Zeikan o tsuukasuru'*... I can be whinging '*datte*'.
18:D Hey, which one do you use *sore ni shite wa?*
19:P No. *Shita bakari*.
20:D How are you going to put it in? *Sore ni shite wa* is better.
21:P Ah, I'm gonna say '*Hayaku tsuukashita bakkari kedo michi ga ko…umm*'
22:D No, that *shita bakari* is you've just done something. It wouldn't be in this context.
23:S What about *sore ni shite* you can use *sore ni shite* with that one. Because you can say it took a long time at the customs… because it took long time at the customs considering that we came here an hour late, only an hour late. *1 jikan shika..*
24:D You should say 'arrived on time but *sore ni shite wa…*'
25:S '*Maniatta kedo zeikan o tsuu… tsuuru*'?
26:D *Tuuka.*
27:P So can I say *shita bakari…*
28:S *Shita bakari* was completion of something, isn't it?
29:D Yes.
30:H Having just done, wasn't it?
31:P Hold on. Let me check it. *Shita bakari* was which topic? First one?
32:D Un.
33:H Having just completed something, I thought.
34:P (checking the textbook) Ok. What was *sore ni shite wa*?
35:H *Sore ni shite wa* was considering that.
36:P Ok. I'm not gonna write it. I'm not in the mood right now. Umm..

In line 1, P stops the group from discussing the reason for their delay and asks the group to evaluate her suggestion again. D identifies the problem that P suggested and P tries to explain the reason why she proposed using '*bakari'* by describing the situation in which she thinks the expression would work. In response to P, S in line 5 proposes an alternative situation and P accepts it. D asks for confirmation of the word ' customs' in

Japanese following S's suggestion, but P ignores D and asks for the word for 'traffic jam', which is completely irrelevant to what S suggested. D immediately gives the word in Japanese and then P attempts to propose an alternative situation. In line 12, S presents the phrase for 'getting through customs' and the group negotiates the sentence according to the alternative that S suggested in line 5. However, in line 18, D realises that the group has forgotten to resolve P's question and then reformulates the problem. The expression D brought up, '*sore ni shite wa'* means 'considering that' and was on the expression list to be used for the task. P in line 19 again insists on using '*shita bakari'* and D tries to understand what kind of situation P has in mind in order to utilise '*shita bakari'* by asking for P's explanation, and proposing that '*sore ni shite wa'* is more appropriate for the sentence they are creating. In response to D, P tries to justify her reasoning by stating Hanako's dialogue in Japanese but fails to complete it. D in line 22 evaluates the dialogue based on D's grammatical knowledge and concludes that '*shita bakari'* does not work in the sentence P tried to create. S in line 23 then proposes an alternative situation that can utilise the expression '*sore ni shite wa'* and in English explains the sentence he created. In response, D in the next line modifies the situation S suggested which she states both in English and Japanese and S develops D's sentence further in Japanese with D's help using the word '*tsuuka'* meaning 'go through'. However P in line 27 still holds on to the idea of using '*bakari'* and reformulates the original problem to the group. S then tries to clarify the meaning of '*bakari'* based on his knowledge, and both D and H pool their knowledge and confirm the meaning. P is not satisfied with the answer the group comes up with and decides to check the meaning with the textbook by herself. While P is looking up the word in the textbook, H repeats what she thinks is the meaning of '*shita bakari'* and then P confirms that H and the rest of the group were correct regarding the meaning. P also decides to clarify the meaning of '*sore ni shite wa'* and H supplies the answer she is seeking. In the end P gives up on working on creating the dialogue for that situation.

In this example, the group brought up two alternatives, '*shita bakari'* and '*sore ni shite wa*'. Despite their long discussion and negotiation on the situation for the script, as well

as on how they could utilise those expressions in the dialogue, they were not able to decide on a way forward. Instead of resolving the problem like in the other examples, they realised they were not able to solve the problem with their own, current resources. As a result the group decided to defer and solve the problem later. This example illustrates that students are not always able to resolve the problems they encounter during collaborative group work and that English can play an important role in allowing the students to notice they do not have sufficient resources to resolve the problem. As seen in the example, they used English when they needed to clarify the situation for the script as well as when they discussed the meaning of the expressions and words they wanted to utilise in the script. As the students used a common language, English, it became clear that no one in the group had a definite solution for each item the group needed to solve. As a result they realised their current resources were not sufficient to solve the problems and they needed to ask for outside assistance. A similar case was seen in example 3 of section 4.2.1 where the group received teacher's assistance and was able to solve the problem in the end. It can be said that one of the learning functions of collective scaffolding is for group members to assist each other in identifying collectively what knowledge lies outside their current abilities. Collective scaffolding leads to learning by allowing the group to identify what they do not know by themselves. The identification of a knowledge gap amongst learners by the learners themselves may not happen in expert-novice scaffolding as the expert usually identifies what the student needs to learn and provides the support needed for them to do this. It can clarify for learners what resources are needed to solve the problem and how they can get the information they need. Collective scaffolding is not only successful when learners get the right answer but it is also successful when they work out what they need to do to advance their learning. Identifying missing knowledge allows learners to adopt other strategies for accessing new knowledge in order to ensure their learning. In this process English plays a facilitating role for learners to enable them to pool their knowledge and to discover what the knowledge gap is in the group.

Another interesting point illustrated by this example is that the group did not have a unified idea on the storyline and dialogue, even in English, which may have contributed to their struggle to resolve the problem. As mentioned earlier, the group had decided to create their script in English first and then translate it into Japanese later. However they sometimes attempted to make dialogues in Japanese whilst still negotiating the storyline. In such cases they did not have a clear idea of how the story would progress nor did they have a clear understanding of what each character's dialogue should be. When they could not express what they wanted to say in English, it appears they had trouble reaching agreement which resulted in their failure to resolve the problem.

The six excerpts above illustrated that the students use each other as a resource to solve problems during collaborative group work while modifying sentences based on their grammatical knowledge. The students provided the type of scaffolded help to each other to develop their L2 aptitude within the capacity of their knowledge. During collaborative scaffolding the students used English to confirm meanings, discuss problems, justify alternatives and evaluate the appropriateness of the sentence. They also used English to analyse the sentence structure based on their own grammatical knowledge. English may also allow the students to realise that they do not have enough resources to resolve the problem themselves. During their discussion their knowledge is activated and distributed to the group and this knowledge distribution is realised by the medium of English or their L1. Although there is a risk that wrong knowledge may be distributed without an expert, English is an important resource to trigger the knowledge to be distributed and consequently it creates pooled knowledge amongst the students. A shared communication tool, English in this case, makes collaborative scaffolding a possibility in group work. Without this language such scaffolding would not be possible and one resource for learning would not be available to the learners.

4.2.4 Summary of results

The results illustrated how the students worked collaboratively in order to solve linguistic problems they encountered during the group work and how English was used in contributing to their second language learning.

When the students attempted to resolve vocabulary related matters, English was found to be an important resource for learning vocabulary during their collaborative group work and to be one of the tools they have available to develop their learning. Firstly, English contributed to the creation of a pool of vocabulary knowledge and enabled learners to use this pool to expand their vocabulary knowledge. Discussion in English about vocabulary allowed intrapersonal knowledge to become interpersonal knowledge and so become available for learning. Moreover, English allowed the students to understand to each other regarding problems with vocabulary and as a result they were able to establish intersubjectivity, which contributed to solving problems and creating a pool of knowledge. Secondly English provided opportunities for vocabulary learning, practice and reinforcement. Discussion in English played a key role when the knowledge of the new word moved from the interpersonal context to the learner's intrapersonal knowledge by providing opportunities for engaging with new vocabulary items. The vocabulary being discussed interpersonally becomes available for intrapersonal learning. Thirdly, English was an important resource in students' vocabulary learning in the following four ways. English is used to formulate purposes while they were working on vocabulary related issues. Thus, it allowed the students to be involved with more complex activities. English also allowed them to understand whether or not the resource available to them was adequate to resolve problems on their own. The use of English also enabled them to formulate their current level of understanding of the topic.

English also played several roles during collaborative group work when the students attempted to adopt new expressions in the TL into their script. During the group work the students provided scaffolded help to each other, that is, in Donato's (1994) term, they engaged in 'collective scaffolding'. Firstly, English allowed them to determine the

meaning of each expression that they attempt to include into their script. Secondly, English allowed them to evaluate the sentences they have created, to explain their judgments about them in order to develop a shared understanding and consensus and to propose alternatives if necessary. English also enabled the students to exchange their ideas without any linguistic constraints and eventually to construct sentences that convey the meaning they intended.

When the students' modified sentences based on their grammatical knowledge they again provided scaffolded help for each other to resolve a problem and English made collective scaffolding possible in group work. English was seen to be used to confirm meanings, to discuss problems, to justify alternatives, to evaluate the appropriateness of a sentence and to analyse the sentence structure based on their own grammatical knowledge. English also allowed the students to identify their knowledge gaps and to adopt other strategies for accessing new knowledge. Furthermore, English was an important resource for activating knowledge which could then be shared among the group and to create pooled knowledge amongst the students. In other words, English was a means of knowledge distribution in interaction and allowed the group to share that distributed knowledge.

4.3 The use of English in addressing cultural aspects of L2

English is also used to address cultural aspects of the L2. During their collaborative group work students were seen using English to discuss and negotiate on cultural issues raised while working on the task. Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) assert that there is an indispensable relationship between language and culture. This idea originates from how language learning has come to be perceived by language educators. The traditional view of language treats language as a code, that is, language is seen as consisting of words and rules that put those words together. Therefore language learning is often understood as merely learning vocabulary and grammar, which Scarino and Liddicoat see as a narrow understanding of language that does not 'explore the complexities involved in using

language for communication' (p. 16). Instead, they suggest treating language as a social practice: 'language is something that people do in their daily lives and something they use to express, create and interpret meanings and establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships' (p. 16). In this view, learning is a social practice that involves creating and interpreting meanings. Language learners have to be active participants who always need to investigate and analyse the language and culture of their target language in order to communicate with the speakers of the language (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009). English has the capacity to allow these learners to be analytic about the language in ways which would not be possible in the TL. In this learning process cultural knowledge is crucial as 'creating and interpreting meanings is done within a cultural framework' (p. 18). They assert that both the learners' and the target language's culture as well as both the languages affect the meaning-making process. For the majority of language learners the ultimate goal of learning a second language would be to communicate with others. To be an effective communicator in a second language, learners need to develop an awareness of the ways in which culture interrelates with language whenever it is used (Liddicoat, Papademetre, Scarino & Kohler, 2003). Liddicoat (2008) argues that when people start to speak using their second language, they not only use their linguistic knowledge to construct sentences but also explore its meanings within a cultural context. In this sense, learners need to acquire cultural knowledge as much as linguistic knowledge in their second language. When language learning is viewed as a meaning-making process in cultural context of the target language, learning culture plays an important role in the second language learning. This section will examine how English is a resource for learners of Japanese in exploring and developing their understanding of Japanese culture.

The goal of this task was to make a drama script based on the situation chosen by the students and to perform the drama. In addition to the criteria of the task – fluency and naturalness, accuracy, range of expression, content and overall performance – they were encouraged to include any cultural knowledge they have in their drama. The teachers took this into consideration when assessing and reflected it in the marking under overall

performance. In short, even though presenting cultural knowledge is not one of the criteria of the task, it is assessed implicitly. This is due to the objectives of the course. As discussed previously, this course has been designed to familiarise learners with colloquial Japanese that may be encountered on radio, television or during informal discourse and to enable learners to use particular expressions in appropriate contexts. The course outline states that when students have completed this course they should be able to comprehend casual conversations in Japanese and to carry out conversations with Japanese native speakers on a casual level. It also states that students are expected to attain competence in carrying out natural conversation by assessing appropriate language use as well as manner. In other words, the students are expected to attain cultural knowledge which is essential to carry out natural conversation through the course. Moreover, one or two students in each group must act as a Japanese person in this task. This means they have to use their cultural knowledge to make up a story and character for each role so that the drama and the dialogue in the drama become natural.

Culture is not taught explicitly through this course. Although the students have access to resources such as Japanese TV broadcast and TV drama videos through the course, there is neither lecture time nor practice about Japanese culture scheduled in this course. This means that exposure to Japanese culture is implicit in this course. This means if or when cultural knowledge is brought to surface as students complete this task and perform a drama, this is as a result of their negotiating about and discussing culture during their group work. Some students have had in-country experiences and developed their own knowledge about Japanese culture. Some students have Japanese friends and have been able to obtain cultural knowledge from them. In other words, individuals' experience of and exposure to Japanese culture will be different and their knowledge base similarly will be different. This knowledge or information is likely to be distributed among the group while working on the task and there may be only a small common core of knowledge that can be assumed to be held by all group members. They need to assemble this knowledge or information collectively to suit the scenario in order to fulfill the criteria of this assessment.

This section will examine the process of how the cultural knowledge is brought to surface by the students during collaborative group work while focusing on their use of English.

4.3.1 Sharing their cultural knowledge of the TL

In the following two excerpts, the students are making up a script for the scene in which a Japanese girl, Hanako, and her non-Japanese boyfriend are meeting her parents for the first time. The scenario indicates that they have been together for a quite long time but she has never introduced him to her parents. They are planning to get married in the near future and her boyfriend, Bob Builder, has decided to meet her parents. In the first excerpt the students are discussing how her mother should welcome them at the entrance. According to the scenario, Hanako has not come back to Japan for a long time and the students are talking about how her mother would react to see her daughter after quite absence.

Excerpt 1:

1: P	……. Should we have mum getting over excited when her daughter comes in? Like 'Ah, *Hanako chan*, whatever, whatever..' and then like 'Hello mum'.
2: D	And then totally…
3: H	Hey mum, you're really embarrassing me now. Stop hugging me.
4: P	Yeah, if you wanna be a typical, ah typical… have you been, you know, I call questions we just…
5: D	Ah, yeah.
6: S	But you know, Japanese, they're not gonna hug.
7: P&D	No.
8: S	So they just give a blank…. If I was a wog like Italian or Greek or Turk or Australian, then I will be just going over and hugging them and giving kiss on each side of their ears. And they go, 'Ahh!'. That'll freak them all right, ei?
9: All	(laugh)
10: H	You can't do it to her mum. I think dad would mind.

11: P *Kimochi warui.*
12: S Dad's chasing me.
13: P What are you doing to my wife?
14: D Dad can be furious.
15: S And then he picks one of those, you know, little soft brooms, hay or straw brooms? And chases me around with that.
16: P Oh God, that's funny. All right.
17: H Ok.

In line 1, P suggests to the group that Hanako's mother should be over excited to see her daughter whom she hadn't seen for a long time. Other group members agrees to P's idea and H adds the concept of hugging Hanako by saying a line, 'stop hugging me' in line 2. There is no obvious opposition to the concept of hugging from other members until S comes up with an idea in line 6 that hugging in Japan would be problematic. S's utterance raises a problem to the group members that Japanese people do not have a culture of hugging, so even though the mother is overjoyed by her daughter's return she would not hug her daughter. S makes the group's cultural presuppositions about how this event should run problematic and the problem needs to be resolved interactionally by the group. This utterance by S reminds P and D of the Japanese custom which they have already known but could not recall at the time and as a result they immediately agrees with S in line 7. This means that S's suggestion helped to activate the knowledge that P and D already held. S then expands hugging issues to cultural comparison between Japanese and Europeans. In line 8, S states that in a situation like this, hugging people would be a natural reaction in European culture and he would not only hug but also kiss people if he acted as a European. However if he did this in Japan, it could scare people. In saying this he proposes a Japanese culture-internal perspective of practices in their own culture and further develops his account of hugging as culturally problematic. In this line, S has moved his perception from Hanako's mother hugging her daughter to him hugging the mother in the role of Hanako's boyfriend, Bob. In addition, while comparing cultural differences, he has introduced a different view on hugging to the group members, and highlights that what they think is normal may be seen as strange to

people in a different culture. In response to S, H suggests in line 10 that S as Bob should not hug the mother because it may offend Hanako's father. In this line, she accepts and confirms that they cannot act as they normally would in their own culture and recommends they should act according to Japanese custom otherwise it may be troublesome. Other group members agree with H's suggestion and from line 11 to 15 they talk about the consequences if Bob did hug the mother.

As seen in this excerpt, English plays a key role by enabling the students to raise problems, discuss cultural differences and negotiate their ideas. English gives them resources for raising problems and developing their understanding of the nature and impact of cultural differences in ways that would not have been possible for them in L2. As a result the students realised that what they think of as natural or common culture is not always accepted behaviour in other culture. By negotiating and discussing questions of culture, the students reconsidered their cultural perceptions and were able to see their own culture from the perspective of another culture. They also recognised the potential strangeness of their own culture and that the behaviours or actions that they saw as normal might not be always appropriate in other cultures. This becomes consolidated as a shared understanding about cultural differences which then becomes available for use in developing the task and framing their L2 linguistic performance. This is what researchers in intercultural teaching and learning call 'decentering'. In terms of culture teaching and learning, Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) suggest that culture should not be treated as a body of knowledge but rather as a framework that people use to 'communicate shared meanings with each other' (p. 19). They propose a dynamic approach to culture in which learners engage with language and culture actively not simply to develop static knowledge about culture which then remains external to learners (Liddicoat, 2011). Developing intercultural capability 'involves an awareness of the interrelationship between language and culture in the communication and interpretation of meanings' (Liddicoat, 2011, p. 2). As a process of developing intercultural capability, learners need to decenter from their own cultural perspectives to see their own positioning from another's perspective (see Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat,

2011). Decentering is a 'process of varying the perspective one takes in understanding the world' and 'seeing his/her perspective as a valid understanding and exploring the consequences of diversity' (Liddicoat, 2011, p. 838). In this excerpt, the students were able to decenter from their own cultural perspective and be able to view another culture from inside as well as outside which is important in learning a language. This would not possible if they were only allowed to use Japanese language. English allowed them to discuss more complex thinking about culture. Hence, it can be said that English allows students to formulate culture-internal and culture-external perspectives on Japanese behaviours and use this to solve problems of cultural appropriateness.

In the first example S suggested that the mother's hugging Hanako was problematic and they discussed that issue as described above. However they did not resolve the problem as S moved on to a different characterisation of the problem. In the following example the students are continuing to discuss how the mother should welcome Hanako and Bob in the way that is more culturally appropriate.

Excerpt 2:

1:P	Amm. Any other idea there? (silence) I think I'm in Japanese mode now. I can't think in English. *Ohisashiburi* or something like that.
	.
	.
	.
8:D	*Hanako chan, Hisashiburi*.
9:H	Ah, how are you? Long time no see.
10:P	Sounds like what my mum would say, but I think in Japanese you would say…
11:D	It's been so long to Japan.
12:S	You can say something like maybe 'really bad time when you came back, it just…
13:D	Dad! Dad is home.
14:H	Dad, That'll be me.
15:P	I keep thinking you're dad. (to another student). Hanako, It's been so long. (taking a note)
16:S	We're gonna convert that to Japanese anyway. It's gonna be, '*Hanako-chan, hisashiburi desu ne'*.

17:P Unn. How are you? How was your flight? (taking a note)
18:D Are you tired or something?
19:S Yeah, definitely you would get that.
20:P And you can tell me maybe I'm wearing something it's not very warm.
21:D Umm.
22:P 'Are you tired, come in come in' or something.
23:D Ah, I prepare some desserts and teas on the table somewhere.

In line 1 P invites other members to suggest ideas about how they should construct the scene of the mother's welcoming Hanako after they realised a mother hugging her daughter was not culturally appropriate in Japan. Not receiving any response from other members, P suggests a phrase in Japanese, '*Ohisashiburi*', which means 'long time no see'. After getting off the track for a short time D in line 8 completes the greeting phrase in Japanese and H quickly translates it into English in line 9. Interestingly, H's translation is not exactly what D proposed in Japanese, instead she adds 'how are you?' which was not included in D's suggestion. In this utterance, H seemed to add 'how are you?' in order to familiarise herself with not only the actual greeting phrase but also the situation in which this greeting will take place. By translating and adding a familiar phrase, she actually changes the whole greeting into what she would hear in her own culture. At this point, she appeared to have stopped considering the situation from the perspectives of the target language. In fact P in the next line makes a comment that the phrase H provided would be used by her own mother in a similar situation and she tries to come up with a different phrase that would be more common in Japan. However D in line 11 repeats the phrase that she proposed in line 8 in English. It seems like the discussion has stalled concentrating on the greeting phrase. To break a deadlock S indicates a possible Japanese alternative in line 12 which, after greeting the mother, could say to Hanako the timing is not right for some reason. S may have attempted to develop P's utterance in line 10 but it is not completed. Then D in next line brings up a new idea that Hanako's father is at home. D may have been inspired by what S said in the previous line, 'bad time', and made an association with the father being at home. Perhaps at this stage she imagines Hanako's father is a scary person and she may have

known that meeting a girl's father would be more nerve-racking for a boyfriend than meeting her mother. In fact the video the students were watching through this course was a comedy about marrying and divorcing and the heroine's father was an old-fashioned scary man. This video may have influenced D's suggestion.

In line 14, H confirms to other group members that she is playing the father's role but does not help developing the dialogue. In line 15 P brings back the greeting phrase that the group discussed earlier and starts taking a note. S in line 16 confirms the complete greeting phrase in Japanese. In line 17, P seems to be taking a note in English and adds a new phrase, 'how is your flight', but other members do not make direct comment on this. However in line 18, D suggests another phrase in English where the mother is asking Hanako whether or not she is tired. This utterance by D seems to be her attempt to develop P's idea in line 17. In response to this, S in line 19 quickly agrees with it and evaluates that this question would be appropriate in this kind of situation. It is not clear whether or not S is considering culture in the target language here. Nevertheless, P proposes two more phrases in English as seen in lines 20 and 22. D plays the mother and suggests that she should prepare tea and dessert for Hanako and Bob to welcome them. There is not much discussion happening here, but they appear to have decided to play out the welcoming scene according to what they know in Australia and to have concentrated on the language rather than how they would act as Japanese.

This example shows English plays a role in confirming the meaning of the dialogue in the target language in a way that enables the students to think about the situation from their cultural point of view. Translating dialogues written in the target language into English, which is their more proficient language, allows them to become familiar with the script and the scene they are creating. This may be problematic because when they act out the script based on the translation from the script written in English, it may bring a feeling that it is anomalous to the audience. The next excerpt is a good example of how translation raised such a problem for the group.

In the third excerpt, the students are continuing to discuss how Hanako's mother should welcome her daughter's non-Japanese boyfriend, Bob, at the entrance.

Excerpt 3:

1:	D	'Hi Bob, nice to meet you. Come in'.
2:	S	*Nihongo de?*
3:	D	'*Konnichiwa. Bobu san'*.
4:	P	Would she say Bob or his last name?
5:	D	Ah, *Birudaa san*?
6:	S	That's good. I like that.
7:	H	Japanese use their last name, don't they? For the first time….meeting. It has to be formal.
8:	P	Yeah, Bob Builder ok.
9:	D	Yeah, surname, I think.
10:	S	But how would, the builder, *Birudaa san*?
11:	P&H	Birudaa san.
12:	D	'*Ah, konnichiwa, Birudaa san. Kochira koso*'.

In line 1, D has suggested a greeting phrase in English and then in line 2 S asks how it should be said in Japanese. D translates the English phrase directly into Japanese, but in line 4 P raises a problem with the translation as to whether or not the mother should use his last name. In this extract the act of translation from idiomatic English to idiomatic L2 requires more than simple translation but rather cultural reframing of the utterance. P raises the problem caused by the act of translation as a problem for L2 performance. Then D responds to P's question and offers an alternative which is calling him by surname. S agrees with D's suggestion and in line 7, H formulates a shared understanding of the cultural rule they need to follow: that people call each other by their last name in formal situations in Japan. Since this is a formal situation where the daughter introduces her boyfriend to her parents for the first time in preparation for their marriage, it is appropriate that the mother uses his last name. Here in this line, H is further discussing the alternative that D offered in line 5 by using her prior knowledge as a basis for decision-making about language use. She frames her contribution as tentative

suggestion using a tag question and her formulation is ratified by P and D. As seen in line 7 and 8, P and D confidently agree with H, in other words, they were able to establish a shared perspective on the issue which enabled them to make a final decision. The problem seems to have solved at this point, but S raises another problem in line 10 which is how his last name, Builder, should be pronounced in Japanese. He proposes a possible pronunciation of how Japanese people would pronounce 'Builder' which repairs a pronunciation error in D's turn at line 5. He provides new target language form 'Birudaa *san*' to the group and P and D confirm it in line 11. S here uses English in order to repair a possible error in transforming English into Japanese. In the end, D completes the full line of greeting based on the knowledge and reasoning provided by the group members as a ratification of the group's shared understanding of Japanese language use.

This instance is a short but clear example that English takes an important role in socially constructed learning. After each problem was raised, the students suggested an alternative, discussed that alternative and gave reasoning for it. In the end, they were able to solve the problem and to achieve a new TL form successfully on the basis of their collaboratively constructed understanding. In the process, English allowed the students to discuss each problem without any linguistic constraints which contributed to establishing shared understanding on the problems they encountered. The sentence they achieved was constructed as if they constructed a building – the knowledge shared by the group members had become a part of the building – and notably each process was almost all done using English.

As described in examples 1 and 2, English is often used by the students to share their cultural knowledge with their peers which results in solving problems. The next excerpt illustrates that English plays a role in creating a shared pool of knowledge to solve problems.

Excerpt 4:

1: P Ok, all right. 'Come in come in'. 'Hi mum, I'm fine. Where is dad?' (taking a note)
2: D So, that would be only me there?
3: P You will be at the door. Because, father, typical Japanese father, would be reading in the room and…
4: D Reading newspapers or something and already in the room waiting.
5: P Yes.
6: D Ok. I'll go to *genkan* and then take you in.

.
.
.

11: P 'Hi mum, I'm fine. Everything is good'. (taking a note) Do I have to say that in Japanese? But I'm gonna write it as it is anyway. 'Where is dad?' (taking a note) Should I introduce him now or introduce him when the parents are together?
12: D Maybe you should say 'This is Bob. Where is dad?'. Introduce Bob to me first and then…
13: S But do you think the father would come out to the door?
14: D Ah, probably not.
15: H I don't know. When I was over there, I didn't meet the dad until he came home after work.
16: D Because Japanese female is dominant to the door. I think the dad can come in later, like after work.
17: P I could introduce Bob to mum first and then when meet dad, mum can go and get some food or whatever and..
18: D Then introduce him there. Ask how is dad and you say 'come in first and then explain that to dad'.
19: P Ok. 'Where is dad' (taking a note)

In the first part of this excerpt, the students are discussing who should be at the door to welcome Hanako and her boyfriend, Bob. In line 1, P is taking a note of what the students have already decided for Hanako and her mother's lines and reading them aloud. Then in line 2, D, who plays the mother's role, comes up with a question about whether or not she should be welcoming them without her husband. With this question, D raises a problem with the assumptions being made by the group about how the interaction should proceed. The problem, having been raised, it requires collaborative work to resolve it. P quickly responds and tells D that she will be at the door on her own because

a typical Japanese father will be reading a newspaper in the room and waiting for the visitor. P's suggestion represents her understanding of stereotypical patterns of Japanese behaviour and it is not necessarily true, but D agrees with her understanding and she decides to come to the door on her own. In this episode, D raised a problem and P and D both provided their knowledge about a typical Japanese father - even though it was stereotyped – to solve the problem.

In the second part of the excerpt, they are discussing the order of introduction. As P was taking a note, she encounters a question of when she should introduce her boyfriend to her parents. D in line 12 suggests that Hanako should introduce her boyfriend to her mother first and later to her father, but S raises a question – who should be at the door - which P and D have already solved earlier. S, who was not part of the earlier decision-making, seems to think that the father should come to the door and does not agree with what P and D decided. In line 14 D keeps her view and H provides her knowledge from her own experience about Japanese fathers in line 15 on the basis of her experience in Japan. In line 16, D develops a more abstract account "Japanese female is more dominant to the door", which frames H's experience as a generalised behavioural pattern. H and D collaboratively construct a version of Japanese culture which responds to the problem raised by S and this version of Japanese culture seems to become the agreed version on which the dialogue is then constructed. On the basis of the ideas provided by group members, P offers an alternative in line 17 that Bob will be introduced to the mother first and when he meets the father he will be then introduced to him. In line 18, D adds to P's suggestion and finally in line 13 they made a decision.

This instance illustrates that English plays a role in creating a pool of knowledge to solve a problem. The students used English to raise a problem first and then they provided their prior knowledge to each other and discussed alternatives. Each student contributes part of the overall pool of knowledge on which decisions will be based. Even though the knowledge provided by this group is somewhat stereotyped and not necessarily true, the elements of knowledge assembled form a coherent version of Japanese culture

representing the group's current level of understanding and produces a more sophisticated account than each of the students' contribution would have by itself. In assembling their shared knowledge in this way, they were able to solve the problem and construct the story. English enabled them to freely talk about what they knew, to create a pool of knowledge and to share them. This knowledge pool helped them to solve the problem and also made them think about the culture appropriate to TL.

The students do not always have the same level of cultural knowledge and they often have their own interpretation of particular items. This is because the most of their cultural knowledge has been attained through their own experiences and those experiences vary depending on the environment they were in. Through collaborative group work, they realise that what they know is not always correct and they learn new or additional knowledge by discussing and clarifying the item. English plays a key role in this process and the following excerpt shows how the students fill the gaps in their cultural knowledge during collaborative group work.

Excerpt 5:

1: D *Ocha o…*
2: P Refreshments. *Okashi*.
3: H *Okashi.*
4: P *Ocha to okashi o motte.. junbi shite kuru kara*.
5: D *Junbi shite kimasu kara…. Ocha to omanjuu*? *Okashi*? *Omanjuu*?
6: P Unn.. *Omanjuu*. Unn.. *Omanjuu*..
7: D *Omanjuu* is ,you know, traditional Japanese sweets.
8: P Yeah, but wouldn't that usually only go with *maccha*?
9: D *Maccha*? *Ocha to…*
10: H Is that it? Oh, that funny little… you know.. like round thing.
11: D Very traditional Japanese sweets.
12: H Paste thing.
13: D Yeah, very very sweet.
14: P I thought… I thought you only eat them with the…ah…usually only eat them with the…
15 D It's pretty nice taste with tea like *maccha*.
16: H We did the traditional tea ceremony.
17: P I usually eat them with the green tea.

18: D Not necessarily. You can buy normal tea. Because it's too sweet, you can eat with normal tea.
19: S It is special occasion too you know.
20: D I didn't like it. It was all right, but…
21: P I like it.
22: D You have to drink a lot of tea to dilute it.

In this episode, the students are discussing what Hanako's mother should bring to the living room after she takes Hanako and Bob in to the room. In line 1, D suggests she will bring tea and in line 2 P adds she should also bring some refreshments. P gives the word for it, '*okashi'*, in Japanese and H confirms it. In line 4 P tries to complete the line for the mother using the word she suggested and D joins P in line 5 to complete the line as well. However she comes up with a question: if *omanjuu* – Japanese sweets – would be more appropriate for this situation? D seems to interpret P's repetition of *omanjuu* at line 6 as a problem in recognising the cultural referent here. D explains what it is in line 7, but P indicates that her problem with *omanjuu* was not with understanding the word but with how *omanjuu* relate to other cultural practices, as shown in line 8. P thinks that *omanjuu* has to be eaten with *maccha*, powdered green tea, which is often used for the traditional tea ceremony, so it would be problematic to serve *omanjuu* with normal tea. P's question leads D to rethink her decision about *omanjuu* in the light of P's understanding: which is more appropriate, *maccha* or normal tea? Then from line 10 to 13 and line 15 and 16, H and D clarify the problem that P has raised and discuss their understandings of what *omanjuu* is by providing their knowledge according to their own experience. In line 14 and 17 P keeps insisting her belief that *omanjuu* has to be eaten with *maccha*. D in line 18 responds to P's opinion and tells her that it is not necessarily to eat *omanjuu* with *maccha*. In line 19, S adds a new dimension when he implies that drinking *maccha* is not so strange in this situation because the scene they are working on is Bob's first meeting with the father and therefore very special. He believes that drinking *maccha* is for special occasions. In line 22, D gives reasoning why normal tea is better than *maccha*, which is that *omanjuu* are so sweet that she had to drink lots of tea

and *maccha* is not suitable for doing that in her experience. By making this statement, D frames an alternative to P's belief that *omanjuu* is only eaten with *maccha*.

In this episode, the students provided information and knowledge they possessed to each other and widened or corrected their view on an item, in this case, *omanjuu*. English enabled them to ask questions, to explain what they know and to clarify what they believe. As a result, they were able to fill the gap in their cultural knowledge. As seen in other excerpts in previous sections, this episode is another example of collective scaffolding - the students collaboratively provided scaffolded help to each other and successfully created a pool of knowledge. English allowed them to transfer their intrapersonal knowledge to other the group members through group interaction and as a result students attained new knowledge about Japanese tea and sweets. Without this common language, such scaffolding would not be possible and one resource for learning would not be available to the learners.

4.3.2 Summary of results

These excerpts show that English plays a key role for the students in addressing issues relating to their cultural knowledge of the target language. In the first excerpt, the students were able to see their own culture from a different point of view on a particular act, hugging, as the result of a discussion of different perspectives. During collaborative group work, they realised the norms of their own culture may be seen as strange in other cultures. English was a resource for raising the problem, discussing cultural differences and negotiating their ideas. It also allowed the students to formulate culture-internal and culture-external perspectives on Japanese behaviours and use this to solve problems of cultural appropriateness. In the second excerpt, they successfully constructed a complete greeting phrase by reflecting on the cultural background of the target language. They used English to raise a problem, suggest an alternative, evaluate the alternative and give reasoning to support their interpretation. They shared the knowledge or information they possessed and constructed new knowledge socially. English played an important role for

this socially constructed learning. In the third excerpt, English aided the students to create a pool of knowledge to solve a problem by enabling them freely to talk about as well as to provide their knowledge or information of the culture of the target language. In the last excerpt, the students were able to fill the gaps in their cultural knowledge and English played a key role in asking a question, explaining their knowledge and clarifying it. Without the aid of English, the students would have been restricted in accessing the resource which their distributed knowledge represents and as a result they may not be able to build cultural knowledge from collaborative group work.

4.4 The use of English as a starting point for L2 structures

In section 4.1, I examined the decision making process used by the students to decide how to develop their drama script. They implemented a process that used English first to develop ideas and later translated the script into Japanese. Below is the extract from section 4.1.2 and recalls how the decision was made during the organisational process by the students. It shows how the students made their decision in order to create their drama script in a way that they felt to be easier and more effective.

Excerpt 1:

1:S	I think it's gonna get easier once we start doing this in Japanese.
2:all	Yeah, definitely.
3:D	Maybe, we just get the ideas out and…
4:S:	And we try to play it out. See what is like. Just an outline.
5:D	We don't write down word by word. Just create the general ideas.
6:P	I think we better to write it.
7:H	Write it down first. Look at grammar and something else later.
8:P	Yeah, I'm not saying we have to translate it exactly. Like we're just writing down what we're gonna say.
9:H	These are just ideas. We don't really have to translate it.
10:D	Okey dokey. So I go, ' Dad dad, they are here'.

The decision to write the dialogue in English and then translate it into Japanese later on means that English rather than Japanese becomes the tool to be used to create the storyline and dialogue for the script which is a central part of completing the task. As the students are more proficient in English than in Japanese, the use of English enables them to explore ideas that are more complex and makes it easier for them to construct situations without being limited by their lower proficiency in the target language. The discussion in the extract above seems to orient to this understanding of the ways of working and the choice of English as the basic tool for developing the script. However some of the excerpts were analysed in section 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 have demonstrated that the decision to work in English also created problems at the same time. Often the students did not know the linguistic structures that they constructed in English in the target language and this caused them problems that had to be solved at some later stage in developing the task. Another issue was that although something sounded fine in English, it may not have been culturally appropriate in Japanese or there may have been different alternatives in Japanese. That is, the students developed the script in the cultural context of English rather than in the cultural context of Japanese and then experienced problems in converting between the different cultural and language systems.

This section will describe how the group's decision to use English to develop a storyline affected the students in terms of their Japanese language learning, examining both its positive and negative consequences. The analysis will be based on the main issues of using English as a starting point for L2 structures that were found in the data: 1) issues in translating an English written script that are beyond their competence; 2) issues of cultural appropriateness in translating a script written in English; and 3) issues in language choice in L2 while translating a script written in English .

4.4.1 Issues in translating an English written script that is beyond their competence

The students' common language was English, which was actually the first language for two students in the group. The students were evidently more proficient in English than Japanese and the storyline and the script they developed in English contained words, grammatical structure, expressions, etc. that were beyond their linguistic ability in Japanese. Owing to the way they created their script, the data revealed that the students often faced a challenging task to translate their English written script into Japanese dialogue.

Example 1 of section 4.2.3 is a classic case of the group being challenged by translating a sentence written in English which is beyond their competence in the TL. This example is repeated below:

Excerpt 1 (Excerpt 1 from section 4.2.3):

1:P	In that way, that means we translate the Mum's sentence… we have to make sure we say it so that it is misinterpreted.
2:S	What about you, Mum? Got any ideas?
3:D	*'Hontou? Hokani wa nani no... nan no shigoto o suruno kana*?'
4:P	So if you say *shigoto*… Do you know his work?
5:D	'*Nani o suruno kana… hokani wa nani o suruno kana?*'
6:H	Ah, what other things do you do?
7:D	*Hokani wa*…
8:P	Ah, maybe you want to use 'can you?'.
9:D	Ah, '*hokani wa nani o dekiruno kana?*'.
10:P	Yeah, 'what other things', then you have.. like what else can he do and … He is trying to impress the family.

In this example, the group is discussing the scene where Hanako's mother questions Bob regarding his occupation. His response to that question was 'a part-time carpenter', which Hanako's mother did not see as a proper job. She asked him again what Bob's real job is. The group decided that Bob should misinterpret her question and answer something funny such as he does washing and cleaning. The mother's sentence in

English was ‘What other jobs do you do, Bob?’. The group had to translate this sentence into Japanese in a way which would carry the same ambiguity as the English version does so that the question can be misinterpreted by Bob and he is able to give a funny answer to her. Firstly D suggests a direct translation of the sentence ‘*Hokani wa nan no shigoto o suruno kana?*’. Then P points out that the use of a word ‘*shigoto*’ may restrict the sentence’s potential to be ambiguous as ‘*shigoto*’ has the specific meaning, ‘occupation’. D then suggests an alternative sentence in Japanese ‘*Hokani wa nani o suruno kana?*’ meaning ‘What other things do you do?’. By using the word ‘*suru*’ meaning ‘to do’ instead of ‘*shigoto*’, the sentence is able to carry a certain degree of ambiguity that enables Bob to misinterpret the question. P then proposes to the group that they could change the words ‘do you do’ to ‘can you do’ so that it may more easily lead Bob to give funny answer to impress Hanako’s family.

This seemed to be a challenging task for the group because the task was very advanced for their competence in the TL. The sentence itself in English was simple and they did not have any problem translating it into Japanese. However when it comes to translating the sentence in a way that carries ambiguity as English does, they had difficulty to do so. This is because they developed the sentence and decided how it would be used in their more proficient language, English. Using English enabled them to be more creative in developing their script than Japanese would have, but the cost was that the ideas were developed in response to the forms and meanings of the English words rather than in terms of the Japanese language. The result was that the associations between form and meaning found in English were not always available in a direct translation and so considerable further thinking and problem-solving was needed to deal with such mismatches. The students were often challenged in finding appropriate sentences in the TL to translate their English, and the expressions they needed were sometimes beyond their competence in the TL.

The second example was recorded in the group’s sixth meeting. The students were discussing the scene where Hanako and Bob explain to her parents why they arrived at

her house late. Hanako's father was quite upset at their late arrival and the group attempted to come up with a reasonable excuse to appease his anger.

Excerpt 2:

1:P	I'm gonna say, 'We've got to the airport early'.
2:H	But the plane was delayed.
3:P	Even we got to the airport early...
4: D	Ah.
5:H	It was a problem with the plane or something.
6:S	*Watashi tachi wa…*
7:D	'*Kuukoo ni tsuku no wa hayakatta*'.
8:P	*Oosutoraria no kuukoo ni?*
9:D	'*Oosutoraria no kuukoo ni tsuku no wa hayakatta kedo…*'
10:P	We got the airport early, but there was something wrong with the plane.
11:D	*Maniatta kedo…* I don't think you should mention anything about like you went to the airport on time, cos' usually people just do that. It wouldn't be possible for you to miss the plane.
12:P	No, I just want to use that. I'm just gonna say we… it's not like we were..
13:D	Oh, you wanna use *bakari*?
14:P	Yes. I'm not gonna say that 'Oh it's not like we delayed the plane or anything. We got there early, but something was wrong with the plane, so was delayed'. Something like that.
15:H	'We didn't do that on purpose'. If it starts to make sense, but... yeah.
16:S	What about that you are just held up at the customs or something? We know the word, customs, don't we?
17:P	Yeah, it's probably easier.
18:S	We learned it. It should be easier.

In line 1, P insists to the group that she wants to use the idea of Hanako and Bob having arrived at the airport in plenty of time. From lines 2 to 5, H and P attempt to construct a concept in English that despite the fact that they were at the airport early, they still arrived late at Hanako's house. On the other hand, S and D collaboratively translate the concept into Japanese and D in line 9 summarises the Japanese translation which means, 'Even though we arrived at the airport in Australia early,.….'. P in line 10 adds the second part of the sentence in English (but there was something wrong with the plane) to

what D had translated into Japanese. D then introduces a new phrase '*maniatta*' that means 'make it on time'. It can be assumed that D was not considering the idea suggested by H in lines 2 and 5, that there was something wrong with the airplane. Her understanding of the situation was that arriving at the airport early means they were on time for catching the flight. With this idea in mind, D raises a problem in line 11 with the way the text is being developed and suggests that they should abandon the concept of arriving at the airport early. P, however, still insists that she wants to use the concept. D then realises there is a reason why P strongly wants to do so, that is P wants to include a newly learned expression, '*bakari*', meaning 'something just happened'. In line 14, P attempts to explain to the group what she wants to say in English, but it does not seem to work for the group and they are not able to come up with an appropriate translation of the sentence. In line 16, S suggests a different idea containing a word they already know instead of using a concept which they do not know how to translate. P evaluates S's suggestion and accepts this alternative as an easier option. S then assures the group that they should be able to translate the sentence based on his idea easily because they have already learned the word 'customs'.

This example demonstrates the group's struggle in translating a concept developed in English into Japanese. D and S attempted to translate what P and H came up with in English, however they were not able to do so. The situation became worse when D realised that P had intended to use '*bakari*' in the translation. No one in the group knew how to translate P's idea using that expression. In the end, the group chose an alternative idea that was within their competence in the TL. The problem here is that the ideas and sentences were all developed in English and even though the English sentence made perfect sense, they were not able to translate it into Japanese because the sentence in English was beyond their language competence in the TL. The collaborative group discussion allowed them to realise their language ability was not up to the level required to resolve the problem and also enabled them to explore an alternative version which was within their language competence so they could continue developing the script. In this case, an idea developed in English has to be remodeled in order to be expressed within

the linguistic capability of the participants and the problem posed by translation is resolved through collaborative problem-solving in English.

The two examples above illustrated how the students dealt with issues while translating their English written script into Japanese. As seen in the examples, the problems occurred when the sentence or the concept developed in English was beyond their competence in the TL. It can be said that English provided a useful tool for developing ideas and evaluating what was to be said in the dialogue in order to make the script more creative and interesting. However the use of English may also create problems for students who are not able to translate the sentence or the concept appropriately in the TL. This is because when English is used to develop ideas which must later be expressed in Japanese, students are not just using English as a tool for supporting their Japanese language use but they are also creating a message for communication which has been conceived and communicated in English. English therefore has two roles in this situation: as a tool for enabling thinking and problem-solving in developing a script where the language plays a positive role in assisting the students. However, English also becomes the text which has to be communicated. In this case, English is not being used as a tool to support Japanese language but as an expressive medium in its own right. Where this happens, the use of English creates problems which have to be resolved by the learners.

4.4.2 Issues of cultural appropriateness in translating a script written in English into Japanese

The excerpts in section 4.3 illustrated how the students addressed issues relating to their cultural knowledge of the target language while translating their script developed in English. While the group was developing the storyline, the ideas and concepts were often originated from their own culture and that created problems when they attempted to translate in Japanese. That is, the script being developed was not a Japanese text

expressed in English for convenience, but an English language text which required translation into Japanese and adaptation to a Japanese cultural context.

For instance, example 3 of section 4.3.1 showed how the students noticed the difference in greeting in terms of the language use between Japan and their own culture and solved the issue collaboratively. This example is repeated below:

Excerpt 1 (Excerpt 3 of section 4.3.1):

1: D ‘Hi Bob, nice to meet you. Come in’.
2: S *Nihongo de?*
3: D ‘*Konnichiwa. Bobu san’*.
4: P Would she say Bob or his last name?
5: D Ah, Biruda *san*?
6: S That’s good. I like that.
7: H Japanese use their last name, don’t they? For the first time….meeting. It has to be formal.
8: P Yeah, Bob Builder ok.
9: D Yeah, surname, I think.
10: S But how would, the builder, *Birudaa san*?
11: P&H Birudaa san.
12: D ‘*Ah, konnichiwa, Birudaa san. Kochira koso*’.

In this example, the group was working on how Hanako’s mother should greet Bob at the entrance to the house. D read out an English phrase ‘Hi Bob, nice to meet you. Come in’, which is not problematic in English. S then asked D to translate the dialogue into Japanese and she suggested ‘*Konnichi wa. Bobu san*’. Although this translation is accurate in Japanese, P raised the problem that she was uncertain whether or not using the last name was more appropriate in Japanese. H formulated a shared understanding of a cultural rule that they should be aware of and consequently the group successfully arrived at the culturally and linguistically appropriate greeting phrase, ‘*Konnichiwa, Birudaa san.*’

This example shows that even though a phrase in English sounds suitable, its direct translation is not always culturally appropriate. In this case, the students possessed cultural knowledge in relation to the issue raised and so the group avoided using a phrase that sounds anomalous to a Japanese audience. This is an example which shows that the students were developing an English text which had to be translated into Japanese. It also shows that this act of translation was in many ways unusual. Normally when people translate, they attempt to preserve as much as possible the language and culture of the original, however, the task for these students is to produce a text which is linguistically and culturally Japanese. This means that they are not so much involved in a translation of their written text but in a process of reconceptualising their English text in a Japanese framing. This means that the issues they dealt with were not simply ones of finding appropriate linguistic forms to capture their English but rather they needed to reformulate basic ideas from their English language text into a Japanese context.

Similarly in example 1 of section 4.3.1, the group faced another issue at the same greeting scene. The example is repeated below:

Excerpt 2 (Excerpt 1 of section 4.3.1):

1: P	……. Should we have mum getting over excited when her daughter comes in? Like 'Ah, *Hanako chan*, whatever, whatever..' and then like 'Hello mum'.
2: D	And then totally…
3: H	Hey mum, you're really embarrassing me now. Stop hugging me.
4: P	Yeah, if you wanna be a typical, ah typical… have you been, you know, I call questions we just…
5: D	Ah, yeah.
6: S	But you know, Japanese, they're not gonna hug.
7: P&D	No.
8: S	So they just give a blank…. If I was a wog like Italian or Greek or Turk or Australian, then I will be just going over and hugging them and giving kiss on each side of their ears. And they go, 'Ahh!'. That'll freak them all right, ei?
9: All	(laugh)
10: H	You can't do it to her mum. I think dad would mind.

11: P *Kimochi warui.*
12: S Dad's chasing me.
13: P What are you doing to my wife?
14: D Dad can be furious.
15: S And then he picks one of those, you know, little soft brooms, hay or straw brooms? And chases me around with that.
16: P Oh God, that's funny. All right.
17: H Ok.

At this time the situation involved how Hanako's mother would react when her daughter whom she had not seen for a long time came back from overseas. P suggested that the mother should be over-excited and hug her daughter and the group seemed to agree with that idea. S then presented his cultural knowledge to the group that Japanese people do not have a culture of hugging and therefore it would be problematic. S's utterance made the group realise that their presupposition about how this scene should be carried out was problematic and reminded them of Japanese customs that they had not recalled earlier in their discussion. S then expanded the hugging issue into a cultural comparison between Japan and Europe. While he was talking about how European people would react in a situation like this, he moved his perception from the mother hugging her daughter to Bob hugging the mother. The group talked about the consequences if Bob did hug her and they did not use this hugging idea in their script in the end.

This example highlighted that what the group perceives to be normal in an English-speaking culture may be felt to be strange by people in a different culture. English was used to develop the idea of hugging for this scene and was initially unproblematic because it was normal for the group members in their English speaking environment. That is, hugging was congruent with the English text but not with the Japanese text. When it came to translating the situation into Japanese, S realised that hugging people was not appropriate in the Japanese speaking environment. In other words, when students use English to develop the storyline, they may adopt the cultural concepts of the starting point culture, not the one of the target language. The use of English in developing the script seems therefore to work to make the target culture invisible or at

least partly invisible to the participants. If they were to adopt cultural behaviours or ways of speaking which fit the English context of their initial text and act these out to their audience, this may be seen as culturally inappropriate ways acting in Japanese. In the context of the task being assessed, this may have been seen as a lack of knowledge about Japanese cultural conventions.

The two examples above demonstrated how cultural issues were raised while the students were translating their script written in English into Japanese. The first example showed that direct translation from English into Japanese may not work without adjusting the text. This is because of the cultural difference in using people's name when addressing them – Japanese people normally use a surname when they meet for the first time, although in Australia first names are much more widely used. In the second example, the group was about to adopt the concept of hugging which is normal in an English-speaking culture but not so common in Japanese culture. For both cases, the choice of English as a working language means that the situations being discussed were developed in the cultural context of English rather than Japanese and this caused problems. Therefore developing the script in English may cause the group to create culturally unnatural dialogues for the final version of the script and may require them to reconsider their original text. On the other hand, it was English that made it possible for the group to discuss and resolve the cultural issues they faced while translating the English written script. Again there is a tension here between the role of English as a tool to facilitate thinking and problem-solving and English as a tool for creating texts. Despite this issue English was still an important resource for the students in addressing cultural issues and contributed to building their cultural knowledge during collaborative group work.

4.4.3 Issues in language choice in L2 while translating an English language script

The last two sections have examined issues in translating an English script that was beyond the students' language competence and issues of cultural appropriateness

involved in translating an English script into Japanese for performance as an assessment task. Another issue revealed by the data was that although there was only one way to state something in English, there might be different ways to express the same idea in Japanese. This may be problematic because the students needed to consider the whole concept of the sentence linguistically and culturally in order to choose the more appropriate alternative in Japanese.

In example 3 of section 4.2.3, the group was discussing a Japanese phrase '*arigatoo*', meaning 'thank you'. The example is repeated below:

Excerpt 1 (Excerpt 3 of section 4.2.3):

1:P: Ahh, OK, and then Bob can just put in line saying '*Arigatoo*' or something.
2:D: '*Arigatoo*'? '*Doomo arigatoo*' sounds better.
3:P: Is it long, '*Doo*'?
4:D: Yes, '*Doo mo*'.
5:P: '*Arigatoo*'…oh wait. But then…oh '*Naka ni imasu yo*'. OK.

The scene was when Hanako's mother told Bob to take a seat and Bob says 'Thank you' to her. D raised a problem of choosing which phrase was more appropriate, '*arigatoo*' or '*doomo arigatoo'*. Both phrases are correct translations of 'thank you' and the problem here was that the group needed to examine which alternative was more appropriate for the scene. D believed the latter phrase sounded better and the group accepted her suggestion. Although 'thank you' can be translated to '*arigatoo*' and '*doomo arigatoo*', there is a slight difference in the degree of politeness. '*Doomo arigatoo*' sounds a little more polite compared to '*arigatoo'*. It is assumed that since Bob was thanking Hanako's mother to whom he should show some degree of respect, D believed that polite way of saying 'thank you' in Japanese was more appropriate for this scene.

In this case, the ways of speaking in the English language context do not map well onto the Japanese context, in which the dialogue will be performed. The situation here means

that the students needed to think about the translation they were making and to address issues of language that emerged in the process of translation. The problem in this example was not related to the students' linguistic competence in the TL unlike those discussed in section 4.4.1. The problem was choosing an adequate translation for a word or phrase suggested in English. There may be several different ways of translating an English phrase to Japanese and this may create alternatives that convey the same meaning but are different in nuance. In order to choose an appropriate alternative for the scene, the students needed to consider various aspects of the situation culturally and linguistically. The cases here are therefore not problems created by the use of a more proficient language to plan a text in the target language but rather they involve instances where the need to translate requires further thinking and discussion about aspects of the language and culture of the TL.

The second example is the example 2 of section 4.2.2 with additional dialogues. The students were discussing the first scene where Hanako suggests that she and Bob go to Japan and meet her parents. The students were developing their storyline in English at the same time as attempting to include the new expressions they had learned into their script.

Excerpt 2 (Excerpt 2 of section 4.2.2 with additional dialogues):

1:P	My sentence is 'Oh, that's sounds nice, but I was wondering maybe, perhaps if it is the time for you to meet my parents'.
2:S	You can use '*iyoiyo*'.
3:P	Oh yeah, maybe we can use '*iyoiyo*' there as well.
4:S	We can change it with the other one if you want to. Or we just use it twice. It doesn't matter. You can use '*iyoiyo*' or…
5:P	Umm. *Ii kangae… Ii kangae…*
6:S	I had the feeling of visiting my parents, you can use '*kanji ga suru*'.
7:P	Umm. I'm gonna… yes… good idea… *Ii kangae kedo…*
8:H	*Sore wa ii kangae*
9:P	*Sore wa ii kangae…*
10:S	And you can use *shi* by adding…like do two events, we can visit my parents and have holiday.

11:P (laugh) *kangae kedo*…
12:S Two positive things then.
13:P *Soo desu ne*. And then you gotta look stunned. (laugh) *Sore wa ii kangae kedo*…
14:S I've got a blank face and I just have a sign up beside my face saying, 'here goes just gone by' or I can get one of those masks or making up a mask, white page just two holes and nose in it. He is gone white. (laugh)
15:P That'll be good. (laugh)
16:H That'll be interesting. We have to make some signs too.
17:P Yeah, signs.
18:H Or I can make them as OHT.
19:P *Sore wa ii kangae kedo demo iyoiyo*…then what…. *Iyoiyo watashi no ryooshin to*…*Demo iyoiyo watashi no ryooshin to*…
20:S Where are you?
21:P Amm. I just wondering maybe perhaps it's time for you to meet my parents.
22:S So what did you say?
23:P I'm thinking. *Sore wa ii kangae kedo*, that's a good idea. *Demo iyoiyo*..
24:S Umm. *Kangae da kedo*…
25:P What's '*iyoiyo*' again?
26:S It says here 'at last or some kind of relief that the action has reached or in reaching completion'. Oh Umm.
27:P Now doesn't sound like I should be using it here.
28:S No.
29:H No. You should use…
30:P I think more like the other one… *demo moo ryooshin to*… *moo ryooshin to*… yeah… *watashi no ryooshin to*…
31:H Yeah, that's it.
32:P *Watashi no ryooshin to*…
33:H *Aimashoo*.
34:P Umm, I'm thinking 'it's time to meet my parents' or 'it's about to…'. I don't want to use '*toki*'.
35:H What's time… time to?
36:P I don't know time… like *toki*… that sounds like…
37:H *Ryooshin ni aimasho?*
38:P Or have to be, '*Moo ryooshin ni awanakya"*?
39:S *Nani kaita?*
40:P *Moo watashi no ryooshin to awanakya.*
41:S *Awanakya*, must meet my parents. Wah, that's a bit of demand.
42:P '*Moo*' is more like it's about time that sort of things.
43:S Ok, and then since you asked me to marry you and all, so how would you say that?

In line 1, P reads out aloud Hanako's line in English and S suggests that they may be able to use a new expression '*iyoiyo*' meaning 'at last' in the sentence. By making this suggestion, it is suspected that S had interpreted the English phrase 'it is the time for you to ~' in such a way that the group could adopt the expression instead of translating the sentence directly in Japanese. That is, S changed the sentence 'it is the time for you to meet my parents' to 'at last the time comes for you to meet my parents'. Then in line 6, S modifies the sentence again so that the group could use another expression '*kanji ga suru*', meaning 'feel like doing something'. In line 6, S attempts to expand the sentence by adding another expression '*shi*' which is used to list two or more reasons for a consequence. P accepts his first idea, but does not appear very keen to follow up with the rest of his ideas. P and H, rather, seem to be focusing on translating the sentence 'that's sounds good' into Japanese with the idea of using the expression '*iyoiyo*'. In fact P in line 19 summarises the dialogue in Japanese to the group, but she is uncertain how to construct a sentence using '*iyoiyo*'. In line 21, P repeats the line in English after being asked to by S. P and S evaluate the correctness of the translation by comparing the text in English and its translation. S is able to pick a grammatical mistake, '*kangae da kedo*' instead of '*kangae kedo*', and corrects it. In line 25, P asks for clarification of the meaning of '*iyoiyo*' and S verifies its meaning by referring to the textbook. In response, they reached the conclusion that '*iyoiyo*' is not suitable to use in this context. Then P proposes an alternative to use another expression '*moo*' which can be used to express something that has to be done soon or before long. H agrees with P's idea but P faces a new issue in translating 'time' in the English phrase 'it's time to meet'. Instead of coming up with a word for directly translating the phrase, H in lines 33 and 37 suggests a verb phrase to complete the sentence following P's half translated sentence. In lines 30 and 32, P suggests a Japanese sentence '*Moo watashi no ryooshin to*…' meaning 'Soon…..with my parents'. H's suggestion in lines 33 and 37 contains the missing part of P's and means 'we shall meet'. P seems to realise that they do not have to translate the phrase 'It's time for ~' because '*moo*' has already implied the meaning. She then suggests an alternative, '*awanakya*', that means '*we should meet*', and presents the

complete translation to the group in line 40. S expresses his concern that the translation has a slightly harsh connotation, but accepts the sentence as it is. P justifies her decision on the translation in line 42 and in response, S creates Bob's dialogue in English to be translated next.

This example illustrates two different aspects in the students' discussion of the alternatives available in Japanese for a sentence that they initially developed in English. One strategy the students adopt is to interpret the original sentence in a way that they would allow them to integrate new expressions into their script and the other to choose a phrase appropriate to the context in the target language. For the first strategy, S proposed three different ways to express the original sentence in English to show the group the possibility of including three new expressions. All three sentences are different, but they contain the same message 'it is time to meet my parents'. S was able to make such suggestions because he understood these expressions in English and easily reinterpreted the original sentence and included them. In short, English was used as a resource to enable him to reinterpret the original sentence in a way that suits his needs and to communicate these to the group. After interpreting the English sentence to fit with their intention, the students' next task was to translate it into Japanese. In this example, the students needed to choose either '*iyoiyo*' or '*moo*' to express 'it is the time to', and for 'to meet', they had to choose '*aimasho*' or '*awanakya*'. The students realised '*iyoiyo*' was not appropriate for the sentence considering its meaning and the context in which the talk was developed. As for 'to meet', they were easily able to translate it into Japanese, but they needed to consider what sort of nuance they want to convey – a gentle suggestion or a demand. There is no discussion that shows a clear reason why the group chose the harsh alternative '*awanakya*' in this example, but it is assumed that P might have felt that the harsh demand is more appropriate as a translation to express Hanako's original sentence in English 'it is time for you to meet my parents' because the original sentence can be interpreted as a demand not just a gentle suggestion. One simple sentence developed in English may be translated in many ways in the target language and the students have to choose an adequate alternative in order to express what

they intend to say. Again the cases here are not problems created by the use of a more proficient language to plan a text in the target language but rather they involve instances where the need to translate requires further thinking and discussion about aspects of the language and culture of the TL.

These two examples have illustrated the processes of choosing adequate alternatives in order to deliver what the students intended to express in their dialogue. As seen above, the sentences that the students attempted to translate into Japanese are quite simple both in English and Japanese, but there are a few different ways of translating them. In order to choose the appropriate language to suit their needs, the students needed to analyse and discuss the original sentence to have clear understanding of the meaning of the sentence and to consider what way they could integrate new expressions into their script. Once the students established a shared understanding of the sentence, then they were able to choose an alternative that suited the situation. During this process, English offered these students a more effective meditational tool than the TL would have. Firstly, English allows the students to access the meaning of both sides, English and the TL, and to establish the connection between the emerging language and their more proficient language, English. Making connections between one's native language or a language in which one has adequate competency and the TL is one of the mechanisms in acquiring a second language according to Vygotsky (1986). Secondly, English allowed the students to have further thinking and discussion on the sentences both in English and Japanese. It assisted them to analyse and evaluate the sentences from linguistic as well as cultural aspects and to make a judgment on their appropriateness. Through the process, the students were able to participate in the meaning-making process of the language. This is exactly what Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) suggested, in which effective language learning is 'how to use words and rules and knowledge of language and its use in order to communicate with the speakers of the language' (p. 16). In other words, English is an indispensable tool for their meaning-making process, and hence an important resource for effective language learning.

4.4.4 Summary of results

This section has examined how the group's decision to use English to develop a storyline affected the students when they translated the script into Japanese. Firstly, although developing a script in English facilitated making an interesting and creative script for the group, it also created problems when the dialogue or concept they developed in English was beyond their competence in the target language. In such cases, the group was unable to translate the script and had to replace the original idea with one within their language competence. Secondly, the situations or concepts that the group discussed in English in order to create their script were often built within the context of an English-speaking culture rather than the culture of the target language. This can cause problems, especially for the naturalness of the conversation in the final version of the script. Thirdly, developing a script in English provided instances where alternative translations were found both in English itself and Japanese. One word, sentence or phrase could be interpreted in different ways in English to suit the students' needs in creating the dialogue and there were many ways to express the implied meaning. The students needed to consider which was more appropriate linguistically and culturally from the various possibilities.

In summary, although English was a useful tool for developing a complex and interesting script, it was a less effective tool for constructing a script which represented their ability to communicate in Japanese. When English was used to create a script, what the students ended up creating was an English-language script in which English forms and English cultural practices were inevitably integrated. In this way, English was not simply a tool for developing a Japanese dialogue but rather English was the language of the text itself. English played multiple roles in this situation, as tool and as text, and these roles related differently to their language learning.

The students had competing goals in their understanding of the task. If the task is understood to be the development of an interesting and elaborated dialogue, then English is an effective tool for doing this. It allows them to be more imaginative and to consider

more complex interactions. If the task is understood to be the development of a Japanese language dialogue which meets the linguistic criteria set for the assessment of the task, English is much less effective. In this case, English as the language of the text being developed may make relevant aspects of Japanese language and culture invisible to the students. What the group discusses in the first extract is the issue of a working language and they opt for the easier choice in terms of their proficiency, rather than tying this choice to other understandings of the task. In short, by using English to design the script, they were able to enhance their ability to do some aspects of the task but they also created some problems in doing the task which would later need to be resolved. When they needed to resolve these problems, however, English still provided them with a useful tool. Especially when the students attempted to translate their English script into Japanese and found that there may be several ways of translating them. In such cases, they needed to have further thinking and discussion on the original sentence created in English and the appropriate translation into the TL. In order to choose an appropriate translation, the students needed to consider the sentence from linguistic and cultural points of views. While having such discussions, the students are in fact participating in a meaning-making process, with which Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) claim language learning should be conducted. This type of discussion could have been done in English, a mixture of Japanese and English, or Japanese alone. The data in this study showed that English was chosen by the students because it allowed them to discuss ideas without any linguistic constraint, i.e. it is a powerful meditational tool. Communicating in Japanese may also have involved a greater processing load than English in terms of their meaning-making process. This may have influenced how language options were used in mediating amongst learners and consequently students chose English as a meditational tool. Considering these aspects, English is in this sense is an indispensible resource for effective language learning.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on addressing the research questions for the present study by means of analysing the transcribed data that was recorded while the students were working on the task during collaborative group work. The study investigated the role of English as a medium for communication from four perspectives: 1) how English facilitated the students' group work while working on a task; 2) how English was used to resolve linguistic problems relating to the L2; 3) how English was used to address cultural aspects of the L2; and 4) the role of English as a starting point for L2 construction. The data analysis has illustrated the mechanism of the students' completing the task by resolving problems collaboratively and also identified various roles that English played during the group work.

In summary, the analysis identified that English is an important resource for second language learning. Firstly English allows the students to understand the nature of the task and to organise how they should work on the task effectively and efficiently. This means that English has an important function in planning which is part of the task management function (see Brooks et al., 1997; Nakaone, 1999; Ohta, 2001).

Secondly, English is a resource for the students to identify linguistic and cultural problems, to solve those problems and to evaluate possible solutions. In this process, the students are able to create a shared understanding of the topic they are working on, and consequently are able to create a pool of knowledge that assists their learning. Establishment and maintenance of shared understanding or intersubjectivity is crucial for the quality of learning (Antón and DiCamilla, 1998; Mulder & Swaak, 2002).

Thirdly, English is a resource for exchanging perspectives on linguistic and cultural issues. It allows the students to exchange ideas without linguistic constraints and to contribute to creating a knowledge pool. This reflects Tudge's (1992) finding that discussion amongst learners may contribute to their attaining shared understanding or intersubjectivity.

Fourthly in relation to this, English is a resource for effective collective scaffolding (see Donato, 1994). English enables the students to give scaffolded help to each other such as confirming meaning, justifying alternatives, evaluating the appropriateness of the sentence and analysing sentence structure. While providing scaffolded help in the group, the students are also able to identify their own knowledge gaps and as a result to adopt other strategies for accessing new knowledge.

Fifthly, English is an important resource for distributed cognition (see Hollan et al., 2000; Rogers & Ellis, 1994). During interaction in group work, the students' knowledge becomes available to other students in the group and that knowledge can be shared amongst the group to create pooled knowledge as a result.

To conclude, English is used as resource for starting L2 structures. Although this may cause problems when it comes to translating, it allows the students to explore their ideas in order to create interesting and creative storylines and to create the basis that they can work on later to translate into Japanese. It also allows the students to participate in the meaning-making process of the language which contributes to effective language learning. In some cases, the discussion could have been done in Japanese or in mixture of languages, however, the students chose to do it in English. It appears that in this case, English provides them more flexibility in exchanging and examining ideas and so is a more effective tool for mediation during students' collaborative work.

This chapter has identified how and when the students used English during collaborative interaction. In the next chapter, I will discuss the roles of English focusing on the way English provided students with resources for learning.

5 English as a resource for learning

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented findings about the use of English by the students and identified the specific areas where the students used English during collaborative interaction. The analysis found that English is an important resource for language learning. This chapter focuses on how English constitutes a resource for learning. The chapter is organised in terms of five constructs derived from the findings in Chapter 4: English as a resource for identifying and solving problems; English as a resource for exchanging perspectives on linguistic or cultural issues; English as a resource for effective collective scaffolding; English as a resource for distributed cognition; and English as a resource for developing L2 structures.

5.1 English as a resource for identifying and solving problems

The qualitative analysis of the collected data identified that English was used as a resource by the students to identify problems they came across, to solve problems and to evaluate possible solutions for problems while working on the task collaboratively. This process, as a result, led to the students' creating a pool of knowledge which assisted their language learning. In this section, I will discuss the role of English in language learning through problem-solving from the perspectives of the importance of problem-solving in second language acquisition, how English facilitates forms of communication that lead to

effective problem-solving and as a result, how the use of English contributes to L2 learning.

In everyday life we face some kinds of problems and attempt to seek solutions for them either by ourselves or with someone's assistance. We are able to attain new experience and knowledge through each instance of problem-solving and consequently the next time we face the same or a similar problem, we can apply that experience and knowledge to solve it. Thus, we, as human beings, learn through problem-solving. Bourke (1996) argues that problem-solving promotes 'the learners' natural tendency to work things out' (p. 14). In the present study, students came across various problems while attempting to complete the task collaboratively. They faced problems not only when dealing with linguistic and cultural issues in their second language but also when they tried to understand the task itself and negotiated how they could work on the task successfully. Once a student had raised a problem, other students discussed it, suggested possible alternatives and evaluated and analysed these alternatives in order to solve the problem raised during group work.

The relationship between problem-solving and learning has been researched in the education field within the framework of Sociocultural Theory. Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD is applied to understand how learning occurs during learners' interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). According to this concept, a learner's development always has two stages: one that can be achieved alone and another that can be achieved with the assistance of more capable others, such as their teachers or more knowledgeable peers. Although there are two stages of learning, both can be achieved through problem-solving. In the present study, the data illustrated that the students developed new knowledge after solving various problems collaboratively. For instance, when the students dealt with cultural issues while creating the drama script, they provided their prior knowledge to each other and contributed to create a pool of knowledge to solve problems. The students did not always have the same level of knowledge but through working collaboratively they realised what they knew was not always correct and they learned

new or additional knowledge by working collaboratively to solve the problem, using English for this purpose. Moreover, when the students faced linguistic problems, they used each other as a resource to solve those problems through processes of providing possible solutions, evaluating alternatives and successfully creating a pool of knowledge using English and, as a result, attained new knowledge. By solving problems, these learners were able to move from one side of the ZPD to the other side because problem solving allowed the learner to identify his/her lack of knowledge or skills and to create new or additional knowledge for the learner. When a learner solved a problem with assistance from more capable peers, the learner was able to move from one side of the ZPD, which s/he could achieve alone, to the other side of the ZPD through the development of increased knowledge about language or culture.

Rogoff (1990) has also argued that problem-solving is an essential element for learners' cognitive development within the ZPD. In her research on peer interaction and children's cognitive development, Rogoff reframes the ZPD as 'a dynamic region of sensitivity to learning the skills of culture, in which children develop through participation in problem solving with more experienced members of a group' (Rogoff, 1990, p. 14). She emphasises that children's development occurs after participating in problem solving and that problem solving is the mechanism for that development. Based on Rogoff's ideas, Cairney (1995) states that 'cognition and thinking are "broadly" problem solving, and this in turn requires an active process of exploring, solving and remembering, rather than simply acquiring memories, precepts and skills. And problem solving reflects human goals that involve other people' (p.37). Considering this idea in a language learning situation, it can be argued that merely memorising linguistic rules relating to the grammar or vocabulary of the target language may not facilitate learners' actual language development. When learners participate in problem solving activities, they are required to participate in an active cognitive process that involves identifying a problem and suggesting, evaluating and justifying alternatives in order to solve the problem. This process requires an active engagement with other people which requires a common language in which they can adequately express their ideas. In other words,

effective problem solving requires a common language because if there is no common language, learners cannot engage adequately with others or exchange their ideas in order to solve problems.

The data in this present study showed that English played an important role in problem-solving while students were working on a task. In chapter 4, the data was analysed according to four perspectives; facilitating group work, assessing linguistic aspects of L2, addressing cultural aspects of L2 and English as a resource for developing L2 structure. Collaborative problem-solving was seen in all the four areas and English was essential for the students to carry out and complete the task successfully.

English facilitates students' group work and English was frequently used in order to understand the task itself and to organise how to work on the task. The students were able to identify problems they were facing in terms of maintaining the group work in order to complete the task, to express their concerns and to exchange their opinions freely in order to solve the problems they encountered by using their more proficient language, English. In the interactions found in examples 1 and 2 of section 4.1.1 (p. 84) for instance, students discussed the criteria of the task in detail in order to understand the task itself so that they were able to establish a strategy to work on the task and gain a better result. After identifying a problem, they used each other as an information resource to solve it. As a result, they successfully established a shared understanding of the criteria for successfully completing the task and a strategy to work on the task incorporating their collective understanding. The students mostly used English during these collaborative problem-solving activities and this language allowed them to consider the task in more sophisticated ways than they would have been possible using Japanese. Other examples, such as examples 2, 3 and 4 in section 4.1.2 (p. 96, p. 97, p. 98), illustrated how students used English in organising group work through problem-solving as well. The problem in example 2 of section 4.1.2 (p. 96) was to find out which scene they were up to and the problems of examples 3 and 4 were to confirm the content of the script they had created in their previous meeting so the group was able to continue

working on their script. In each case, the group identified the problem and negotiated their shared recollection by using each other as a resource. As a result of their discussions, they were able to reach a consensus and common agreement on what they had decided and this allowed them to complete the task successfully. Moreover, the students faced a problem in how they would create a script, namely which language they should use to develop a storyline in order to complete the task, in example 1 in section 4.1.2 (p. 94). In this case, although the decision to work in English in creating the dialogue was made with little discussion, their discussion in English on this problem led them to develop a strategy to work on the task. These examples illustrated that problem-solving during collaborative group work resulted in their developing a shared understanding of the process for doing the task which provided a basis for further learning (Mercer, 1996).

The talk in English is an important tool for developing a shared understanding (Mercer, 1995, 1996). In the process of solving problems, the students generated talk while communicating with each other in their group. As seen in the examples, students shared their ideas and negotiated them in order to solve the problem and created new knowledge (Mercer, 1995, 1996; Swain, 2000). Furthermore, Brooks and Donato (1994) investigated how speaking influences and learners produce this kind of discourse when attempt to understand and organise a task, which they called 'Speaking as shared orientation' and 'Speaking as goal formation'. According to Brooks and Donato, 'orientation' refers to how individuals approach and work through a given task in order to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. The steps or actions taken by each individual to accomplish the goal are not the same, rather 'highly idiosyncratic' (Talyzina, 1981). Owing to the diversity of individuals' ways of working, it is important to establish shared orientation in order for a group to carry out a task and solve problems smoothly and effectively in small group work. Talk plays a central role in establishing a shared orientation to a task and Brooks and Donato categorise talk that does this as 'orientational talk'. They have defined orientational talk as talk that 'serves to focus

joint attention on the problem to be solved and relates to how a task will be carried out' (p. 268).

In the present study, this type of discourse was seen in examples 2, 3 and 4 in section 4.1.2 (p. 96, p. 97, p. 98) in which the students were organising their group work. For instance, in example 2, student S attempted to orient which section the group should start working from by saying 'Where are we? Scene 2? End of…?'. This utterance created a focus of joint attention and made an issue available for the group to discuss on. In fact, student P responded to S ('No way, no way. Didn't you get scene 3?') and student D then tried to reorient their understanding by saying 'In the living room, right? We are going up to scene 4.'. P and D's utterances show evidence that the group had focused their joint attention on a problem which was raised by S and that the group tried to solve it. After this exchange, S found the draft script for the scene 3 and the group was finally oriented to the focus of the work for that meeting.

The second notion, 'Speaking as goal formation', means that students speak in order to externalise the goal or end-result of the task (Brooks & Donato, 1994). The examples for this type of discourse were recorded in examples 1 and 2 in section 4.1.1 (p. 84, p. 86). For instance, in example 1, student P raised a question about criteria for the task: 'But just wondering what are we getting marked on? Fluency of Japanese or just the content?'. P's utterance works to launch talk which will externalise what the group should aim for in order to gain maximum marks. This externalisation enables the issue to become a focus of future talk by the group. Student P also asked the group how the mark would be given by saying 'Individual or group?' and student H said 'I think it's a group mark', providing her understanding of the marking system. Based on H's suggestion, P was about to make a judgment that they did not have to be concerned with the number of new expressions student S uses in his lines ('In other words, he doesn't have to talk too much then.). However student D opposed that idea by saying 'But I think you have a good allocation of time'. P then agreed with D and the group was able to set their goals in order to complete the task. Both types of discourse, 'Speaking as

shared orientation' and 'Speaking as goal formation', are important for learners to take control of and engage with the task, and these assist the learners' accomplishment of the task. English made it possible for the students to generate talk which constituted 'Speaking as shared orientation' and 'Speaking as goal formation' while solving problems without any language constraints. Therefore it can be said that English contributed to their learning through the task by giving them resources with which to clarify and plan their work.

English was also used to assess linguistic aspects of the L2 and instances of problem-solving were recorded in which the students were dealing with issues of vocabulary, expressions and other grammar-related problems. While solving problems in relation to linguistic aspects of the L2, the students identified problems, discussed them, justified alternatives and evaluated the appropriateness of the sentences they developed. Bourke (1996) suggests in his arguments regarding linguistic problem-solving that solving problems for oneself is not the same as getting a correct answer from a book or help from a teacher but instead involves cognitive activity that promotes a deeper experience in learning. It promotes 'significant learning' (i.e. Fink, 2003) and learners are able to find new knowledge, internalise it and finally produce it (Bourke, 1996). As problem-solving requires more cognitive processing than sourcing answers by asking the teacher or consulting a textbook and as 'it challenges the learner to address questions, evaluate evidence, and infer generalisations based on the data observed' (Bourke, 1996, p. 15), the learning experience is deeper than the learning which results from these ways of acquiring information. Bourke identifies the problem-solving procedure as involving problem-posing, data analysis, forming and testing hypothesis, restructuring the rule and finally forming the rule. The data collected in this study illustrated this procedure and will be described in detail later in this section. Bourke argues that through these processes of problem solving, the L2 grammar is acquired. He also introduces the idea derived from Seliger (1988), that 'the central learning process for acquiring a language is hypothesis testing' (p. 14), and claims that language learners attempt to formulate hypotheses and gradually develop rule systems. He argues that as their interlanguage

emerges, learners develop rule systems. Learners have to be given the opportunity to let their interlanguage grow in order for them to internalise the L2 system (Skehan, 1993). Bourke suggests 'teaching must allow them to formulate new hypotheses, abandon inadequate ones, and restructure their internalised grammar' (p. 14) and in the students' group work, English provided a tool through which such activities could be performed.

Example 1 in section 4.2.3 (p. 128) and example 1 of section 4.2.2 (p. 119) showed that how the students formulated a problem (problem posing), analysed the sentences they were producing (data analysis) and suggested alternatives (forming hypotheses). Then they applied alternatives in the dialogue to see if it was correct use while adapting a new expression to a sentence (testing hypotheses). The interaction in example 1 in section 4.2.3 shows how students discussed how to translate their English dialogue into Japanese and successfully achieved consensus. The problem one student identified was how they should translate an English phrase, 'What other jobs do you do, Bob?', into Japanese phrase while maintaining a certain degree of ambiguity so that it can be misinterpreted as they intended. This phrase was created as a question from Hanako's mother to Bob in their drama script. Their intention was that the Japanese translation should carry ambiguity so that Bob misunderstands the question and states what he does on a day-to-day basis rather than what his official occupation is. Student P uttered in English, 'that means we translate the Mum's sentence….we have to make sure we say it so that it is misinterpreted'. Having clarified a problem, student D suggested a phrase possible translation as '*Hokani wa nan no shigoto o suruno kana?*' which is a direct translation of the original script. Student P's evaluation of this translation led D to realise her translation could not express the ambiguity the group intended because '*shigoto*' means occupation and if they were to use the suggested phrase, the answer to that question would have to be a specific occupation which would not suit their intention in developing the talk. D then modified her first suggestion to '*Hokani wa nani o suruno kana*?', meaning 'What other things do you do?'. Instead of using the job specifying word, '*shigoto*', D used an alternative word, '*suru*', meaning 'to do", and as a result, the phrase was able to carry ambiguity. Then student H evaluated it by back translating the

sentence into English in order to show how she understood the Japanese line. Taking H's English translation of D's suggestion as a starting point, P then proposed an alternative phrase in English by changing the wording 'do you do' to 'can you do' and D translated it into Japanese as '*Hokani wa nani o dekiruno kana?*'. P evaluated the Japanese sentence by translating it back to English as 'What other things …what else can you do?', which P justified would lead Bob to give a funny answer, such as that he is able to do all kind of house work, instead of telling what he does for living. The problem was resolved as last. In this example, the students are formulating hypotheses about the translation which are then tested/evaluated by the rest of the group as possible solutions to their communicative need. It should be noted that the group was focusing on nuances of vocabulary and solving problem of meaning through their discussion. The issue they dealt with in this example was not a basic level of vocabulary use but rather a more conceptual level which involveed evaluating subtle differences in meaning. This means that English allowed the group to discuss complex issues of meaning rather than simply discussing the correctness of vocabulary use and shows how English works as a tool for collective problem-solving.

Another example of students' being involved in linguistic problem-solving is illustrated in example 1 of section 4.2.2 (p. 119). In this example, the students discussed possible use of the expressions, '*tte ieba*' which means 'speaking of', '*sore ni shite wa*' which means 'considering' and '*shita bakari*' which means 'just finished doing'. While attempting to incorporate these Japanese expressions into their drama script, the students accessed the meaning of these expressions by using English as a resource so that they were able to create sentences using them. In this instance, the students were creating the script for the scene where Hanako comes back to the house while Bob is working in the kitchen. Hanako asks Bob '*Nani o shite iru no*?' meaning 'What are you doing?'. S intended Bob's answer to be slightly sarcastic and suggested a sentence '*Nani o shite ieba ryori o tsukuruno yo*'. Student S believed that he could add a sarcastic nuance by using this expression according to the explanation in the textbook, that is, he put forward a hypothesis about how to deal with the problem. S's proposed Japanese sentence was

however grammatically incorrect and both S and P were uncertain about whether to adopt the sentence as it was and began to test the hypothesis. S provided an English line, 'If you are asking what I'm doing….cooking dinner', in order to clarify what he wanted to convey by the suggested Japanese sentence. Student P evaluated the sentence based on its English translation and insisted there was a problem using '*tte ieba*' in that sentence. As a result, S abandoned his first idea and looked for other alternatives from the textbook and suggested using '*sore ni shite wa*' to see if it would fit in the scene but found it could not be used. S then suggested '*shita bakari*' and gave a completed sentence using that expression '*Ryoori o shita bakari desu*'. This sentence means 'I just made dinner' which changes the meaning of the original sentence the group created. In fact student P confirmed her understanding of the sentence by saying 'I thought you are making dinner. If you say that, you just finished making dinner'. S further justified his reasoning for adapting the sentence, ('That means you can just eat now. It fits in, I think. Because it doesn't change the conversation.'), and P agreed with S's suggestion, ('Yeah, you can say '*ima*'. Let's just say we just finished cooking dinner.'). Then the problem was resolved. As described, the group members kept generating alternative hypotheses for realising their communicative goals and analysed them to test if it was appropriate to use '*tte ieba*', '*sore ni shite wa*' and '*shita bakari*' in the context. After discussing the use of each expression, they abandoned inappropriate ones and were able to successfully choose an expression that would convey the meaning they intended and as a result, to solve the problem.

In terms of restructuring and forming a rule, this was seen in example 5 of section 4.2.3 (p. 133). The problem they had to deal with was one relating to the use of the particle '*ni*' in Japanese. Student P was going through the drama script they had created and formulated a problem by saying in English, 'Didn't you say you would've been here an hour ago?'. Responding to P, student S provided a Japanese sentence '*1 jikan osokatta yo*' meaning 'You are one hour late'. Student D also modified that sentence and suggested in Japanese, '*Moo 1 jikan osokatta janai…osokattanjanain ka*', which conveys the same meaning as what S suggested, but which also includes the speaker's feeling of

annoyance implicitly. Then student P asked S and D in English to repeat the suggested sentence again ('What was it again?'), but S and P only provided the verb used in the Japanese '*Okureta*' or '*Okureta n janai?*', which means 'being late' rather than the full sentence. P asked again for more information saying 'What's the other word?' and D provided a Japanese word '*jikan*' meaning 'time'. P attempted to construct a sentence '*1 jikan osokatta*', however she came across a problem of the use of particle and formulated the problem for the group by saying '*jikan o* or no *o*?'. D then confirmed her shared orientation to the problem saying '*1 jikan okureta*….oh yeah, the particle. *1 jikan*…'. This utterance showed that D had realised she had not thought about the use of particle in the sentence, but could not give any suggestion as to how to resolve it. P suggested '*ni*', but D was not convinced with that it was correct.

Student S then brought up a new hypothesis stating the grammatical rule that the particle describing time should be '*ni*', formulating a rule for Japanese language use ('It's time, it should be *ni* isn't it?'). Although the grammatical rule expressed by S was correct to a certain extent in that '*ni*' is used with time expressions, the use of '*ni*' was incorrect in this context as they did not realise that one hour is a period of time and not expressing a point in time which is what '*ni*' is used for. Nevertheless the students were able to talk freely about the grammatical rule and form a rule in order to structure the sentence. These examples illustrate that linguistic problem-solving generates the processes that Bourke (1996) describes and so it contributes to 'significant learning' by engaging students in talk which develops understanding of the language and ways of speaking.

The type of dialogue produced amongst learners involves what Swain and Lapkin (1995, 1998) defined as 'Language-related episodes' (LRE). According to Swain and Lapkin, the definition of LRE is 'any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others' (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p326). They concluded that interactions that involve LREs assist learners to co-construct the language they needed to express the meaning they wish to convey and also to co-construct knowledge about the language. The language used in

such interaction provides a tool both for L2 learning and for communication with each other. LREs involve learners in what Swain (2006) and Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki and Brooks (2009) called 'languaging'. Languaging is defined as 'the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language' (Swain, 2006, p. 89). When learners externalise their thoughts by verbalising them, their talk mediates solving complex problems and tasks (Swain et al., 2009). The concept of languaging is based on Vygotsky's theory that language is one of the most important tools for thinking (Vygotsky, 1986). During collaborative problem solving in the present study, the students can be seen to engage in such LREs using English as a tool for languaging. As shown in the example 1 in section 4.2.3 and the example 1 in section 4.2.2 described above, the students used English to access the meaning of each suggested sentence which assisted them to co-construct the sentence in the TL.

This is similar to the findings of a study by Brooks et al. (2010) in which learners uses their existing knowledge of their native language to acquire second language forms. In their analysis, they draw on Vygotsky's (1986) ideas about the acquisition of scientific concepts and argue that learning a second language is a comparable process. In applying Vygotsky's theory, Brooks et al. argue that languaging assists learners to make connections between scientific concepts and spontaneous concepts which are represented learners' first language. Through languaging, the participants were able to mediate between their existing and emerging knowledge of language forms and reshaped their existing knowledge and concepts of language.

Furthermore, when the students formulated a problem, and suggested, evaluated and justified alternatives in the examples discussed above, English was used to make it easier for them to communicate with each other, as English was the language in which they were most proficient. The students did not passively create the dialogue for the drama script but rather they used their prior knowledge to contribute to solving linguistic problems while working collaboratively. They analysed whether alternative possible utterances were appropriate and discussed the problems they identified proactively and

openly to resolve them in order to complete the task. Swain and Lapkin (1995, 1998) argue that engagement in problem-solving generates this type of interaction amongst learners and that interaction contributes not only to the creation of knowledge but also to the internalisation of that knowledge through the discussion of possible solutions to the problem. Languaging during this type of interaction promotes deeper understanding and provides a strong basis for its application (Swain et al., 2009, p. 21). Swain and Lapkin (1998) see the use of L1 in LREs as 'a meditational tool to regulate their own behaviour, to focus attention on specific L2 structures, and to generates and assesses alternatives' (p. 333) and this is born out in the ways in which the students in this study use English. Swain et al. (2009) have also acknowledged the use of English in their study of languaging in learning the grammatical concept of voice in French. From the perspective of sociocultural theory, language can therefore be seen not only as a communicative tool but also as a tool for mediating cognitive activity. In other words, English can facilitate languaging and as a result it also facilitates the learning of emerging concepts in second language. For these students English, as the language in which they were most proficient, made LREs possible by providing a resource for languaging and consequently the students were able to make use of interaction as a way to extend their learning of the target language.

English also played an important role in problem-solving on culture related issues. English was used as a resource for raising culture related problems, discussing cultural differences, negotiating their ideas and expressing their reasoning in order to solve problems of cultural appropriateness. The data showed that the students were interested and engaged in solving culture-related problems and created a pool of knowledge through collaborative group work. In the discussion of example 4 in section 4.3, the students dealt with a problem on who should answer the door in Japan. This example illustrated that how they identified a problem, talked freely about what they knew to form hypotheses about relevant cultural behaviours and finally assembled their shared knowledge and formulated a rule to solve the problem. The solution was rather stereotypical and so represents the limitations of the knowledge they had to address the

problem, however, their solution was the result of the best knowledge about the situation they could achieve collectively. Through problem-solving, they were able to share the knowledge and information that each individual possessed and construct new knowledge collaboratively.

Moreover, the students seemed to enjoy exchanging cultural information while solving a problem. They often made jokes about what they suggested such as example 1 in section 4.3.1 (p. 145), where what would happen if Bob (Hanako's boyfriend) were to hug Hanako's mother. During the discussion, they realised what they see as normal in their own culture is not always normal in a different culture and that their own preconceptions about interaction were not shared by others. Students joked about what the consequences would be if they applied their own norms in the target language context. Bourke (1996) argues from the view of linguistic problem-solving that one of the merits in problem-solving is it can be 'an enjoyable activity when success can be achieved' (Bourke, 1996, p. 15). He claims that learners learn like 'wildfire' when learners become interested and engaged in the topic there are working on through problem-solving. Bourke's observation relates to linguistic problem solving, however the interaction in example 1 in section 4.3 shows that the same is true of other aspects of problem solving in language learning. The students enjoyed discussing cultural issues during problem-solving and because they enjoyed the activity, they were engaged in the task they were working on.

Problem-solving that addresses aspects of culture allows the students to build new knowledge in the culture of L2 by sharing their partial understandings of Japanese culture to create a more complete understanding. Without the aid of English, the students would not have been able to actively discuss the problems and suggest possible solutions to the problems. Thus English aids the students in gaining cultural knowledge from their peers through problem-solving.

In summary, problem-solving is important for learners' linguistic and cultural development as well as maintaining the group work in order to accomplish the task successfully and effectively. In linguistic problem-solving, it helps learners to internalise

the L2 system to promote 'significant learning' which contributes to learners' retention of knowledge. It is an enjoyable learning experience when learners are able to achieve the goals they set. More broadly, problem-solving generates talk that contributes to L2 acquisition and through problem-solving learners are able to build knowledge. In terms of knowledge-building, collaborative problem solving promotes learners' engagement in LREs which assists them to co-construct and internalise knowledge about the language (Swain & Lapkin, 1995, 1998) with English as their primary tool for languaging. Swain et al. (2009) argue that languaging during interaction, such as in the present study, promotes deeper understanding and provides a strong basis for its application. Thus the present study has shown that English is an important resource which allows this sort of learning to happen in Japanese acquisition. Therefore, it can be said that problem-solving contributes to second language learning and English, which students used as their main language during problem-solving, has an important role in facilitating problem-solving by allowing the students to solve problems without any linguistic constraints. If the use of English was prohibited in the L2 classroom, students would not able to do any of the problem-solving activities reported in Chapter 4 and that means that no similar learning would have occurred. In other words, English is an essential resource for problem-solving and contributes indirectly to learning of an additional language.

5.2 English as a resource for exchanging perspectives on linguistics or cultural issues

In the previous section, I discussed the students' use of English as a resource for identifying and solving problems. The analysis showed that problem-solving contributes to second language learning and English, which is the most proficient language for the students, is an essential tool to facilitate problem-solving without any linguistic constraints. One of the inevitable actions that the students need to take during problem-solving is to exchange views on the solutions to problems that have arisen. As discussed in chapter 5.1, problem-solving in L2 grammar acquisition involves five steps: problem

posing, data analysis, forming and testing a hypothesis, restructuring a rule and forming the rule (Bourke, 1996). Exchanging perspectives is a part of process in problem solving at each step. By exchanging views or ideas, students create shared understanding and develop a pool of knowledge which can be a resource for learning. In the analysis of students' dialogue in the present study, they freely expressed their views on linguistic and cultural issues and were quite capable of solving problems. In this section, I will discuss the role of exchanging perspectives while the students working collaboratively and why it is important in second language learning. In addition, I will discuss how the use of English contributes to exchanging perspectives and thus ultimately to learning the second language and culture.

In Vygotsky's (1978) framework, all learning is firstly a social process. That is, we learn as a result of interaction with other individuals through meaningful exchange of ideas, concepts and actions (Guerrero Nieto, 2007; Sengupta, 2001). Learners assist each other to construct meaning and knowledge through interaction, and meaning and knowledge are eventually internalised by individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). Exchanging ideas during interactions involves verbalising learners' inner thoughts externally which is a type of what Swain (2006) calls 'languaging'. Based on the view of learning in sociocultural theory, Swain and Swain et al. (2009) argue that languaging is important in learning process because 'it transforms inner thoughts to external knowing (externalization) and, conversely, it transforms external knowing into internal cognitive activity (internalization)' (Swain et al., 2009, p. 5). Swain et al. suggest that the learning process through languaging is as follows:

> By externalizing their thoughts (i.e., by using language to mediate their cognitive processes), students came to understand what they did and did not know, what information they had to seek out to complete their understanding, and what inferences they needed to make to have a coherent conceptual understanding. (Swain et al., 2009, p. 21)

Thus, languaging allows students to develop a sense of their understanding of concepts and to use this sense as a basis to further their conceptual learning. Conceptual learning is the basis of development in the Vygotskian framework. It provides deeper

understanding and becomes a starting point for its application (Swain et al., 2009). In relation to conceptual learning, Brooks et al., (2010) studied how languaging mediates between scientific and spontaneous concepts using Vygotsky's (1986) distinction between scientific and everyday (spontaneous) concepts. In the analysis of their study, they found that learners were able to make connections between their existing everyday concepts and their emerging scientific concepts of voice in French and to reshape their existing language knowledge and concepts through languaging. In language learning, everyday concepts are viewed as learning first language which is acquired unconsciously without volition, attention or analysis. On the other hand, second language acquisition is equivalent to learning scientific concepts which need to be acquired consciously and strategically. Acquisition of second language often uses learners existing knowledge of their first language (Lantolf & Throne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1986). The study by Brooks et al. (2010) suggests that languaging, the language use during interaction, facilitates conceptual learning.

The concept of languaging uses the idea from sociocultural theory that language is a cognitive tool (Vygotsky, 1986). Language used during interaction is important for learning. In the data analysed in chapter 4.1, the students used mostly English when it came to exchanging their ideas or views in order to solve problems. This is because the concepts of Japanese grammar or fine details of culture are too difficult for the students to explain in the TL and English being their most proficient language, is the only tool that can mediate awareness and understanding of these concepts. It is by enabling such mediation that the use of English contributes to exchanging perspectives and ultimately learning the second language.

Excerpt 1 of section 4.2.2 (p. 119) and excerpt 1 of section 4.2.3 (p. 128), which I discussed in the previous section, both illustrated how the students exchanged their perspectives in the process of problem-solving and how they used English as a tool to externalise their views, and moreover used their existing knowledge of English forms to construct a sentence in the TL. Excerpt 2 of section 4.2.3 (p. 129) is another example of

how the students exchanged their views in order to solve a problem. In this example, they identified the difference in sentence structure between English and Japanese and successfully expressed how they intended to translate the dialogue written in English. To be specific, student P framed a problem for the group about how Bob, an Australian boy in their script, should be described ('he is a carpenter from Australia or he is an Australian and he is a carpenter?'). This is a subtle difference of the language structure between Japanese and English. While P made this utterance in English, it appeared she was thinking the Japanese sentence at the same time and comparing two sentences in both the languages. In other words, she attempted to connect everyday and scientific concepts. Then she externalised her inner thought that, as a result, ended up forming a question to the group. D then gave her an idea by providing the word for Australian as a person ('*Oosutoraria jin*'), implying that the group should take the latter pattern. Student S endorsed D's idea with his existing knowledge about Japanese grammar ('he is an Australian and he is a carpenter because in Japanese it is very difficult to say two together'). However student D suggested another alternative which was easily translated and carried the meaning of what the group wanted to express in Japanese ('Australian carpenter?'). The group finally succeeded in making a Japanese phrase meaning 'Australian carpenter' in Japanese (*Oosutoraria no daiku*'). In this example, the students verbalised their views – they could be forming a question, analysing alternatives or expressing existing knowledge to external and exchanging their views, they were able to overcome the problem. Moreover, in the process of constructing the sentence, their thinking went back and forth between Japanese and English. This means that the group was trying to connect the language forms they knew (spontaneous concepts) and the forms of the emerging language (scientific concepts) in order to make an appropriate sentence, as Brooks et al. (2010) also found in their study. English plays a key role in exchanging perspectives and it can be said that it contributes to conceptual learning.

Problem-solving on culture related issues also involves students' exchanging their views. The cultural experiences and knowledge of each individual in the group was different as they had obtained or developed the knowledge in a different way. Through their own

experiences - they may have been interacting with Japanese friends, staying with a Japanese family in Japan, watching a Japanese program on TV and so forth - they had developed cultural resources that assist to interact with Japanese people in an appropriate manner. As they developed these resources, they attained a repertoire of practices (Gutiérres & Rogoff, 2003; Rogoff, 2003). In the analysis of the present study, students were able to share their own resources of cultural knowledge and expand their repertoire of practices by exchanging their views or externalising their knowledge to others. Even though they were not observing or participating in cultural practice in an actual TL community, the group they were working in was similar to a virtual TL community. While the group created a Japanese drama script, they not only developed their knowledge of the Japanese language itself but also established their knowledge of Japanese culture concurrently. Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) also argue that language and the culture of the TL are in an indispensable relationship and that language learning should be treated as a social practice that involves creating and interpreting meanings within the framework of the TL. In this framework, learning culture plays an important role in learning the TL.

To sum up, exchanging perspectives on cultural issues is important in language learning because it fills in the gap in their cultural knowledge, creates cultural resources that aid students in interacting with people in the TL and expands their repertoire of practices. English in this sense is an essential tool in exchanging perspectives. It allows students to be analytic about their own culture and that of the TL and gives capacity to verbalise their thought and transfer their knowledge to others. As a result, English contributes to socially constructed learning.

The excerpts I discussed in the previous section showed how the students exchanged their perspectives during problem-solving on cultural issues and created a drama script where some of them must act as a Japanese person. Excerpt 1 of section 4.3.1 (p. 145), for instance, was about hugging. Student P described the scene of their drama script to the group, when Hanako (Japanese girl) comes back to her home and how her mother

becomes over excited to see her back ('Should we have mum getting over excited when her daughter comes in?'). Student H suggested an idea that her mother should hug her ('Hey mum, you're really embarrassing me now. Stop hugging me'). This idea seems to have come naturally to H, who is an Australian student, and other members of the group did not oppose her idea. At the time, the members of the group were all making the script based on the culture in which they were based - Australia. Then student S analysed the situation and verbalised his view on hugging ('but you know, Japanese, they're not gonna hug'), that reminded P and H of the culture of the TL ('no'). This means that S's suggestion assisted P and D to activate their existing knowledge. After S expanded his talk about hugging as a common way of greeting in European countries, student H also agreed that hugging is inappropriate for the Japanese family ('you can't do it to her mum. I think dad would mind'). In this excerpt, by exchanging views, the students realised what is appropriate in one culture is not always the norm in a different culture. In other words, it enabled the students to decenter themselves from the perspectives of their own culture and view another culture from inside as well as outside. According to researchers in intercultural teaching and learning, this 'decentering' is important in language learning as it promotes intercultural capability (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat, 2011). For the students in this excerpt, this cultural awareness would help them to act appropriately in Japan. Moreover, exchanging their perspectives would not be possible without an aid of English as the matter they were discussing was complex and they did not have capacity to do it in the TL. English therefore plays an important role in exchanging perspectives in that it allows students to formulate culture-internal and culture-external perspectives on Japanese behaviours and assists them to determines ways to act appropriately in different circumstances.

Exchanging their perspectives contributes to cultural awareness both of their own and of the target language. Excerpt 2 of section 4.3.1 (p. 148) shows how the students attempted to come up with a culturally appropriate greeting. Continuing from excerpt 1, they worked on how Hanako's mother should welcome her daughter at the door. Student P invited ideas from other group members ('Any other idea there?... I think I'm in

Japanese mode now….*Ohisashiburi* or something like that'). *Ohisashiburi* means 'long time no see' and it is a quite commonly used phrase for the scene they were about to create. Student D endorsed P's idea ('*Hanako chan, Hisashiburi'*) and student H repeated the greeting in English, but added an extra phrase ('Ah, how are you? Long time no see'). By translating the Japanese phrase and adding 'how are you', student H seemed to have familiarised herself to the situation and as a result, stopped thinking from the Japanese perspective and constructed the dialogue in her own cultural frame. Student P quickly pointed out that H's suggestion is not culturally appropriate ('sounds like what my mum would say, but I think in Japanese, you would say...'). After a short discussion of other suggestions, student D made another suggestion ('Are you tired or something') and student S immediately agreed with it ('Year, definitely you would get that'). D's suggestion seemed to inspire student P to push the content further ('And you can tell me maybe I'm wearing something it's not very warm….Are you tired? Come in come in or something like that'). Finally the group decided on the greeting phrase. It is hard to identify if students D, S and P were considering Japanese culture when they suggested those greeting phrases, but they verbalised their ideas and corrected cultural inappropriateness with each other to create acceptable greeting phrases. English in this excerpt mediated exchanging their ideas and contributed to creating a pool of knowledge that everyone of the group could access and analyse in terms of what would be useful for competing the task. Similar to excerpt 1 of section 4.3.1, it also contributed to cultural awareness both of English-speaking cultures and that of the TL.

In summary, exchanging perspectives on linguistic issues during problem-solving promotes constructing meaning and knowledge of the TL that eventually internalised by individuals. It also involves languaging that mediates learners making their inner thoughts external and this promotes deeper conceptual learning. Such conceptual learning can provide a strong basis for the application of knowledge in real world contexts (Swain et al., 2009). Exchanging perspectives on cultural issues during problem-solving, on the other hand, prompts students to create cultural resources that help them to interact with people in the TL appropriately and to expand their repertoire

of practices. It also provides a tool that enables students decenter themselves from the perspectives of their own culture and see another culture form inside and outside. This mediates students' cultural awareness in relation to cultures. English is an essential tool for these students in exchanging perspectives. It allows students to exchange their views and ideas freely and to externalise their inner thoughts. English also provides a tool that gives these students the capacity to be analytic about their own cultures and that of the TL, as a result, contributing to socially constructed learning.

5.3 English as a resource for distributed cognition

One of the common aspects that the data illustrated in chapter 4 is that students used each other as a knowledge resource in order to accomplish the task. Distributed knowledge that each student possessed was made available to others when s/he verbalised it while participating in collaborative tasks. This knowledge was transmitted to other students in the group and as a result was transformed into an end product – the Japanese drama script. The data showed that while students worked on the task collaboratively, they exchanged their ideas, knowledge, information and so forth. This resulted in their creating a pool of knowledge as well as shared understanding that is a basis for learning. In other words, this learning process occurred socially through interaction rather than individually. This learning process can be explained using the theory of distributed cognition (Hollan et al., 2000; Hutchins, 1995; Hutchins & Klausen, 1996; Roger and Ellis, 1994). In this section, I will discuss how distributed cognition contributes to second language learning during collaborative group work. I will also discuss what kind of role English plays in terms of the theory of distributed cognition and how it mediates second language learning.

Excerpt 1 of section 4.2.1 (p. 106) illustrates how an individual's knowledge becomes explicit allowing other members of the group to share that knowledge and, as a result, they were able to expand their vocabulary. In this excerpt, student H read aloud one of

the dialogues they had created in English previously ('I'm also doing laundry and ironing and vacuuming'). In response, student P asked for confirmation about the meaning of a word from the group ('*Souji* is cleaning, right?'). Student S, who was certain about his knowledge, responded to her ('yes') and P's uncertainty about her knowledge was resolved. In this exchange, P possessed knowledge of the word, but was uncertain about the knowledge, whereas S was confident about his knowledge. Through S providing confirmation that P's knowledge was correct, P and S were able to pool their knowledge in a way that assisted in resolving P's uncertainty. Student D then asked for a Japanese word meaning washing ('Washing is?') and student S again provided an equivalent word ('*Sentaku*, I think'). Contrary to the first case, student D appears to have had no knowledge of the word, washing, in the TL and used other members of the group as a resource to supply the meaning of unknown words. In spite of differences in each case, both patterns illustrated that the students used their peers as a resource for confirming less certain knowledge or as a source of information they lacked. Through interaction, individual's knowledge was elicited and resulted in knowledge which was lacking or only partially acquired being made available both to themselves and others and so the information could be taken up by others. In this interaction, P and D's learning reflected distributed cognition as a learning process because each individual's knowledge or information is different and interaction enables to assemble this information to increase or modify knowledge. Interaction in English created a pool of knowledge, in this case vocabulary knowledge, and students were able to expand their vocabulary knowledge through interaction.

Excerpt 2 in section 4.2.1 (p. 108) is another example of students' dealing with a vocabulary issue but this example illustrates how individual knowledge became interpersonal knowledge and then was transformed to be intrapersonal knowledge. Student S introduced a Japanese word, meaning carpenter ('He could be a *Daiku*'). Student P had no knowledge about the word ('A *Daiku*?') and S provided its meaning to P ('A carpenter'). S's knowledge became public and interpersonal at this point and student H responded to it ('Ah. *Daiku*'). As I described in section 4.2.1, this 'ah' is a

change of state token (Heritage, 1984), that means in this utterance student H demonstrated that she now knew something that she did not know previously. After discussing other issues, student H used her peers as a resource to provide her with another opportunity to learn the word ('What was a carpenter again?'). Although H was introduced to the new word previously, she did not acquire the word at that point, although she did now know that the word was available as part of the shared knowledge of the group. Student P this time provided the answer ('*Daiku*'). Although P had had to ask the group the meaning of '*daiku*' when the word was first introduced by S, this time P was able to display her knowledge about the word confidently. This indicated that knowledge initially provided by S moved from interpersonal context of the interaction to intrapersonal knowledge and this enabled P to help H. Student H responded ('Yeah, of course') which shows she was able to confirm the familiarity of the new word. That is, new knowledge became partially familiar to her but had not moved to the stage where she was actively able to produce the word. In other words, she had not transformed knowledge of the word into intrapersonal knowledge. Nevertheless, students assembled distributed knowledge for each other and in doing this they mediated P's acquiring of new vocabulary intrapersonally and H's partial acquisition of it.

In both cases English played an important role for enabling students to access knowledge and information that individuals possess. Without English, it would have been impossible to elicit an individual's knowledge and distribute it to the rest of the group. That means they would not be able to create a pool of knowledge that could contribute to their language learning. Therefore, in these cases, English provided an important element for distributed cognition.

Other than students' sharing their knowledge on vocabulary, excerpts 3 and 4 in section 4.2.3 (p. 131) also showed how students' internal knowledge were activated, shared and distributed amongst them on linguistic issues. In excerpt 3 in section 4.2.3, students came across a phonetic issue – whether they pronounce a word with a long vowel or a short vowel. When student D suggested a line of dialogue ('*Doomo arigatoo* is better'),

student P asked D if it had a long vowel or not ('Is it long, *Doo*?'). Student D then confirmed it had a long vowel ('Yes, *Doomo*') and the problem was resolved. In excerpt 4 in section 4.2.3 (p. 131), the students solved a problem of the use of end particle. Student P formed a problem while suggesting a line of dialogue ('*Osokunai yo*. Should I say *yo*? I am a girl'). This utterance triggered for student D the realisation that there is a difference in speech patterns for male and female in Japanese ('*Osokunai yo*. Yeah, yeah. *Osokunai yo*'). By repeating the suggested phrase, D attempted to connect the information about the different speech patterns in Japanese that P had suggested and her existing knowledge, and accepted P's suggestion when the connection was finally made. The problem was resolved through mutual collaboration and knowledge sharing. These two examples illustrate that students possessed the knowledge to resolve the problems that arose in each case, and while participating in a collaborative task, this knowledge was activated and distributed to the group. As a result, shared knowledge was created.

During the processes discussed above, knowledge distribution was made possible through the medium of English. Hence, it can be said that English played a facilitating role for the students in activating their knowledge, and allowing this knowledge to be distributed to the group, which in turn resulted in the creation of pooled knowledge.

As a part of the successful knowledge distribution shown in excerpt 2 in section 4.2.1 (p. 108) and excerpt 3 in section 4.2.3 (p. 131) which I have discussed above, students were able to resolve problems because each student in the group had relevant expertise in a particular subject and the rest of the group accepted the validity of this knowledge. In the first example, student S provided his expertise by suggesting a Japanese word '*daiku*' and other students accepted his suggestion. In the latter example, student D provided her expertise by giving an answer to student P about pronunciation and P accepted it without questioning. For both cases, except for the student who provided the expertise, the students had either no or only partial knowledge about the subject and, therefore, accepted their peer's expertise without questioning. When there is an expert in the group, the knowledge supplied by this expert is instantly blended into the group's knowledge

pool as newly supplied information and since that knowledge pool is available to everyone of the group, other students can use it to fill their knowledge gaps. This is similar to what happens in expert-novice scaffolding where a novice moves from one side of the ZPD to another side of ZPD as the result of an expert's assistant.

In terms of knowledge distribution, knowledge transition is smooth when there is a recognised expert in the group for a particular matter. If no one in the group is able to provide expertise, or if the level of knowledge is almost the same for all members of the group when discussing a particular subject, knowledge distribution during the discussion does not work positively but rather may cause confusion or challenging or rejection of each others' expertise. This is shown in Excerpt 3 in section 4.2.1 (p. 110) which illustrates how students discussed problems in order to solve them but failed. In this example, during the discussion for deciding one of their character's, Bob's, occupation, students attempted to adapt the Japanese word, '*Nichiyoo daiku*', which means a person who does carpentry work around the house as a hobby. They were not only unsure about the concept or usage of this new word but also unclear about how they had decided his occupation despite having decided he was a full time carpenter in their previous meeting. This resulted in them having to deal with multiple problems without them realising it and this in turn prevented them from focusing on solving any one problem. Firstly, student S provided his expertise regarding the issue of language ('*Nichi daiku*, a weekend carpenter. I think that's the term'). Student P was not clear about the word (*Nichi daiku*? Does that have another meaning apart from just a carpenter?'). P had acquired the word, '*daiku*' as shown in excerpt 2 in section 4.2.1 (p. 108) and used that knowledge to comprehend the new tem. Student S offered further explanation ('*Nichi dai*. No, no. It's I think, it's *Nichi daiku* or *Nichi dai*?.... you are a handyman not a carpenter. So dad can say or dad or mum can say, would that be good enough?'). This explanation shows that S was not certain about the correct form of word, '*Nichiyoo daiku*', but knew the concept that this word expresses.

S also tried to provide a reason why the group should use the word – Bob having an unstable job makes the parents of his girlfriend worry and they would oppose their marriage. This moves the discussion from resolving the language problem to focusing on why this word is being chosen for the dialogue. P then made another suggestion about Bob's occupation ('Maybe you're not actually a good carpenter or a proper carpenter. You just have a pretty good business, but dad just assumes you're a *Nichi daiku*'). P seemed to be confused. S attempted to clarify the word ('Weekend carpenter like a handyman'; 'Not really a carpenter. He just goes to a hardware and gets the stuff on the weekend'). Responding to S's further explanation, student D tried to explicate the word ('Ok. If you are a *Nichi daiku*, that means you have another job to do.'). S assured D that her understanding was correct (Yes, I have. You hope so.'), but D was not still clear how the word would fit in the story they were creating (But you are…oh, and dad assumes you're a *Nichi daiku*, actually you are full time *daiku*'), which is a slightly different interpretation of what P suggested. It seems D had the idea that Bob's occupation is as a full-time carpenter, as the group had previously decided, whereas S was working on Bob being a hobby carpenter. There was communication break-down at this stage due to S not being able to explain what *Nichi daiku* means and the group not having a united idea about Bob's occupation.

This dual problem resulted in them having a long discussion without success and D eventually realised the group was not going anywhere with the discussion ('Are we going to have any more to say at all? That *nichi daiku* and *daiku* thing.'). P then suggested that they use the word, *Nichi daiku,* for the purpose of giving a reason for Bob's girlfriend's father to have a negative attitude towards Bob because of the negative connotation that the word carries. ('Well, I think we'll have time to write it. I don't know… because if we… because this is a better sort of things to go on with, then if we just randomly have father saying he looks bad or whatever.') and ('Do you know what I mean? Instead of just starting to tease like bullying him out of nowhere, we actually have a reason now.'). The group agreed and started to create further lines for their drama script but the lack of clarity about the word still remained. The problem was finally

solved when their teacher came into the room and she corrected the word from *Nichi daiku* to *Nichiyoo daiku* and explained the concept.

This episode showed that not having expert person in the group with recognised expertise to resolve the problem could cause confusion and prevented their distributed knowledge from being assembled to address the problem. This resulted in their knowledge becoming dissipated as they worked on different problems and thus the knowledge was not being shared to create a knowledge pool. As each individual provided their knowledge about the problem as they understood it, they became more confused about what they were doing, as if they were drowned in a muddy knowledge pool. In this case, English allowed students to deal with more than one issue and to engage with complex activities; however, this complexity had the potential to create problems. At the same time, their English use allowed them to formulate their current stage of understanding and led them to realise they did not have sufficient knowledge and expertise to resolve the problem. This awareness encouraged them to receive assistance from outside and helped their learning within their ZPD. This shows that English facilitates distributed cognition and consequently learning, but only where the necessary resources exist within the group. The failure of students to resolve the problem was not the result of their use of a particular language but rather of the lack of the necessary resources to bring to their languaging about the problem.

Knowledge distribution was also observed when students were working on cultural issues. Except 3 in section 4.3.1 (p. 150) showed how students shared their knowledge in order to solve culture-related problems they came across during the task. The problem in this example was how the group should translate a greeting phrase made in English into Japanese as the act of translation from idiomatic English to idiomatic L2 that requires more than simple translation but rather cultural reframing of the utterance. When student D stated a greeting phrase in English ('Hi Bob, nice to meet you. Come in'), student S asked the group how to translate it into Japanese ('*Nihongo de*?'). Student D offered a translation ('*Konnichiwa Bobu san*'), but student P raises the problem

('Would she say Bob or his last name?') caused by the act of translation as a problem for L2 performance. Student D considered P's question and offered an alternative ('Ah, *Birudaa san*?'). Student H then attempted to confirm her existing knowledge and understanding of cultural rule in Japan to the group ('Japanese use their last name, don't they? For the first time….meeting. It has to be formal'). P and D seemed to have had the knowledge that student H made available to the group and both ratified it (P: 'Yeah, Bob Builder ok'; D: 'Yeah, surname, I think'). At this point, students were able to establish a shared perspective on the issue, which enabled them to make a final decision. S then attempted to clarify how the name should be pronounced in a Japanese context ('But how would, the Builder, *Birudaa san*?'). In this utterance, S proposed a possible Japanese pronunciation of the English word 'Builder', which at the same time corrected the pronunciation error that D made earlier, '*Birudaa san*'. P and H confirmed S's suggestion was correct ('*Birudaa san*') and the group finally completed the appropriate greeting phrase ('*Ah, Konnichiwa, Birudaa san. Kochirakoso*'). This excerpt illustrated that distributed knowledge related in cultural issues can also be shared and that shared perspectives contribute to students' understanding culture.

In this example, students distributed and shared their knowledge about greetings and the way Japanese people would pronounce an English word in order to successfully produce the correct form of a greeting in Japanese on basis of their collaboratively constructed understanding. When knowledge about culture is made available by a student, that knowledge may become available as new knowledge for some students or as additional knowledge for others who already have prior knowledge. This results in students' increasing or modifying their knowledge about culture. In other words, knowledge distribution in socially constructed learning mediates individuals' cultural learning. Moreover, English plays an important role in the distribution of knowledge. Each process – problem forming, making suggestions and verbalising internal knowledge – was almost entirely done in English. Without the aid of English, the group would not have had an effective way to access each other's knowledge and as a result, some learning processes would not have occurred.

In summary, the theory of distributed cognition is useful for understanding how each individual's learning is shaped while participating in a collaborative task. Based on the principles of the theory – that cognitive processes may be distributed across the members of a social group and that they may involve interaction between people and environment, learning a second language in collaborative settings can be identified as an effective way of learning. It enables knowledge or information that an individual possesses to be elicited and distributed to the group and to create a pool of knowledge that can be a basis for learning. In this framework, each individual in a group is an important source of knowledge or information and they are able to use their peers as an information source. In order to access the individual's knowledge, English is an essential tool. Therefore English contributes to learning in terms of the framework of distributed cognition.

The distributed cognition approach posits that cognitive processes occur socially and therefore coordination amongst individuals, environment and artifacts is important. Rogers and Ellis (1994) argue that 'sharing access and knowledge enables the coordination of expectations to emerge which in turn form the basis of coordinated actions' (p. 123). Coordinated actions in the present study can be interpreted as creating a successful drama script in Japanese. The tool that enables students to access information or individual's knowledge is the language in which that can communicate proficiently, in this case English. Therefore, English can be seen as an important tool for distributed cognition and ultimately contributes to language learning.

5.4 English as a resource for effective collective scaffolding

In the analysis of students' dialogues discussed in chapter 4, the students used English to provide mutual assistance while working on the task in order to solve various problems. They not only helped each other to solve linguistic and cultural problems but also to understand and organise the task so that they were able to accomplish it. There was no obvious expert in this group but the students compensated for each other's lack of knowledge or skills and used each other as a resource to solve problems. This mutual

assistance is what Donato (1994) has called 'collective scaffolding' and the students in the present study illustrated that they were quite capable of providing collective scaffolding and that this led them to complete the task. The data also identified that English played a crucial role when the students gave scaffolded help to each other during collaborative group work. In this section, I will discuss the importance of scaffolding in language learning and how English facilitates forms of communication that lead to effective scaffolding and as a result, how the use of English contributes to L2 learning.

The concept of collective scaffolding is derived from the original idea of expert-novice scaffolding found in the work of Vygotsky (1978). In classroom expert-novice scaffolding, it can be understood as 'task enabling support' by a teacher who plays an expert role or as 'assisted accomplishment of new or difficult tasks' (cf. Michell & Sharpe, 2005). According to Wood et al. (1976), in their study of expert-novice scaffolding, there are six functions that tutors can use to develop successful scaffolding. They are: (1) Recruitment – enlisting the learner's interest in the task; (2) Reduction in degrees of freedom – simplifying the task by reducing alternatives in order to reach a solution; (3) Direction maintenance – keeping the objective(s) of the task clear for learners; (4) Marking critical features – indicating discrepancies between what the learner has produced and what would constitute a correct answer; (5) Frustration control – moderating learner's frustration while working on the task; (6) Demonstration – modeling solutions to a task.

In collective scaffolding where there is no apparent expert in the group, each member of the group acts as a tutor and provides scaffolded help that normally the expert provides in order to complete the task successfully.

The data in this present study illustrated that the students used English most of the time while they were giving mutual assistance to each other. The qualitative analysis of the data in chapter 4 shows that the students were seen to provide collective scaffolding in three contexts: for facilitating group work, for working with linguistic aspects of L2, and for addressing cultural aspects of L2. English was an essential instrument for facilitating

students' interaction and scaffolding. I shall start by discussing scaffolding and the role of English when the students were dealing with linguistic problems as scaffolding behaviours were most seen in that context according to the data.

The data showed that the students provided mutual assistance when they came across new expressions in the L2 and attempted to adopt them into their L2 text. Anton and DiCamilla (1998) have asserted in their study about L1 use that the use of L1 has a '*metalinguistic function* when students are trying to produce complex linguistic forms or understand why they are using a particular linguistic form' (p. 325). During their interaction in the present study, English was used to access the meaning of particular expressions and to evaluate and understand the meaning of L2 texts while the students were providing each other with scaffolded help. That is, amongst students at a similar level of Japanese proficiency, each student contributed for the others different skills and knowledge that other students did not have in order to adopt new expressions into their L2 text. In other words, each of the students assisted the others in accomplishing the task. The discussion of example 2 in section 4.2.2 (p. 122) illustrated how the students provided mutual assistance in order to construct the correct form of the dialogue in the TL, and the use of English allowed them to access the meaning of a complex expression and evaluate if it was appropriate to use the new expression, '*iyoiyo*' which means 'at last'. In this example, the group was working on a sentence for the scene in which the Japanese girl, Hanako, tries to convince her boyfriend, Bob, to meet her parents. The line that the group had created in their previous meeting was '*Sore wa ii kangae kedo demo iyoiyo ...watashi no ryooshin to …*'. This incomplete sentence means 'That is a good idea, but finally you…with my parents'. Firstly student P read aloud the incomplete sentence to the group in order to address the problem and to seek attention from the group. Student S then asked in English for confirmation as to what scene was troubling P. S saying 'Where are you?' was a form of orientational talk which created a focus of joint attention on the particular current problem that was discussed in the previous section. It also works as one of tutor's functions identified by Wood et al.

(1976), *recruitment*, as this utterance enlists other group members' interest in solving the problem in order to accomplish the task.

Responding to the issue made available for discussion by S, P read aloud an English translation of the sentence, 'I'm wondering…maybe...perhaps it's time for you to meet my parents'. By providing talk that focused attention on a particular issue, P helped other group members to evaluate whether or not the sentence carried the meaning that the group intended and also to assist the group to complete the sentence. Student S understood in which scene the problem existed and then requested that P clarify the problem of the translation ('So what did you say?'). The utterance by P appears to evaluate if the translation was correct by stating what the dialogue was supposed to mean ('I'm thinking. *Sore wa ii kangae kedo*, that's a good idea. *Demo iyoiyo*…'). Having understood the meaning of the sentence in English, S was able to concentrate on the form of the sentence and corrected the original sentence by adding a particle '*da*' ('*Kangae da kedo*…isn't it?'). S' utterance 'isn't it' here invited other group members into discussion about whether or not his suggestion was correct. In other words, S prompted or suggested a correct version of the earlier sentence. By saying 'isn't it', S's utterance became collaborative rather than a simple correction and helped him or other members to build knowledge about grammar. Thus, this interaction can be classified as scaffolding because it prompts other members to realise there is a grammatical mistake in the sentence and sets the stage for the group to think collaboratively about what the correct sentence is. This is what Wood et al. (1976) called, *demonstration*, one of the tutor's functions. S (who takes on the tutor's role here) has demonstrated an idealised form of what P and the group partially constructed in their previous meeting. By demonstrating this model sentence with the ending, 'isn't it?', he expects that P or the group to 'imitate' it back in a more appropriate form. P did not seem to be aware that the sentence was not correct without the particle '*da*' and S provided his knowledge to correct the sentence. This kind of knowledge shift has been identified as a result of successful peer scaffolding in other studies (cf. Anton & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Donato, 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Villamil & De Guerrero 1996). If P

was creating this dialogue individually, she would not have realised the form was wrong and the sentence would have remained as it was. In this sense, it can be said that P and S managed to construct a correct sentence through collective scaffolding.

The next problem the group encountered related to the correct use of '*iyoiyo*'. P produced an utterance that served as a prompt for formulating a new problem ('What's *iyoiyo* again?). S provided the English meaning of '*iyoiyo*' which was explained in the textbook ('At last or some kind of relief that action has reached or in reaching to completion. Oh'). 'Oh' at the end of S's utterance indicates that he had discovered a problem and this utterance seems to have enlisted the group's interest in the problem. This utterance works as *reduction in degree of freedom,* which is a tutor's function in expert-novice scaffolding because it prompts eliminating alternatives. In response to S, P prompted a partial solution to the problem ('It doesn't sound like I should be using it here') which can be classified as *marking critical features* of a tutor's function and the group reached the solution (S: 'No.' and H: 'No. You should use..'). The group established a shared perspective on the sentence, concluding that the use of the expression was not appropriate in the context. This is another form of effective collective scaffolding because this exchange led the group to use knowledge they had gained through mutually supported interaction to construct a correct sentence after eliminating inappropriate use of '*iyoiyo*'. P then proposed an alternative ('*Demo moo ryooshin to… moo ryooshin to*…yeah…*watashi no ryooshin to…'*). Student H produced the utterance ('Yeah, that's it.') which indicates that P's suggestion had triggered H to activate her knowledge about the use of '*moo*' meaning 'about time'. Although this expression was not listed as a new expression on the list, it is a quite common expression that the students had come across previously while studying model conversations in the textbook. However, P did not seem to be aware that '*moo*' implies the meaning of 'it is about time to do ~' and kept asking the group to come up with a solution to complete the sentence ('Umm, I'm thinking…it's time to meet my parents or it's about to… I don't want to use *toki*'). H seemed to try to clarify P's problem (What's time…time to?') in order to assist P, but P failed to answer that question ('I don't know time…like *toki*…that

sounds like…'). H then provided a simple alternative ('*Ryooshin ni aimasho*?') which means 'Let's meet my parents'. H's utterance here implied her uncertainty about the suggested sentence and prompted other members to evaluate if it was appropriate or not. H's suggestion was made as a result of reframing their original idea of the sentence but avoiding using an expression that the group was not familiar with. This can be classified as the *demonstration* function because it suggests another alternative that H expects to be close to an appropriate sentence and prompts other members to modify it to the more appropriate form based on her suggestion. By suggesting the alternative sentence, H has built on P's partial solution to her problem. This scaffolding by H has led P to realise that it is not necessary to include a new expression in the sentence in order to convey the meaning that they intended to. P then made a proposal of another alternative ('Or have to be. *Moo Ryooshin ni awanakya*'). P simply changed the verb ending from '*aimasho*' (lets' meet) to '*awanakya*' (we should meet). P and H have mutually helped each other to construct a sentence in the TL that translates the English sentence they had created. They kept evaluating alternatives by using English and finally succeeded in completing the dialogue correctly. None of the problems elicited by students could have been managed using their individual knowledge but students supplied the knowledge that others did not have in order to solve problems. This mutual assistance can be classified as assisted accomplishment of tasks which is one of the perspectives of novice-expert scaffolding (Michell & Sharpe, 2005).

Example 3 of section 4.2.2 (p. 125) is another example where the students provided scaffolded help to each other in order to adopt a new expression in their role-play script. English plays an important role in this process. This time, the group tried to use the expression, '*sore ni shite wa*' which means 'considering the fact(s)'. Student P formulated a problem for the group stating that she was not sure why they had decided to use '*sore ni shite wa*' in the context ('Why do we use *sore ni shite wa* again?'). P here has performed the *recruitment* function of a tutor in novice-expert scaffolding because her contribution enlists other members' interest in solving the problem. Student D explained and justified her reasons by providing the meaning of the expression in

English (‘I was thinking to put in *sore ni shite wa*, considering that you say you arrived on time but… and then say reasons’). It has to be noted that ‘you’ in this utterance means ‘Hanako and Bob’ and student P is playing a role of Hanako. P responds with ‘Ah’, which indicates her level of understanding of the matter and D reinforced her reasoning why the expression had to be used in that particular part of the sentence (‘You should say you arrived on time first and then *sore ni shite wa…. ’*). In this utterance, D has made a suggestion about how the sentence should be constructed using ‘*sore ni shite wa*’ in English and then in Japanese. By providing suggestions of an alternative, D has provided a form of scaffolded help, which can be classified as *demonstration* function of a tutor, facilitating the group in solving the problem.

In fact, this scaffolding led both P and D to realise that they had misunderstood each other on the concept of the sentence they had in mind. That is, the idea P had in mind was that Hanako and Bob did not arrive home on time because their airplane was delayed (‘We didn’t arrive on time though’) whereas D thought they had arrived home on time (‘Oh, you mean the airplane. I thought you meant arrived at home’). The utterance ‘Oh’ by D is an indication of her discovery that she had misunderstood the concept of the sentence. Student S explicated his reasoning about why ‘*sore ni shite wa*’ should be used in the context by clarifying its English meaning (‘*Sore ni shite wa* is considering that. That’s why you’re using *sore ni shite wa*, after saying all of that, taking into consideration all of that, we are only late 1 hour’) in order to assist P and D to resolve the problem. S here provided the *marking critical features* function of a tutor because he identified discrepancies between P and D’s ideas and showed how the correct sentence should be constructed with information that the group had seen in the textbook. This scaffolding enabled the group to create a shared understanding of the sentence they were working on, to clarify the meaning of ‘*sore ni shite wa*’ and its use. The group, as a result, was able to successfully resolve the problem, that is, to construct a sentence by adopting a new expression.

The examples that I have summarised above illustrate how the students helped each other in order to construct the dialogue in the TL by adopting new expressions. The scaffolding functions of tutors identified by Wood et al. (1976) in novice-expert scaffolding can be seen in these examples. Each student has contributed a certain amount of help to the group similar to the way in which a teacher, as an expert in the classroom, assists students to accomplish a new or difficult task that they cannot manage on their own. They were collectively able to construct a dialogue in a similar way to that observed in the study by Anton and DiCamilla (1998) and other studies of peer interaction (cf. Brooks & Donato, 1994; Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2000, 2001; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996; De Guerrero & Villamil 2000). Anton and DiCamilla (1998) have stated 'in collaborative activity between learners at the same level of proficiency, knowledge shifts between the members of the group as each member of the group contributes different skills and areas of expertise to the task' (p. 325). Therefore, collective scaffolding as illustrated in these examples is an effective way to develop learners' language because it facilitates constructing shared knowledge that assists individual's language development.

Furthermore, when learners are working collaboratively, English is an essential tool to mediate collective scaffolding because it allows students to 'facilitate L2 production and to allow learners both to initiate and sustain verbal interaction with one another' (p. 268) as Brooks and Donato (1994) have also argued in their study. Especially, when learners tried to adopt new expressions, as the examples above showed, English was used to evaluate and understand the meaning of the expression and of the whole dialogue in the TL that they had created. This role of English supports what Anton and DiCamilla (1998) found in their study about the role of L1. Without the aid of English, it would be hard for these students to adopt new expressions and produce dialogues for their role-play script because they would not be able to identify the problem they were working on, to access and evaluate the meaning of the expressions that they intended to use and to explain their judgment about whether the sentence is grammatical. English allowed the students to exchange their opinions freely, and in so doing, it allowed them to give

necessary scaffolding to each other. In addition, by understanding the meaning of new expressions and sentences that learners were working on, and evaluating the suggested alternatives in their more proficient language - English - learners were clearly able to develop a shared understanding of the problem they were tackling and work towards resolving it.

As discussed in section 5.1, developing a shared understanding creates a basis for further learning because it allows students to create new knowledge (Mercer, 1995, 1996). For instance, in example 2 of section 4.2.2 (p. 132) discussed above, the group established a shared understanding on the sentence they were working on which allowed them to have an analytical stance towards the TL and to investigate meaning and match meaning to the context. They were able to evaluate and eliminate alternatives and to correct wrong form by giving mutual assistance. This process, as a result, led them to construct shared knowledge, in this case, how to adopt a new expression into a particular sentence. Anton and DiCamilla (1998) have also argued that the L1 is used to establish and maintain intersubjectivity, namely in the form of shared perspectives on the task. By having a shared understanding or intersubjectivity in relation to the problem, learners are able to provide appropriate assistance mutually and solve problems effectively through collective scaffolding. Thus, it can be said that English plays an important role in providing effective scaffolded help during learners' interaction.

On the other hand, the data in the present study also illustrated the limitations of collective scaffolding. In example 5 of section 4.2.3, the students attempted to solve a problem concerning the correct linguistic form for expressing time, that is, the use of the correct Japanese particle for time. The group used each other as a resource and provided mutual help in order to construct a line of dialogue to translate 'We were an hour late'. Firstly, student P made an utterance to address the problem ('*1 jikan osokatta*?') which is the *recruitment* function of a tutor, and this allowed student D to propose an alternative ('*1 jikan okureta*'). The two suggested sentences carried the same meaning and P's attention moved to the use of particle for describing time. P's utterance, '*jikan o* or no *o*',

serves as a prompt for the group to reconsider the use of particle in that sentence as seen in D's utterance, '*1 jikan okureta*….oh yeah, the particle. *1 jikan*….'. This 'oh' indicates that she had realised they needed to give attention to the use of particle. P's utterance also showed P's inability to solve the problem on her own, which means she required assistance to construct a correct sentence. P then externalised her idea to the group for their evaluation ('*ni?*'), but D was not confident with the suggestion ('*Ni*….Umm…'). Student S then provided scaffolding for P and D, which can be classified as the *marking critical features* function, by analysing the sentence and explaining the grammatical rule for using the particle so that the group was able to solve the problem ('It's time. It should be *ni*, shouldn't it?'). This utterance led the group to decide to use the particle '*ni*' and the problem was resolved for the time being.

Student S used English to analyse and explain the linguistic form, in this case, the Japanese particle for time, and the group accepted his suggestion. Unfortunately, the choice was wrong as the particle '*ni*' is not used to describe 'a period of time' as this dialogue was supposed to mean but rather the time when something happened and no individual in the group noticed the mistake they were making. This shows the limitations of collective scaffolding, that is, learners may arrive at incorrect knowledge and may not even notice that they have attained wrong knowledge if the correct knowledge is not available to any member of the group. Collective scaffolding may not be as effective as expert-novice scaffolding as the required resources or knowledge that an expert is usually able to provide to a novice during expert-novice scaffolding may not be available amongst learners themselves. Collective scaffolding cannot create knowledge which is not available to participants. As I described in chapter 4, when learners provide scaffolded help mutually, the process may work well to develop a pool of knowledge where the basic knowledge is available to members of the group, but they cannot create new knowledge where it does not exist.

Collective scaffolding, however, did also allow learners to identify a knowledge gap in the group and gave them an opportunity to adopt other strategies for accessing the

missing knowledge, such as seeking help from their tutor, in order to solve problems. Example 6 of section 4.2.3 (p. 136) illustrated how learners noticed that they did not have the necessary knowledge to solve the linguistic problems they faced when the group attempted to adopt the Japanese expressions '*bakari*' and '*sore ni shite wa'*. In this example, student P had decided that the group should adopt an expression '*shita bakari*' (D: 'Hey, which one do you use, *sore ni shite wa*?' P: 'No. *Shita bakari*'). Student D did not agree with P and asked P to explain the reason ('How are you going to put in?'). P attempted to justify the reason why '*shita bakari*' was appropriate for that context but failed to do so ('Ah, I'm gonna say *Hayaku tsuukashita bakkari kedo michi ga ko*…Umm'). In response, D evaluated what P had suggested and concluded '*shita bakari*' did not work in the sentence ('No, that *shita bakari* is you've just done something. It wouldn't be in this context'). D's utterance worked as an instance of the *Demonstration* function of a tutor and made the group focus on creating a sentence using '*sore ni shite wa*'. Students S and D proposed alternatives to each other in order to complete the sentence. However, P reformulated the original problem for the group as question ('So can I say *shita bakari*?'). This appears to be a kind of *recruitment* function because it enlists other members' interest in this particular expression. S suggested the English meaning of the expression ('*Shita bakari* was completion of something, isn't it?'), in which he implied his uncertainty about what he was suggesting by adding 'isn't it' to his suggestion. D was certain about the meaning of the expression ('Yes') and then student H also suggested her interpretation ('Having just done, wasn't it?'). H also showed her uncertainty about the meaning by adding 'wasn't it' at the end of her utterance. Both S and H provided talk that constitutes the *reduction in degree of freedom* function because they have attempted to choose one expression, eliminating alternative expressions by clarifying its English meaning. Although it was clear that D was certain about how not to use '*shita bakari*', the difference in level of knowledge and uncertainty shown by S and H made P to choose another technique to resolve the problem ('Hold on. Let me check it. *Shita bakari* was which topic? First one?'). By saying this, P had identified that there was a gap in the collective knowledge of the group and as a result

checked the textbook ('Ok.'). It can be assumed that this 'Ok' did not mean that she had learned something new from the others. Rather she had identified the gap in her knowledge from what the others were suggesting because they kept providing alternatives with uncertainty. In the end, P decided to work on the sentence later ('Ok. I'm not gonna write it. I'm not in the mood right now'). This is an example of failure of the attempted scaffolding to achieve the results, instead identifying a lack of knowledge in the group and an incapability to solve the problem by themselves through interaction. The group's process of making suggestions provided an attempt at scaffolding but this attempted scaffolding did not create new knowledge because there were differences in what had been formulated through interaction. P did not identify that other members of the group knew what the construction meant but rather that they were uncertain about its meaning. As a result, P chose to use another way to resolve the problem. Although the attempted collective scaffolding failed to lead to new learning in this episode, English allowed the students to notice what they knew and what they did not know, and as a result it enabled them to seek other ways to solve problems in order to ensure their learning.

Collective scaffolding was also seen when the students addressed cultural aspects of the L2. In the example 5 of section 4.31 (p. 154), the students discussed a particular Japanese sweet called '*omanjuu*'. The problem the group was working on was what Hanako's mother should bring to the living room after she takes Bob and Hanako to the room. Firstly, student P made a suggestion ('Refreshments. *Okashi*') and H seemed to support the idea by making a confirming utterance ('*Okashi*'). H's utterance assisted P to construct a sentence for the scene in the TL ('*Ocha to okashi o motte junbi shite kuru kara*'), which means 'I will prepare a tea and refreshments, and bring them here'. P read the sentence aloud which enabled the group to evaluate if it was accurate and also to create a shared focus of attention to the sentence. This activated D's internal knowledge about Japanese culture regarding serving tea to guests and, based on her knowledge, she proposed alternatives asking which was the correct one to use ('*Ocha to omanjuu? Okashi? Omanjuu?*'). This can be classified as the *recruitment* function of a tutor

because it prompts other members to think about the problem raised. P was, however, not able to give an immediate assistance to the question ('Umm…*Omanjuu*. Umm…*Omanjuu*..'). D added a kind of scaffolding by explaining what *omanjuu* is ('*Omanjuu* is, you know, traditional Japanese sweets') so that P could resolve the problem. This may be an attempted use of the *frustration control* function as D believed that by describing *omanjuu*, P would be able to choose which one is more appropriate in the situation. Contrary to D's expectation, P knew what *omanjuu* was, but in fact P had a different view on serving tea ('Yeah, but wouldn't that usually only go with *maccha*?'). Student H joined the discussion and attempted to share her knowledge with the group members ('Is that it? Oh, that funny little…you know, like round thing'). D and H exchanged their knowledge to each other in order to clarify what *omanjuu* is (D: 'Very traditional Japanese sweets'; H: 'Paste thing'; D: 'Yeah, very very sweet') and they were able to establish a shared understanding on the view of *omanjuu*. Student P's understanding of '*omanjuu*' was that it should be served with '*maccha*', powdered green tea, which is often used for the traditional tea ceremony. The scene which the group was creating was not a tea ceremony, however, and when D suggested serving '*omanjuu*' with ordinary tea ('Not necessarily. You can drink with normal tea because it's too sweet. You can eat it with normal tea'), student P thought it was problematic ('I thought you only eat them with the…ah…usually only eat them with the…'). Student S then provided scaffolding in order to resolve the problem by suggesting a new dimension on the scene they were working on ('It is special occasion too, you know'). What S meant by this utterance was that the scene was quite special because it is Bob's first meeting with Hanako's parents. This can be classified as the *reduction in degree of freedom* function as it assisted them to narrow down their choices of the word. S's utterance assisted the group to resolve the problem and the group decided to adopt an idea to serve *omanjuu* and *maccha* for this scene. As described above, D and P provided their knowledge and information about '*omanjuu'* and '*maccha*', and successfully expanded each other's understanding of these items and how they are used. They were able to fill the gaps in their cultural knowledge and create a pool of knowledge through collective

scaffolding. English played a key role in this process by allowing learners to ask questions and explain what they knew and what they believed about Japanese culture. It can be thus said that collective scaffolding using their proficient language helps learners attain new knowledge of cultural aspects of the L2.

Lastly, the data analysed in section 4.1 revealed that the students used English in order to understand the task and organise how they should work on the task and, as a result English was an essential instrument to facilitate students' interaction and for scaffolding their learning. Example 1 of section 4.1.2 (p. 94), for example, illustrated how each member of the group made suggestions in order to make the task manageable. In this example, the group made a decision that they would use English to develop their drama script. In their first meeting, student P volunteered to write down the lines for each character mostly in English while the group was creating a drama script. However it was a tacit understanding and they were slightly frustrated about their slow progress on creating the script. Student S then produced an utterance in which he attempted to reduce frustration amongst the group members ('I think it's gonna get easier once we start doing this in Japanese'). The others in the group agreed with S and showed a sense of relief by saying ('Yeah, definitely'). This kind of utterance made by S is similar to what would have been provided by their tutor to reduce tutees' frustration as well as to enlist tutees' interest in working on the task. Therefore, it can be said that this is scaffolding behaviour in the form of *frustration control*. In response to S, students kept suggesting their ideas about how they should create their drama script (D: 'Maybe, we just get the ideas out and…'; S: 'And we try to play it out. See what is like. Just an outline.'; D: 'We don't write down word by word. Just create the general ideas').

This interaction above showed that S and D had similar ideas on how to create the script. Both students tried to simplify the task so that they were able to manage the task. This is again another scaffolding behaviour, that is, by reducing degrees of freedom in the task, they were able to make the task manageable. On the other hand, student P and H had different opinions about creating the script (P: 'I think we better write it.'; H: 'Write it

down first. Look at grammar and something else later'). By providing their opinions, students P and H provided similar type of scaffolding to what S and D provided earlier. Their way of creating the script was different from what S and D had suggested, but their intention was to simplify the task in order to make the task manageable as well. Student P then produced an utterance that strengthened her idea ('Yeah, I'm not saying we have to translate it exactly. Like we're just writing down what we're gonna say'). By proposing her opinion, student P attempted to keep the members of the group motivated and showed them a direction towards the immediate goal of the task. This scaffolding behaviour collected together the group's opinions and the group was able to make a decision that they would produce their draft script in English.

As seen in this example, each member of the group played the role of a tutor in their collaborative group work. This scaffolding behaviour assisted them to complete the task efficiently and successfully. English, which was learners' most proficient language, made it possible to facilitate scaffolding behaviour amongst the learners. In similar contexts, De Guerreo and Villamil (2000) found in their study of the interactions and the mechanisms of peer scaffolding by two ESL students whose L1 was Spanish that the students' decision to use the L1 supported communication and achievement of the task goals and L1 in this sense was 'an instrument of task control' (p. 64). They have also asserted that 'the use of the L1 to talk about the task was considered valuable to the extent that it did not inhibit but instead of promoted achievement of the goal' (p. 64). Their findings are reflected in the results of the present study in which English played a similar role.

In summary, collective scaffolding is important in group work in language learning as each member of the group has different skills, knowledge and expertise, and is able to contribute to fill the knowledge gap that leads to the creation of a pool of knowledge amongst learners. It works in a similar way to novice-expert scaffolding in terms of assisted accomplishment of the task. English plays a key role in facilitating collective scaffolding by allowing students to access the meaning of L2 forms, to evaluate and

understand the L2 texts and, to explain and justify why they need to use a particular linguistic form or complex expression in communicating in the L2. The use of English enables learners to develop a shared understanding or intersubjectivity that allows learners to give appropriate help to each other. English also provides a meditational tool which allows the group members to assist each other in the accomplishment of the task. Therefore, English is an indispensable instrument to enhance collective scaffolding and learning second language.

5.5 English as a resource for developing L2 structure

In the previous sections, I have discussed how students' use of English contributed to second language learning from the view points of problem-solving, exchanging perspectives, distributed cognition and collective scaffolding while students were working collaboratively on the task of developing a script. It was found that English played an important role in language learning in a group work setting and is a valuable resource and tool for mediating second language learning as well as for learning the culture of the TL. Without the aid of English, students would have had difficulty in solving problems because they would not have been able to exchange ideas or opinions on problems. Knowledge distribution would not have been so effective if the use of English had been restricted and collective scaffolding acts might not have been as useful as was found in the present study.

There are, however, issues that should be addressed, especially on students' use of English to develop L2 structures. In the present study, students decided to create a storyline for their drama script in English first and then translate it into Japanese. This caused some problems and the students needed to solve them in order to accomplish the task. In this section, I will discuss the issues that arose when English was used as a base to develop a storyline for the drama and why that caused problems when translating the written English script into Japanese, and consider what roles English played during the process.

Students decided to make an English written script first as was seen in excerpt 1 in section 4.2.1 and section 4.4. It seems that students chose English as a working language to create their script and then change it into Japanese because English was their more proficient language in terms of communication within the group. Hence, English would enable them to exchange ideas freely and explore complex concepts and it would facilitate the construction of situations for their drama script without language constraints. Although students decided to write an English script first, they did not intend to write detailed dialogue in English, but rather they planned to create an outline so that at least they had a base to build on (cf. D: 'Maybe, we just get ideas out'; S: 'And we try to play it out'; D: 'We don't write down word by word. Just an outline'; P; 'I'm not saying we have to translate it exactly. Like we're just writing down what we're gonna say'; H: 'These are just ideas. We don't really have to translate it'). Based on their decision, students used the English language to create a story and dialogue that should later be played out in a Japanese context. Students, however, often introduced Japanese words or phrases, especially new expressions that they were required to integrate into the script, while creating the script. They also developed Japanese sentences concurrently with creating a dialogue in English and compared Japanese and English sentences to judge whether or not they were equivalent. This way of developing L2 structures allowed students to make connections between English and Japanese language concepts. In other words, the English language played the role of mediating the concepts of the two languages in order for students to acquire forms, meanings of words and grammatical structures of Japanese.

This way of learning where students use the concept of first language to acquire second language relates to what Vygotsky (1986) argues in his view on second language acquisition. According to Vygotsky, second language acquisition is equivalent to acquiring scientific concepts which require more conscious and strategic learning as they are abstract. Second language acquisition uses word meanings that are already well developed in one's native language. Knowledge of aspects of one's own language, such as grammar and vocabulary, and other linguistic knowledge also play an important role

in acquiring a foreign language. That is to say, second language acquisition uses the semantics of the native language as its foundation. The argument Vygotsky makes is that the student learning a second language must be aware of the underlying structure of the language. One of the benefits of second language learning is a growth in the awareness of the structures within one's native language. Although English was not a native language for some students in the group, it acted in much the same way as their first language would have in this context as it was their most proficient language for communication in this situation, and this allowed them to analyse the structures of the Japanese language collaboratively.

In respect of using the knowledge of a first language in order to acquire a second language, Brooks et al. (2010) also found in their study of languaging that learners were able to connect scientific and spontaneous concepts in the process of learning a second language. Furthermore, Anton and DiCamilla (1998) argue that use of L1 plays a key role in accessing linguistic forms and has a metalinguistic function when learners have to produce or understand complex linguistic structures. They also found that the L1 is also used in evaluating and understand the meaning of L2 texts. The data in the present study is similar to these findings from previous research. Therefore, it can be said that English is a useful tool for developing the structures of the second language and, consequently for learning a second language. English also enables students to explore more complex L2 structures which promotes language awareness both in their first and second languages. In addition, English enables students to be more creative in terms of making up a story for their drama script which makes the task more enjoyable and promotes their engagement with the task. In the process of creating the story, students suggested different situations and dialogue without linguistic constraints which led to the students being more motivated to work on the task.

The use of English in developing the script did, however, cause difficulties when students came to the stage of translating the script written in English into Japanese. There were three major problems that they faced as I described in section 4.4: (1)

although students understood the original English, the Japanese equivalents were beyond their level of competence; (2) although translated sentences were grammatically correct, they may have been culturally inappropriate; and (3) students had to consider various choices in the Japanese language that would fit the situation as they translated the English written script. The first problem occurred inevitably because their English was more proficient, of course, than their Japanese and students faced a challenging task in analysing their English script and modifying or simplifying it in such a way that they could convey their intended meaning. The second problem was caused because, while the students were creating their English script, they were not only using the English language as a tool for supporting the Japanese language but they were also adopting cultural concepts from the cultures of the English-speaking world. The Japanese sentences they produced could therefore sound strange so that, even if students were able to translate their script into Japanese, the resulting utterances did not always fit well in Japanese contexts. The reason for the third problem was that the ways of speaking found in the English language context do not map well onto the Japanese context. This resulted in students' needing to consider various aspects of the situation culturally and linguistically in order to express what they had planned in English. As a result the translation task the students had set themselves caused some of the problems that they needed to solve in working on the task.

The data illustrate that English played two roles concurrently when students used English as a starting point for developing second language structures. One is that English was a tool for supporting their Japanese language use as well as for thinking and problem-solving in their script developing. When English played this role, it had positive effects on their second language learning. It enhanced students' creation of an interesting story that kept them engaged with the task and facilitated them in accessing the forms and meanings of second language that promote language learning. On the other hand, the second role, in which English was a tool used as an expressive medium in its own right, caused problems for students during the process of translating their script. When students had created the script in English, that script in fact carried messages for

communication originally conceived and communicated in English. It also contained cultural concepts from an English speaking environment. This was often the case where they tried to include humour in their text or where they had designed particular social rituals (e.g. greetings). When English played this role, it was a less useful tool for developing second language structures because students had to reconceptualise their English written text into a Japanese framework and to reformulate basic ideas from the English language text into a Japanese context. The use of English may therefore work negatively to a certain degree in some aspects of developing second language structures because it may encourage negative transfer from the source language. Nevertheless it also generated opportunities for students to interact with each other in order to solve problems. The use of English promoted the exchanging of ideas, scaffolding acts and knowledge distribution that contributed to language learning as I discussed in previous sections.

5.6 Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this study was a comprehensive investigation of the role of English while students were working on a task collaboratively. The overall results have clearly and significantly demonstrated that English was an important resource for language learning. This chapter has presented a discussion based on the results of past studies on learners' interaction and second language learning within the framework of sociocultural theory. Further analysis was conducted to examine relationships between students' use of English and second language learning from the perspective of five constructs: identifying and solving problems, exchanging perspectives on linguistic and cultural issues, effective scaffolding, distributed cognition and developing L2 structures.

In terms of problem solving, while solving a problem, students produced talk in the form of LREs that contributes to building knowledge about the language as well as providing a basis for its application. It was seen that students identified various problems - linguistic,

cultural and procedural - and overcame those problems mostly by themselves. Problem solving inevitably involved exchanging their individual perspectives in order to reach a solution to the problem. Exchanging their views involved languaging which allowed students to construct meaning and knowledge of the TL by externalising their inner thought. The shared knowledge that resulted could then be internalised by individuals and this promoted their conceptual learning. Exchanging perspectives also assisted students in creating cultural resources and expanding their repertoires of practices so that they developed a greater capacity to interact appropriately in the target language context. The concept of eliciting the knowledge that an individual possesses and distributing this knowledge to the members of the group is related to the theory of distributed cognition. Collaborative group work made distributed cognition possible and facilitated students in creating a shared pool of knowledge about the language and culture of the TL. Students used each other as important resources for providing knowledge and information that were fully or partly lacking in order to fill a knowledge gap and in so doing they learned from their peers. Even though there was no apparent expert, such as a teacher, in the group, students were capable of assisting each other by giving scaffolded help. This way of learning was possible because each student had different skills, knowledge and expertise, and through interactions such as those shown in the present study, they were able to fill the knowledge gap and co-construct knowledge. This led them to assisted accomplishment of the task.

In the process of second language learning through collaborative group work, English was found to be an indispensible tool for learning. Firstly, English as their common and most proficient language, allowed students to solve problems, to exchange their perspectives and to give scaffolded help without any linguistic constraints. Thorough discussion in English not only enabled students to achieve a solution to a problem and to attain new knowledge but also led them to realise their lack of knowledge which encouraged them to ask for external assistance. Secondly, English was a resource for languaging that made valuable talk such as LREs possible, and as a result interactions amongst students were more constructive and provided an effective method of learning.

Thirdly, English was an essential tool for accessing individual's knowledge which allowed knowledge to be distributed to others in the group and to create a pool of knowledge, which could be a basis for learning. Lastly, English was a meditational tool for collective scaffolding by facilitating the development of shared understanding and intersubjectivity that allowed students to give appropriate assistance to each other. In other words, English enhanced collective scaffolding and in so doing the learning of a second language.

Another role of English found in this study was that of a starting point for developing second language structures. It worked in both negative and positive ways as I discussed in this chapter, but nevertheless English gave students opportunities to explore their possibilities in order to create their original drama script by adopting new words and expressions of the TL as well as the cultural knowledge that they possessed. The data showed that these opportunities provided students with different perspectives on their language and culture and that they compared emerging knowledge with their existing knowledge which can promote conceptual learning.

This present study has given insights into what took place in the students' L2 learning and how they expanded their existing knowledge about the language and culture of the target language and attained new knowledge. It has also presented how learners maintained group work in order to accomplish the task efficiently and successfully by themselves. The detailed qualitative analysis within the framework of sociocultural theory allowed me to investigate the dialogues that occurred during students' interactions where using English as a tool contributed to their socially constructed learning.

This study has demonstrated that the use of English while students are working on a task collaboratively can be an effective part of learning a second language and culture. It has shown that students were quite capable of maintaining their group work and accomplishing the task themselves. The present study has made a contribution by furthering the understanding of the importance of a vehicular language, in this case English, for students' collaborative group work. It has also given an opportunity to

rethink the way we as language educators perceive the use of vehicular languages in classroom in terms of second language pedagogy.

6 Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

This thesis has investigated the use of English as a *lingua franca* in group work. In language classrooms in Australian universities where there are many international students undertaking an additional language course, language learners can be seen using English as a communication tool amongst learners and with their teacher. Students cannot use their first language to communicate with others in class because their first language varies as they came from different countries. Students use English because their level in the target language is not proficient enough to carry out smooth communication in order to participate in class activities, including clarifying a given task and organising how they work on the task in order accomplish it. It is inevitable that English is the only language in which students are able to share in class and, due to the university entry requirements, international students must have a relatively high proficiency in English. Moreover, since the introduction of the sociocultural approach into language classrooms, more language teachers have introduced learning activities that involve peer or group work in their language class. This change in classroom dynamics, namely from a teacher-centered to a student-centered classroom, has allowed students to have more autonomous learning opportunities. This has resulted in students' requiring effective communication amongst themselves in order to complete an assigned task on their own. A language that makes communication possible is an indispensible tool for learning.

Although English use is common and has been accepted in language classrooms, language teachers in practice, myself included, feel a sense of guilt when they use English. They tend to restrict students' English use because there is a common concept that ideally only the target language should be used in language classes and the use of students' first language or equivalent should be kept to a minimum. However, there is currently little understanding of the roles of English, the benefits or detriment of English in terms of language learning, and there is no detailed investigation of the use of English as a *lingua franca* in group work. The current study is, therefore, important in order to shed light on 'what English does' in the process of student's language learning during collaborative interaction.

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and discussion and outlines the contribution made by the study, followed by its pedagogical implications. Limitations and future directions for the study are discussed. The chapter concludes with an exposition of the author's views on second language teaching and learning pedagogy.

6.1 Summary of findings

The present study demonstrates the various roles that English plays as a medium of communication amongst learners while they were working on a task collaboratively. The results of the present study show that English plays an important role in language learning. Firstly, the detailed analysis of the data has revealed that English facilitates group work by assisting learners to understand the task itself and to organise themselves to tackle the task. The common language in which they were most proficient, English, was a resource to develop shared understanding of the nature of the task which led learners to accomplish the task and as a result to achieve the expected learning objectives. In other words, learners' use of English contributed to their learning. Moreover, in order to complete the task, English provided a tool for making a plan for how learners would work on the task and to also enabled them to access shared recollections of prior work,

with which reminded them of decisions made on the script in previous meetings, during group work. Learners used the learning tool, English, to work on the task effectively and efficiently as well as to complete the task successfully. From these perspectives, English was not only a useful tool for facilitating group work but also an important tool for structuring their learning.

English was also used as a valuable tool when learners faced problems with linguistic aspects of the TL. Reflecting the findings of the study by Antón and DiCamilla (1998) about L1 use during collaborative interaction by adult learners of Spanish, the current study found that learners' common language, English, also played the same roles as L1. That is, English assisted learners in accessing forms of the TL and evaluating and understanding the meaning of a text in the TL. When learners evaluated the meaning or the structure of a text, English had a metalinguistic function that enabled learners to adopt analytic perspectives on the text and also to make connections between English and Japanese. Making connections between one's native language, or in this case a language in which one has adequate competency, and the TL is one of the mechanisms in acquiring a second language, according to Vygotsky. Vygotsky (1986) has identified the mechanism involved in second language acquisition as being equivalent to the acquisition of scientific concepts. That is, acquiring a second language uses word meanings that are already well developed in one's native language and the semantics of the native language as its foundation. In this sense, a language in which learners have an adequate proficiency for making connections with the TL, in terms of word meanings and semantics, plays an important role in learning a second language.

In terms of learning the target language culture, English facilitated exchanging the cultural knowledge that each learner possessed and so allowed them to fill the knowledge gaps that existed amongst them. It also allowed learners to formulate culture-external perspectives on Japanese behaviours and these perspectives assisted learners to solve problems relating to the cultural appropriateness of their language use. In other words, while discussing culture related issues, learners were able to decenter themselves from

their own cultural views through their talk in English and to perceive their culture from different perspectives. The process of 'decentering' has been shown to be important in language and culture learning (Byram, 1989; Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat, 2011). Through the process of exchanging and sharing each individual's knowledge or information about culture, learners were able to socially construct their knowledge of the target language culture as well as to develop different perspectives on their own culture. Learning about the culture of the target language as well as being aware of learners' existing cultural knowledge is important for learning the language itself. According to Scarino and Liddicoat (2009), language learning is a social practice that involves creating and interpreting meanings within a cultural framework and both the cultures affect meaning making processes. In this view, culture and language have an indispensable relationship. The study found that English assisted in creating this relationship and, as a result, learners were able to learn the language for communication rather merely focusing on attaining linguistics knowledge such as vocabulary and grammar.

English can act as a starting point for developing ideas about how to use the target language to achieve a particular task. In the present study, learners had decided to use English first to create their drama script. This decision gave the researcher an opportunity to investigate how English is deployed as a starting point for developing L2 structures. The data showed that English provided a useful tool for developing ideas in order to make a drama script more creative and interesting. It also helped learners to evaluate whether or not the lines of dialogue that they created were able to convey the intended meanings. Without the use of a language in which they had adequate competency to formulate their ideas, learners would have been restricted to using familiar phrases that would not challenge their intellectual capacity. In other words, English provided opportunities to develop cognitively more complex communicative situations and so pushed the language demands of their work. On the other hand, the use of English did create problems when English was used as an expressive medium in its own right. In this situation, it appeared to be problematic because students were not able to do a straight-forward translation from their English written script into Japanese.

However the need to translate often prompted students to think further about their language use or aspects of the target language culture in the sentence they were attempting to translate. During such processes, students were participating in a meaning-making process which contributed to effective language learning (Scarino & Liddicoat, 2009).

Further discussion on the roles of English also showed that English is an indispensible resource in language learning. Firstly, English aids learners to solve various problems that occur during collaborative group work. Problem-solving is an important element for learners' linguistic and cultural development within the ZPD. Through problem-solving learners are able to build knowledge as well as retain it. English therefore indirectly contributes to learning of an additional language. In relation to problem-solving, English aids learners to exchange perspectives on linguistic and cultural issues in the process of resolving the problems they faced. Exchanging perspectives on linguistic issues promotes constructing meaning and knowledge of the TL and this newly attained knowledge can eventually be internalised by individuals. The exchange of perspectives also gives opportunities for learners' inner thoughts to be made external and as a result learners are able to experience deeper conceptual learning. When learners exchange their cultural perspectives, a new cultural resource is created and that resource can help them to interact with people in the TL appropriately. The resource created contributes to expanding learners' repertoire of practices that mediate learners' cultural awareness of their own and the target languages and cultures. English makes it possible to bring these positive benefits to learners through exchanging perspectives.

In both problem-solving and exchanging perspectives, learners were seen to use each other as an information source. In other words, each individual in the group is an important source of knowledge or information and problem-solving and exchanging perspectives allow their inner knowledge to be elicited and distributed to the group. As a consequence, learners are able to create a pool of knowledge that can be a basis for their own learning or that of others. According to the distributed cognition approach,

cognitive processes may be distributed across the members of a social group and an individual's learning is shaped while participating in a collaborative work (Rogers and Ellis, 1994). English is an important tool as it allows learners to access each other's inner knowledge or information so that it can be distributed in the group.

English also played an important role when students provided scaffolded help to each other during their group work. Previous studies have shown that collective scaffolding works in a similar way to novice-expert scaffolding (e.g. Donato, 1994). In the present study, learners had different knowledge and expertise and proficiency levels in the TL. During collaborative interaction in English, learners were able to fill in knowledge gaps and this led them to create a knowledge pool. The use of English also enabled learners to develop a shared understanding, or intersubjectivity, in a group setting and this is considered crucial for the quality of learning in interaction (Mulder & Swaak, 2002). English therefore is an important instrument for enhancing collective scaffolding and so contributes to language learning.

As discussed earlier, when English is used as a resource for developing L2 structure, it plays both positive and negative roles. However, in general, the use of English provides learners opportunities to think about language, both English and the TL, including its syntax and lexis. It also prompts learners to view their own culture from different perspectives. Attention needs to be given to the use of English because, although it is beneficial to learning, in some contexts it can also create problems for students. When learners use English to develop ideas which must later to be translated into the target language, they are not just using English as a tool for supporting their target language use, at the same time they are in fact creating a message for communication which has been conceived and communicated in English. This is not simply a matter of their language competency but also involves cultural influence on the language and its use. Where this happens, the use of English creates problems and teachers should assist the learners appropriately if they cannot solve problems on their own.

The findings from the present study largely overlap the roles of L1 found in the study on learners' interaction and SLA. In other words, it can be said that English as a *lingua franca* can play the same or similar roles as L1 during learners' collaborative interaction. This is significant as there is no research conducted that has yet investigated what roles English as a means of *lingua franca* communication plays in language learning classes. According to Wertsch (1985), language acquisition is the internalisation of the language through social interaction from the interpsychlogical plane to the intrapsychlogical plane. In this process, English plays an important role for knowledge/information transfer between learners. The present study therefore contributes to produce different perspectives on the role of English and that may lead educators to adopt a different teaching method in their classroom.

From a methodological point of view, the use of learners' dialogue as a unit of analysis and microanalysis of the data have unveiled the learners' learning processes during interaction. In Vygotsky's words, this type of analysis has made it possible to witness a 'psychological processes undergoing changes right before ones' eyes' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 61). It has also shown the importance of analyzing all the talk produced by learners, both in English and the TL, in order to understand learning processes in detail.

6.2 Implications of the research for language learning

The findings have practical implication for how learners' shared language, English in the present study, should be perceived and treated in multilingual classrooms. It is often the case in countries like Australia where there are many international students from different countries studying at tertiary institutions that learners do not share the same L1 in classroom. Since the sociocultural approach has come to influence the area of SLA, more language teachers have introduced learning activities that involve peer or group work in their language class. Under these circumstances, it is natural that learners use English as a means of communication while working on a task with their peers.

Despite the fact that the need to use English is apparent in the classroom, there is still a common idea that learners should communicate only in the TL in language class in order to acquire the language effectively (e.g. Crawford, 2004; Dickson, 1996; Madylus, 2001) and this idea has restricted language teachers' and learners' language choices. Both teachers and learners have been discouraged from using the learners' L1 or a shared language that may aid learners in any way. The findings from the present study demonstrate that English mediates learning and this means that preventing learners from using English may hinder learning. The finding that English does assist language learning can give language teachers different perspectives on learners' English use when they assist learners during peer interaction. It may also encourage teachers to develop activities that promote useful talk for learning amongst learners. Most of all, learners do not have to feel guilty when they use English to discuss the task or the issues they come across during collaborative interaction.

6.3 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research

The present study marks the first attempt to conduct a detailed empirical investigation on the roles of English as a medium of communication during learners' collaborative interaction. The present study was exploratory in nature and it is acknowledged that there is a need for a far greater scale of study to occur in this area before any real generalisations can be drawn regarding the learners' use of English during collaborative interaction in language learning class. Although the study found that English is a useful tool for language learning and has been able to demonstrate short term learning during the execution of a task, it has not traced how that learning is developed or consolidated over time. This study analysed a single group working on a long-term task as a case study of how language is used amongst learners. The transcribed data from the group enabled the researcher to make a detailed analysis of interactions in the group. There is a need to study a larger number of groups working on different types of tasks to reconfirm

whether or not students' use of a shared language varies in different groups and settings and to analyse their language use further. There is also a need to study different levels of learners in order to conduct thorough investigation of their language use and the influence of proficiency on the ways languages are and can be used. The participants in this study were at an third year level of Japanese at a tertiary institute but there needs to be a study of elementary to intermediate level students at various institutes including primary to high schools to attain more nuanced ideas of the roles of English during collaborative interaction.

Language learning in a social context and acknowledgement of English as a *lingua franca* is an area that should be further developed and researched. The results should be disseminated into the general teaching context, so that teachers and learners may seek the benefits of a medium language during collaborative interaction. Teachers may adopt new learning activities to best effect in the teaching of a second language.

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