

Characteristics of Modifications for Interaction

Summary B

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What follows is a list of items that outline the characteristics of the speech used when native and non-native speakers of a language converse. Please consider what issues this raises for classroom interaction designed to help students learn content and language. Then given these expected characteristics of interaction, what would be optimal conditions for interaction for second language learners in the classroom?

Content:

Here is a list of what happens to content in initial interaction between native and non-native speakers of a language. This is most true when your knowledge of second language is limited.

- Use a more predictable and narrower range of
- Focus more on the here and
- Provide briefer treatment of topics with fewer information bits per topic and a lower ratio of topic-initiating to topic-continuing moves.

Interactional Structure:

These are the characteristics of the structure of a conversation between native and nonnative speakers.

- Abrupt topic shifts occur more
- Both speakers are more willing to allow fellow conversationalists to choose the
- They more easily accept unintentional topic-switches.
- Nonnative speakers are more likely to use questions to initiate
- The conversation contains more repetition from both speakers, and repeats will be exact and
- To ensure understanding, both participants check for understanding more frequently using
 - more comprehension checks
 - more confirmation checks
 - more clarification requests
- The conversation contains more
- There are more question-answer strings
- There is more decomposition—where the speakers break ideas into parts, get understanding, and then build back to more complex ideas.

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A St. George native, Dr. Pinnegar graduated from Dixie College (now DSU) and Southern Utah State (now SUU). She taught on the Navajo Reservation then completed an M.A. in English at BYU. She taught for 5 years in Crawfordsville, Indiana. She then completed a PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of Arizona (1989). She was faculty at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, before coming to BYU. She helped develop and now directs the TELL program. She is Acting Dean of Invisible College for Research on Teaching, a research organization that meets yearly in conjunction with AERA. She is a specialty editor of *Frontiers in Education's* Teacher Education strand with Ramona Cutri. She is editor of the series *Advancements in Research on Teaching* published by Emerald Insight. She has received the Benjamin Cluff Jr. award for research and the Sponsored Research Award from ORCA at BYU. She is a founder of the Self-Study of Teacher Education Practices research methodology. She has published in the *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Ed Researcher*, *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* and has contributed to the handbook of narrative inquiry, two international handbooks of teacher education and two Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices handbooks. She reviews for numerous journals and presents regularly at the American Educational Research Association, ISATT, and the Castle Conference sponsored by S-STTEP.



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