

ESL Adult Learners' Legitimate Peripheral Participation in Whole Class Discussions *

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This article explores how ESL adult learners participate in a community of practice at the periphery through whole class discussions. Eight ESL learners engaged in whole class discussions about short stories read, each learner undertaking a different role, for example, discussion leader and contextualizer. Analyses of naturally occurring classroom discourse data reveal that the students were interactive with a high level of achievement in the different processes of analyzing text. From the perspective of community practice theory, the students as apprentices learned to think and act by participating in classroom discussion practices. They showed awareness of the role of discussion leader while making various performances, such as initiating discussion, encouraging participation, and making comments on responses. During discussions, the students created their own meanings based on multiple available resources and articulated them. The students also collaboratively made inferences or interpretations of the text while scaffolding the process.

[community of practice/ apprenticeship /whole class discussion/
classroom discourse analysis/실행공동체/도제/전체토론/교실담화분석]

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, many second language acquisition (SLA) studies have investigated the learning and teaching of second language (L2) from a psycholinguistic perspective. In this view, language was considered a set of language rules and focus was on how an individual learner cognitively processes the linguistic rules and eventually internalizes them. Given this trend, Davis (1995) highlighted a need for socially situated SLA studies which

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approach SLA as social, cultural, political, and institutional activities embedded in a specific context. In response to Davis' call, more recently, an increasing number of research studies have reconceptualized L2 learning process using a broader, sociocultural perspective of language and learning. This sociocultural perspective interprets language acquisition in relation to the features of sociocultural contexts in which it occurs. The present study builds on this line of research framework. In particular, this research resonates closely with studies based on situated cognition and the benefits of apprenticeship in learning (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997; Lave & Wenger, 1991). They will form a major element of the theoretical background of this paper. The perspective on apprenticeship holds that its

forms of learning are likely to be generated in practice, in situations whose specific characteristics are part of practice as it unfolds.... Apprentices learn to think, argue, act, and interact in increasingly knowledgeable ways, with people who do something well, by doing it with them as legitimate, peripheral participants. (Kirshner & Whitson, 1997, p.19)

In the ESL class where this study was conducted, the students read short stories and were then involved in student led whole class discussions (SLWCDs). SLWCDs demand that the learners confront texts, make their own interpretations of the text, and discuss them with other classmates. As will be seen, this task is challenging, forcing the students to puzzle over the language, but more importantly over the pragmatic effects of that language. Indeed, the importance of textual pragmatics is foregrounded, as students are often struggling with the meaning of apparently simple sentences in terms of grammar, once they are embedded in a particular cultural context. The students were encouraged to see that by reading and understanding classic American short stories they could increase not only their language proficiency but also awareness of American culture. They were also encouraged to see that they could make significant strides toward a valid interpretation of literary texts.

Through close analysis of episodes of classroom discourse, this study attempts to reveal how student interaction unfolds in the SLWCDs. A particular focus will be on how the students exhibit some of the elements of both the apprenticeship and flow experience. The present study is guided by the following research question: how do the ESL adult learners participate in whole class discussions as apprentices of an academic community of practice?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Legitimate Peripheral Participation in a Community of Practice

A community of practice refers to a group of people who share certain beliefs, interests and practices (Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991). A community of practice is characterized by three main features: joint enterprise, mutual engagement, and shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). Members of a community of practice jointly engage in common activities; they develop and use shared stories, experiences, and ways of understanding through interaction with each other; in the process, practices that reflect the distinctive ways of the community evolve over time.

Lave and Wenger (1991) explain *learning* in terms of increasing participation in a community of practice. Unlike conventional explanations of learning that relates learning primarily to the mind of a learner, Lave and Wenger view learning as situated in social context. They interpret learning as “an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice” (p. 31). This view focuses on how learning occurs through participation in community practices. In relation to this, Lave and Wenger set forth a significant notion - legitimate peripheral participation. This notion accounts for how a newcomer or an apprentice becomes an active, experienced member in a community of practice. After joining a community, newcomers learn the community practices in the peripheral position by doing simple, easy tasks only and then, with more and more learning of community practices, they gradually become more involved in the main processes of the community. It is similar to apprenticeship in which learners as apprentices acquire expertise by explicitly and implicitly interacting with experienced others. In the process, newcomers or apprentices gradually move from the peripheral position to the core of the community.

More recently, several studies have been conducted to examine social interaction from the perspective of legitimate peripheral participation. Hellermann and Cole (2008) analyzed the peer interactions of one adult learner of English in terms of the learner’s increasing participation in classroom communities. Through the analysis of classroom discourse data, Hellermann and Cole illustrated how the learner was led to more full participation in the language practices of the classroom community of practice. Young and Miller (2004) investigated how an apprentice—an adult Vietnamese learner of English—gradually learned to participate in one unfamiliar discursive practice (i.e., revision talk in writing conferences). The study demonstrated the processes in which the student moved from peripheral to fuller participation in the practice. Young and Miller highlighted language learning as co-constructed development in socially situated practices. Earlier, Belcher (1994) conducted case studies involving three nonnative speaker graduate students writing dissertations and their advisors. Using the apprenticeship approach to advanced academic literacy, she explained how the interaction between the students (newcomers/apprentices) and their advisors (old-timers/experts) affects the dissertation writers’ participation in the academic research communities.

2. Interaction

The role of interaction in SLA has been the topic of much research. Studies of interaction, to date, have examined interaction largely from two different perspectives – psycholinguistic perspective and sociocultural perspective. The psycholinguistic framework of interaction examined interaction in view of input stemming from interaction (Long & Porter, 1985; Pica, 1994; Varonis & Gass, 1985) and the opportunities offered for negotiation and both self- and other-correction (Deen, 1991; Duran & Szymanski, 1995; Gumperz & Field, 1995). According to this framework, the value of interaction lies in its provision of comprehensible input through meaning negotiations to L2 learners who depend on internal linguistic processing mechanisms for language development.

More recently, interaction has been increasingly examined from a slightly different perspective surrounding sociocultural theory. The framework of sociocultural theory sees learning as a complex social phenomenon, which view is reverberated in the Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice model explained above. Vygotsky (1978) maintained that higher cognitive processes emerge during social interaction between the individuals before they are transferred within the individual. Following Vygotsky, SLA researchers in the realm of sociocultural theory claim that the traditional psycholinguistic approaches to interaction cannot answer the question of how negotiation arising from interaction impacts L2 development as it does not properly attend to the evolving and dynamic features of social interaction. Ohta (1995) provides the following critique of the previous work on interaction: "... because language and interaction are not viewed as revealing learner cognitive processes, this work does not investigate learner language for evidence of how L2 development proceeds through and is constituted by meaning-making activity" (p. 95). Sociocultural perspective focuses on the inseparable, dynamic relationships between interaction and language development. In this view, social interaction is an arena where individuals provide each other with support and guidance, jointly shaping language learning opportunities. This framework perceives language learning as proceeding through concrete social interactions in which learners use L2. Several studies (e.g., Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) reported that L2 learners co-constructed accurate target language structures and successfully learned and used the structures during interaction. In Ohta's (1995) words, "L2 acquisition takes place as the gap between what the learner can do alone and with assistance is filled with collaboration" (p. 97).

In line with this view, Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976) proposed the notion of scaffolding, which refers to the expert's (e.g., teacher or another learner) assistance to the learner offered during the interaction. Scaffolding assists the learner to achieve a task which the learner would not be able to complete without assistance. Scaffolding is

characterized by six functions:

1. Recruitment: enlisting the learner's interest in the task
2. Reduction in degrees of freedom: simplifying the task
3. Direction maintenance: keeping the learner motivated and in pursuit of the goal
4. Marking critical features: highlighting certain relevant features and pointing out discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution
5. Frustration control: reducing stress and frustration during problem solving
6. Demonstration: modeling an idealized form of the act to be performed by completing the act or by explicating the learner's partial solution (Wood et al., 1976, p. 98)

3. Classroom Discourse

Most discussions of classroom discourse have focused on some version of the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE)/ Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) production format, in which a central authority initiates a speech act, to which a learner responds, whereupon the authority evaluates or gives feedback to the act. This interaction pattern is reported to occur frequently in classrooms (Ernst, 1994; Johnson, 1995). Certain researchers have suggested that a movement beyond the IRE/IRF format is crucial to engendering more and higher quality discourse.

Questioning strategies, particularly the use of more open questions rather than close questions (Barnes, 1969) and more referential rather than display questions (Long & Sato 1984) have been seen as ways of opening the classroom to more interaction and higher quality interaction. Indeed, although Ellis (1994) cites significant research showing that "display/closed questions are more common than referential/open questions in the L2 classroom" (p. 589). He also cites several studies which have shown that "when learners are given the opportunity to ask questions, they automatically elect to use open, referential-type questions" (p. 591).

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Context

This study was conducted in an elective course of the Intensive English Program (IEP) at a large mid-western university in America. The IEP program designed for English-as-a-

second-or-foreign-language (ESL/EFL) students goes around a series of seven-week sessions from level one to level seven.

The students in the class were required to read classic American short stories assigned and had discussions about the stories. The teacher regularly used the student led whole class discussion (SLWCD) activity. For the SLWCD activity, he trained the students on some simple elements of literary criticism of short stories. He broke the elements of this criticism into roles he designed, including a “dungeon master” (leader responsible for conducting the discussion in a lively and cogent manner), a “personnel director” (in charge of exploring the conflicts), a “geographer” (concerned with the physical setting(s) of the story), a “contextualizer” (responsible for describing the background of the story, for example, any historically or socially important events at this moment), a “poet” (responsible for describing ways the author uses language and symbols) and others (For a complete list of roles and some hints on their use, see Appendix A). Students chose or were assigned their roles with a different student undertaking a different role for each story. Every student was required to take a leader role in turn. The students did not adhere exactly to the roles they chose, or they did not understand well what the roles were designed to achieve, yet over a number of sessions, the roles gave them an added purchase on the material.

Among the objectives in this class was the goal of sponsoring a sense of responsibility for generating knowledge without help from a teacher or other authority, focusing instead on the text itself as an ultimate authority, which is expected of members in an academic community of practice. Thus, the teacher organized the course in such a way that after presenting two short stories and his own understanding of how the analytical roles enhance the interpretation of the stories, he had the students start SLWCDs assuming their roles. In a sense, the teacher modeled the roles and discussions, which may facilitate the students' participation in community practices. During the SLWCDs, the teacher observed the discussions, taking notes, but refusing to enter the discussion. For each story, the students had SLWCDs for approximately two class periods. This varied according to stories, however, as discussion of some stories flagged during the second day, while others went into a third day. As a general rule, the discussions centered around reporting on their assigned roles during most of the first day. This allowed students to generate questions among themselves which they would try to resolve on the second day after reviewing the story with those questions in mind. After this, the teacher entered the discussion to help summarize and clarify what they had found.

Certain aspects of the SLWCD have tended to be consistent across the observations. Possibly one of the most clearly visible ones was the formality that tended to obtain in the early stages of discussion with assigned roles. Students initially respond to the task as simply a series of reports, with each student reporting on the role assigned, and with very

little interaction emerging from this procedure. However, this formality and the performative frame that sustains it, rarely persist throughout the discussion and a following negotiation of meaning.

2. Participants

The students in the elective course under study were at the highest levels (6 & 7) of the IEP program. There were eight students aged between 22 and 28, six of whom were preparing for graduate studies at American universities and two of whom were taking the course primarily for improving English skills. Four students were from Korea, one from Japan, one from Venezuela, one from Saudi Arabia, and one from Thailand. Four were male students and four were female. The students met for the course one hour per day. In this research, students are treated not as language students with a problematic degree of language proficiency, but as apprentices who have had significant experience in the language classroom and are learning to think and act in an academic community of practice.

3. Data Collection

The data collected for this study include audio- and video-taping of four one-hour SLWCDs, field notes from classroom observation, and transcribed classroom discourse. I observed the class four times without participation in the class activities. During the observations, I audio- and video-recorded the SLWCDs. A total of four hours of recording was made. The audiotapes were later transcribed using fairly narrow indicator of the process of and success in negotiating complex inferential chains. Transcripts of two one-hour lesson constitute the primary body of data analyzed for this study. I also wrote observation notes during the classroom observation. The observation notes contained information on the participants, their roles of the observation day, content of the short stories, and specific features of the verbal interactions that captured my attention. I used the field notes to develop an understanding of what happened during the activity and to crosscheck the audio- and video-taped verbal interactions.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in three phases. In the first phrase, I watched the videotapes to develop an initial idea of the patterns of legitimate peripheral participation. While watching, I wrote down commentary notes on what I perceived as significant. In the second phase, I transcribed the audiotapes fairly narrowly using typical Conversation Analysis (CA) transcription conventions (See Appendix B). For the accuracy of their

transcription, I frequently referred to the commentary notes, field notes, and the videotapes. Recent research on interaction has shown the value of looking closely at the interactions taking place, using techniques from Conversational Analysis (CA) to explore how participants employ mutual scaffolding in terms of inferences about both text and context in the classroom (e.g., Fox, 2006; He, 2004; Hellermann, 2008; Hellermann & Cole, 2008; Scollon, 2001). In this paper, CA will provide the means for understanding how learners participate in social practice through the language they are learning particularly surrounding apprenticeship and co-construction of meaning.¹ In the final stage, I analyzed the transcripts for recurrent themes regarding the forms of legitimate peripheral participation in the community of practice. I finally identified in the transcripts parts most representative of each recurrent theme.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study identified the following recurrent patterns of legitimate peripheral participation in the academic community of practice: showing an awareness of the role as the discussion leader, collaborative inferential scaffolding, and making individual interpretations.

1. Showing Awareness of the Role as the Discussion Leader

Traditionally, leading a discussion is one of the usual practices in academic communities of practice where discussions occur a lot. In the class under study, the students nominated as discussion leaders were expected to lead the SLWCDs smoothly, performing various tasks, such as initiating discussion, asking questions that would elicit active response, encouraging participation, and making comments on classmates' responses. They may have been new to this practice; however, by observing the teacher and classmates leading discussions and by actually participating in the practice, they gradually learned how to engage in the practice.

The following fairly long sequence led by a Korean student, Mikyoung, will reveal some

¹ Principles of CA relevant to this study state that verbal contributions to interaction can be adequately understood only by reference to the sequential environment in which they occur and that no sequence of detail can be dismissed as disorderly or accidental (Ustunel & Seedhouse, 2005). It is expected that CA grounded in these principles will reveal the process of co-construction of talk-in-interaction as it unfolds in real time.

of the dynamics of the group interaction in its early stages and her role as the discussion leader. The story in question is Raymond Carver's "Neighbors", in which one couple (the Stones) keeps another couple's (the Miller's) house while the Millers are away on vacation, leading to a vicarious experience of otherness.

Excerpt 1

1. Mikyoung : there are Millers (.) uh Bill and Arlene and there is
2. another couple whose name is ((slight questioning tone))(.)
3. Harriet and Jim (2) Stone Uh-huh
4. ((someone laughs))
5. and what else did you get from this (.) two paragraphs
6. I think that there is pretty much information (4)
7. Hideki: (syl syl) they are neighbors
8. Mikyoung: they are neighbors, yeah. That's pretty important
9. Students (Ss): ((laugh))
10. Mikyoung: and Bill and Arlene are are are they satisfied with their lives?
11. Achara: no I don't think so
12. Mikyoung: I think they they (.) leader's role, its not leader's(.) well no
13. what (..) are they satisfied with their lives especially in
14. comparison with their neighbors (2) what do you think?
15. Hideki: No::: (1.5)
16. Mikyoung: No? what what uh uh (.) specifically how unsatisfied? (7)
17. well(...) but they think <you know> they that their neighbors
18. are having better life fuller life brighter whatever and how about
19. their jobs? (1.5) neighbors? (4) Harriet? (5) no-
20. there's no clue about that it was (.) mean it was about Bill?
21. but he's a salesman what blah blah blah ver- it's very (syl syl)
22. (2.5) so uh finally what happens? what is gonna happen?
23. something is gonna happen right. Hassan, can you tell what's
24. gonna happen? with the story?
25. Ss: ((laugh nervously))
26. Hassan: Actually I didn't read that (.) I have no idea.
27. Mikyoung: Well, you know, well its really ↑ easy

Mikyoung begins in lines 1-6 with general summary information. She pre-evaluates her question "what else did you get from this two paragraphs?" by saying "I think that there is pretty much information." This seems to echo the teacher's stipulation that the first few paragraphs of any good short story are packed with scene-setting information. The response by Hideki, "They are neighbors", is the most obvious information. The students' laughter at this response seems to indicate that they realize that Mikyoung was fishing for

more esoteric information, as indicated by her pre-evaluation. In typical IRE format, she follows up with a strongly encouraging evaluator.

Mikyoung's next question in line 10, however, shows the intense awareness of her role in a communicative classroom, into which she has been socialized. She asks a question to which Achara responds, but she wants at first to reject but then she realizes that her role is not that of authoritative leader but rather of facilitator. So in line 12 she begins to "correct" the student or at least to bring her around to a different opinion, but then stops, verbalizing her understanding of her role as leader, "well, no, it's not(.) not the leader's role." And she sets about to rephrase her question.

In the exchanges that follow, the students are reluctant to say anything. Long pauses punctuate her attempts to lead the class to see Bill and Arlene as dissatisfied. Despite the fact that what she wants them to say is fairly clear, no one will take her up. In her frustration, she nominates a particular student, Hassan, but he admits that he hasn't read the story. At this point, Mikyounge becomes more frustrated, as is evident from the extreme pitch rise in her negative evaluation in line 27, "Well, you know it's really ↑easy."

This interaction is fairly early in the day's discussion, only about 5 minutes into the class, and the class has not yet warmed up. Throughout this sequence of exchanges, there is evidence not only in the silence, but in the quality of the laughter, that the students recognize Mikyounge's investment in her role of "teacher/leader" but feel nervous about their own responses. Reviewing the timing of the laughter makes this clear. The laughter in line 9 follows her evaluation, reflecting the students' awareness of Mikyounge's use of IRE format, with which they are familiar. The laughter in line 25, which clearly has a tentative or nervous quality to it, seems to be either relief that someone else was called on, or an awareness that Hassan is not paying attention. Whatever the reason, it is clear that the laughter is aimed at Mikyounge's performance rather than at any humor in the content of the exchanges themselves. Laughter often occurs in ways that seem to indicate that it is a form of subtle self-applause, a reaction to appropriate performance. However, it is also clear that her style of questioning, while showing awareness of the demands of her role, nevertheless has created a mood of negative affect among the students, who are unwilling to volunteer as she attempts to elicit a turn from anyone in the class.

As presented, Excerpt 1 shows a variety of aspects of Mikyounge's awareness of her role as the discussion leader in a communicative classroom. She varies presentation of background material with questioning to elicit the meaning of the material. She uses mainly open-ended questions at this point. On the other hand, discussion leaders sometimes experience difficulties in performing the task. Sometimes, no one in the class has the requisite knowledge or skill to broach a difficult impasse. In Excerpt 2 below, Miguel opens the class by calling up the group to solve two problems: one, the meaning of the cake baking, and the other, the problem of the *stranger* in the short story read.

Excerpt 2-1

1. Miguel: haeh, haeh, heah (..) yesterday we yesterday we talked about his
2. story and I think uh today we have to uh know (.) the the who
3. is the stranger and (.) what's the meaning of the cake (for husband)
4. yeah. excuse me, Ji Yeon, could you tell me who is the stranger
5. the meaning of the stranger (1)
6. Ji Yeon: I don't know any(about) about stranger
7. Miguel: excuse me (12) ((desks shuffling, maybe student entering the class))
8. maybe if you don't know, if you have any if you have no idea you
9. can (you can point someone)
10. Ji Yeon: ((quiet exhalation/laugh) So stressful!
11. Miguel: >no no no no no<

This, again, is the beginning of a class, and the leader, Miguel's first move, a bald and extravagantly open question in lines 4 and 5, "Could you tell me who is stranger, the meaning of stranger?" meets with resistance from the student he nominates, Ji Yeon. Miguel invites her, if she cannot respond, to nominate the next turn-taker. Ji Yeon responds with what sounds like a low, soft laugh, then expresses here frustration, "so stressful!" in line 10. Both the leader and the students are struggling at how to proceed, which is common in the opening minutes of any class. Miguel's rapid "no, no, no, no, no" in line 11 is meant to comfort and encourage Ji Yeon.

Miguel as the leader initiates the discussion by raising questions intended to solicit student responses. What is clear, however, is the initial lack of any attempt to scaffold. The leader goes for a question which is quite difficult, and in fact has no "correct" answer. The students respond by rejecting such an open-ended question.

As mentioned earlier, the structure of this course generated opportunities for the students to make legitimate peripheral participation in an academic community of practice. Before and after SLWCDs, the students observed the teacher lead the discussion, interacting with students. Multiple observations of the teacher's practice may have allowed them to notice the features and requirements of the practice. Then while working as discussion leaders, the students also engaged in the community practice. As shown in the excerpts above, though their performances as leaders were sometimes unsuccessful, the students underwent participation in the community of practice with varying effectiveness.

2. Making Individual Interpretations

The students as apprentices participated in the community of practice as they made and expressed their own interpretations of the text in SLWCDs. They made the interpretations

based on their previous experiences and knowledge of the world. Sometimes, the interpretations were unique and stimulating.

In the following two excerpts, the students had the long discussion of one sentence in the story, "The Wrysons." In the story, the middle class couple, the Wrysons, are mainly interested in maintaining their middle-class suburban lifestyle in the face of assaults from what they see as a sort of barbarian groups outside. The sentence in question which elicits student responses is about the Wryson's discomfort toward such assaults: *They seemed to sense that there was a stranger at the gate – un washed, tirelessly scheming, foreign, the father of disorderly children who would ruin their rose garden and depreciate their real-estate investment, a man with a beard, a garlic breath and a book.* (Cheever, 1978, p. 378) (For the full paragraph where the sentence occurs, see Appendix C).

Excerpt 2-2 occurs right after Excerpt 2-1 in which Miguel does not make a good performance as the leader when Ji Yeon shows an explicit resistance to his too difficult an open-ended question. In Excerpt 2-2, however, another student, Sunho, takes up the challenge.

Excerpt 2-2

1. Sunho: I think this stranger is not a (for Christ) people because
2. some explanation that descry describes about uh strange
3. washes tirelessly
4. Miguel: yeah
5. Sunho: I think it's a kind of middle class or low class (3)
6. they no include in join this place, but (3) actually its not,
7. kind of looks like the Wrysons, I think
8. Miguel: a stranger means the Wrysons
9. Sunho: or a middle class, not a high class not high class people
10. Miguel: ye-ahh::
11. Sunho: but (.) (laugh)
12. Miguel: ahh:::
13. Sunho: because it's a stranger at the gate
14. Miguel: yea::s::::
15. Sunho: just and
16. Miguel: some kind of border.
17. Sunho: yes,
18. Miguel: and high class and low low calss. their border is the stranger
19. Sunho: yes yes (2) What do you think about about (2) ((laughs))
20. He said the stranger is border, high class and low class border (2)

In this excerpt, Sunho suggests that the stranger at the gate in the story represents something outside the society of the setting and characters of the story, and that this is somehow class-based. In line 16, Sunho simply suggests that the stranger represents some

kind of infringement of class strictures, “I think it’s a kind of middle class or low class (3) they no include in join this place.” But he is unsure if the Wrysons are not included in this infringement, as he adds that they seem to resemble the stranger by saying, “kind of looks like the Wrysons, I think,” in line 18. Actually, Sunho may have captured the subtle irony of the story here, which is that the Wrysons are more philistine in their stubborn closed-mindedness than any of the encroaching minorities could be. However, neither he nor the other classmates can sustain this interpretation.

Sunho has associated the middle and low class. Class distinctions seem to pose a problem here. The students seem to see the Wrysons as wishing to think of themselves as “high” class, and furthermore that they see the middle and lower classes as equally threatening to such a position. Thus, after Miguel suggests that the stranger means the Wryson, Sunho repeats his view that the stranger is “or a middle class, not a high class” in line 20. Miguel recasts the stranger’s role low, making the clear distinction between high on the one hand and low on the other, completely eliding the middle. In fact, it is exactly the ability to shift classes and to move up within the middle/higher class which is at the heart of most Cheever stories. However, Miguel restates Sunho’s view as seeing the stranger as the “border” between the high class and the low class in line 29. Sunho does not dispute Miguel’s revision of his view. So, in this instance, the leader, Miguel, actually leads the group away from a more subtle and interesting interpretation toward a more simplistic, but less accurate one.

At this point, Miguel solicits other members of the class to add to this interpretation. Mikyoung begins hesitantly.

Excerpt 2-3

21. Miguel: okay okay. other ideas?
22. Mikyoung: I (2) I have no clue (but/about) who this guy is
23. eh:: I think this description’s pretty specific and I (.) you know
24. because foreign he’s foreign, but foreign means like (.)
25. strange? or
26. Miguel: foreign means the other country
27. ((laughs, along with several other students))
28. Mikyoung: well, sometimes, but you know (.) but like, yeah I know
29. that it’s from (.) another country, but sometimes it could be like (.)
30. something you
31. Miguel: oh yeah
32. Mikyoung: like
33. Miguel: umm
34. Mikyoung: I think author means has some specific person in his mind
35. I don’t know [and his

36. Miguel: [what? What's? What? What is specific?
 37. Mikyoung: it's like um I mean his description has much detail in it
 38. Miguel: yes, the beard, yea[h yeah
 39. Mikyoung: [yeah, the beard, the book
 40. he has a [book
 41. Miguel: [yeah
 42. Mikyoung: maybe education, garlic breath, could be Korean
 43. Ss: ((laugh))

This passage expresses very well the tentativeness with which students approach this kind of heavy inferential task. In line 33, Mikyoung begins with a hedge, "I have no clue..." in order to distance herself from the inferential leaps she is about to make. Her first inference is to connect foreignness with strangeness. She bases this inference on textual backing in the specificity of the author's description, and the presupposition that if the author put in so much detail, it must be important. Miguel initially seems to reject this inference, stressing the literal meaning of foreign as being from another country in line 37. His laugh here functions as a mitigator of this face-threatening act, and other students laugh with him, again as appreciation of his performance in the leader's role.

However, Mikyoung is not deterred. In lines 38 to 40, she prefaces her disagreement with his rejection with partial agreements and delayers, "well, sometimes, but you know (.) but like, yeah I know that its from (.) another country, but sometimes it could be like (.) something you". Pomerantz (1984) has shown how these kinds of "disagreements are produced with stated disagreement components delayed or withheld from early positioning within turns or sequences" (p.70). Furthermore, Mikyoung uses what Pomerantz calls "agreement prefaces" (p.72). She uses two weak agreements "well, sometimes" and "yeah I know that's it's from another country," but then she goes on to disagree, still very softly, "sometimes it could be like something you..." In line 42, Miguel finally agrees with her.

Starting line 45, Mikyoung continues with her assessment that the plethora of detail must have some presuppositional value that the author is clearly trying to make some point. She ponders the beard, then the book, postulating that the book may represent education. Finally, she comes to the garlic breath, and here she has the insight, 'It might be Korean,' in line 53. The students laugh roundly at this, as some of the tension over the difficulty of interpreting this passage is broken.

Of course, Mikyoung has seemingly stumbled, but in fact has scaffolded herself into a very apt interpretation. Given the context in which Cheever was writing, the stranger is clearly Jewish, but in the present context, except for the beard, he could easily be Korean, and a Korean would represent the idea of the encroaching minority in the present context perhaps better than a Jew would. So, up to this point, the performance has been stunning. The problem is that no one builds on Mikyoung's idea and it is simply let drop.

13. Ss: ((laugh))
 14. Miguel: from his mother and Donald the process about process of his
 15. mother and Donald make a cake, yes, bake
 16. You Na: this part seemed a little-(..) did you find this part "she taught him"
 17. Miguel: what what paragraph?
 18. You Na: second paragraph
 19. Miguel: 1 2 3
 20. You Na: yes. from the bottom 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,
 21. Miguel: yes.
 22. You Na: she taught him to make cookies and croutons and muffins and
 23. finally a Lady Baltimore Cake. It means uh cookies, muffins and
 24. banana bread is easy (.) what (.) to make.
 25. Miguel: Really?
 26. You Na: I(.) just I guess
 27. Ss: ((laughter begins))
 28. You Na: just my guess and finally, the Lady Baltimore Cake, it means
 29. Baltimore Cake needs more detail
 30. Miguel: [Ah::::= Yes, yes, yes]
 31. You Na: [detail, technique take a long time]
 32. Miguel: You mean, how to make something the point is she taught her son
 33. You Na: =yes=
 34. Miguel: to live the=
 35. You Na: =yes, step by [step
 36. Miguel: [how how to live the life
 37. You Na: the the the Baltimore (.) to make the Baltimore Cake is final course,
 38. I think.
 39. Miguel: wow! Ha ha ha ha
 40. You Na: why?
 41. Ss: ((several laugh))
 42. Miguel: then the Baltimore Cake's the core of life
 43. Ss: ((all laugh))

The leader starts by asking for contextual knowledge to help solve the puzzle, but none of the students know what a Lady Baltimore Cake is. You Na suggests a textual solution, beginning in line 11. Grasping the iconic nature of the text, You Na uncovers the textual presupposition of increasing level of difficulty. She begins, "It means uh cookies, muffins and banana bread is easy," and ends, "and finally the Lady Baltimore Cake...it needs more detail."

What is truly striking in this example, however, is the way You Na and leader orchestrate the elaboration of this meaning of concrete details into thematic meaning. In line 30, Miguel seems suddenly to see where she is heading, and in lines 30-38, they create a duet, in which You Na leads Miguel to voice the meaning that she has inferred from the text. You Na, in lines 37-38, states the conclusions in concrete terms, to which Miguel adds

a wonderstruck “Wow!”, leading other students to laugh. But Miguel takes the meaning one step further, thematizing it, “then the Baltimore Cake’s the core of life” in line 67. The laughter of the class is long and general after this comment, which is a typical form of self-applause, as noted previously. Here a collusive performance between two students is seen in the interaction. The students mutually construct scaffolding for inferencing the text as one sees the textual presupposition and another generalizes it into a thematic gesture. This scaffolding pattern is similar to Donato’s (1994) collective scaffolding. Based on the analysis of verbal interaction among three French learners, Donato reported that the students collectively constructed a scaffold for each other’s performance in language use and meaning co-construction. He argued that such collective scaffolds might progressively extend the individual learners’ linguistic development.

V. CONCLUSION

This article intended to examine from the community of practice perspective how ESL students learned to act and think appropriately in an academic discourse community by participating in whole class discussions. For this, the present study closely analyzed classroom discourse arising in the whole class discussions using CA methodology.

The students in this study were college graduates in their own countries and were preparing for studying at a graduate program of an American university. Thus, on the context of an English-for-Academic-Purpose environment, the students knew that they were undergoing an apprenticeship into the academy and thus felt incentive to attain mastery. And the nature of whole class discussion used in the class added an element of motivation to perform. As described earlier, the teacher arranged the whole class discussions with the elements of his modeling of leading and participating in discussions. With this modeling, the students had opportunities to observe practices, particularly discussion practices, of an academic community of practice. In addition, while engaging in the practice at the periphery, the students figured out and enacted the principles and requirements of the academic communities that they were part of, or trying to obtain new membership into by engaging with more experienced teacher and classmates and also by performing discussion practices.

In the elective course under study, the teacher and the students were brought together and the students as apprentices participated in classroom discussion practices. The students engaged in the community practices in a couple of forms. They sometimes participated in the discourse community as the discussion leader who is supposed to initiate discussion, encourage participation, and call on the next speaker. The students created their own meanings from the text using available resources, such as world knowledge, intertextual

knowledge, and previous experiences relevant to the text, and articulated them during the discussions. They were sometimes engaged in collective scaffolding in Donato's (1994) words; they collaboratively made inferences of the text and scaffolded each other's inferencing processes.

Before this class, they may not have had many opportunities to lead and participate in intellectual discussions, but during discussions, they picked up language and used their resources to better participate in the community. This process provided a venue for them to raise awareness of the community practices and to learn how to perform the practices. In the class the students were not only practicing the English language; they were performing sociocultural practices as legitimate peripheral participants and moving closer to the target community of practice that they wished to join.

This study highlights a couple of pedagogical implications. As mentioned earlier, in this research, students are treated not as language learners with a problematic degree of language proficiency, but as apprentices with rich language learning experience who are actively learning to think and act in an academic community of practice. This view is more aligned with the current view of language learners who actively participate in the language acquisition or learning process by interacting with others or through trial and errors with linguistic elements (Brown, 2007). Actually language learners are not the people with linguistic needs only; they have much more diverse needs, for example, to develop their communication and thinking skills as in the class in this study. This approach to language learners has the potential to uncover many aspects of language learners and their unaddressed needs. It may lead to developments of different teaching methods, techniques, or materials to meet the learners' varying needs. Next, this study points out the significant role of teacher in the student development. The teacher in this study arranged the class in the way that the students as apprentices could participate in the community practices through, for example, modeling and preparing discussion roles. The teacher facilitated the students' apprenticeship process without active participation in the discussion practices. Instructors need to raise awareness of their role as masters that must help students to better perform as apprentices.

This study was conducted during a short period of time (two weeks). Because of this time constraint, this study focused on the patterns of students' participation of the time only. It cannot show how the students gradually get more involved and experienced in the practices of a discourse community. Longer observation of the students' engagement in the community practices can illuminate *learning* through legitimate peripheral participation. In line with this, the present study argues for the need for more classroom-based research studies which reveal the evolving and dynamic aspects of interaction in real time. Studies of changes in the patterns of legitimate peripheral participation are one of them.

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APPENDIX A

Roles Used in Student Led Whole Class Discussion

1) Dungeon Master:

Responsible for conducting the discussion in a lively and cogent manner. You should lead the discussion, choosing who will speak, cutting speakers off if needed, encouraging speakers to make new connections as well as noting connections being made inadvertently, and generally keeping us moving through the discussion.

2) Contextualizer:

Responsible for describing the background of the story. For instance, what is happening historically and socially at this moment? What kinds of information about the world around these characters do we need to know in order to understand the story?

3) Geographer:

What is the setting for the story? That is to say, where exactly does the story take place? In one room of a house? In a big city or small town? In a foreign country or in some particular region of the US? How does the place affect the story? For instance, if it is a rural area, the people may be relatively unsophisticated. If it takes place at a university, the people will probably be liberal and intellectual.

4) Personnel Director:

Who are characters? – major and minor? What is crucial to know about them? Describe the psychology of each character, their motivation, what makes them tick. What about their relationships drives the story? Short stories are usually mainly about the characters, so this is often the most important role.

5) Story Meteorologist:

What is the atmosphere of the story? What is the tone and mood (emotional feel) of the story? What language does the author use to set the tone (emotional words or descriptions)? What kinds of external descriptions tell us about the characters' moods ("It was a dark and stormy night..." or "The sun shone brightly on her as she bounced down the road.")

6) Philosopher:

The philosopher should identify the bigger themes that this story illustrates. Good and evil, social injustice, moral conundrums, what is the essence of being? Why do we like hostess twinkies? This and other metaphysical quandaries will be your purview.

7) Authorizer:

Gives background on the author and, particularly, the place of this story in her/his work. Does it show themes similar to her other work? Is it a stylistic departure? What is the author noted for?

8) Attorney:

The attorney in charge of clarifying and adjudicating the conflicts which drive the story. Who has which problem with whom? What is the cause of their problem? What is the status of the problem at the end of the story? Has anything been resolved?

9) Poet

Describes ways in which the author uses language and symbols to make her point. Looks especially at symbolic things (a vase, a “magic barrel”, an animal, etc.) and events (e.g. if a character is described as “haloed” in the lamplight).

10) Ironist

Discusses the uses of irony in the story, which includes humorous language and absurd things.

APPENDIX B

Transcription Conventions

- [A single left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset
-] A single right bracket indicates the point at which overlap terminates
- (0.0) Silences roughly in seconds and tenths of seconds (measured more according to the relative speech rate of the interaction than to the actual clock time)
- (.) A dot in parentheses indicates a hesitation between utterances.
- :: Colons indicates lengthening of immediately preceding sound. Multiple colons indicate prolongation of sound.
- A dash indicates a cut-off, unfinished utterance.
- . A period indicate a stopping fall in tone.
- , A comma indicates a continuing intonation (slight rise or lack of fall)
- ? A question mark indicates a rise in tone that clearly marks a question.
- ↑↓ Arrows indicate marked shifts into higher or lower pitch in the utterance part immediately following the arrow.
- CAPS indicates increased loudness.
- (syl) Material in parentheses represents untranscribable utterances
- (()) Material in double parentheses represents descriptions of background, transcriber's comments and other notations to transcript.
- ° Degree signs indicate salient softness of utterances they bracket.
- <> Less than signs indicate that the utterance bracketed within them was spoken at a quicker pace than surrounding talk.
- .hhh perceptible intake of breath
- hhh perceptible exhalation

APPENDIX C

Literary Text

The Wrysons wanted things in the suburb of Shady Hill to remain exactly as they were. Their dread of change – of irregularity of any sort – was acute... The Wryson's civic activities were confined to

upzoning, but they were very active in this field, and if you were upzoning petition before you got away. This was something more than a natural desire to preserve the character of the community. They seemed to sense that there was a stranger at the gate – unwashed, tirelessly scheming, foreign, the father of disorderly children who would ruin their rose garden and depreciate their real-estate investment, a man with a beard, a garlic breath and a book. The Wrysons took no part in the intellectual life of their community. There was hardly a book in the house....

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