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ABSTRACT

A microethnographic study and intervention were conducted in a mixed-age preschool classroom with 3- to-5-year-old native speakers of English, Khmer, and Spanish. All were learning English and had native-language support. In the study's first phase, the language of five children was audiotaped during play time. In the second phase, the whole class, then each target child individually, were taught strategies for interacting more frequently and more optimally with second-language learners (L2s): initiation, reinitiation, slower rate of speech, better enunciation, requesting clarification, and recasting and expansion. In the third phase, language data from the original five children were collected and coded. Results indicate that while all target children interacted more frequently after the intervention, one child, Tiffany, far exceeded the others in quantity and quality of interactions with L2s. She greatly increased the proportion of time spent with them, initiated conversations more frequently, and took more turns talking to them than others did. She spent much of her time assuming a teaching role with Khmer-speaking girls, using known-answer questions and organizational comments while directing their play schedules. The findings indicate the potential of introducing such communication interventions in multicultural classrooms. (Author/MSE)

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S HELP TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS:

A CASE STUDY OF TIFFANY

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April 1991

ABSTRACT

A microethnographic study and intervention were conducted in a three to five year old mixed-age preschool classroom in which 50% of the children were native English-speakers, 25% were native Khmer-speakers and 25% were native Spanish-speakers. The children were all learning English and the second language learners also had support in their first language. In the first phase of the study, language of five target children was collected during free choice play time via audiotape. In the second phase, the class as a whole, then the target child individually, were taught five strategies about how to interact more frequently and more optimally with second language learners. These strategies were: initiation, reinitiation, slower rate of speech, better enunciation, requesting clarification, and recasting and expansion. In the third phase, post-intervention language data were collected from the five target children. The data were coded according to the CHAT (Codes for Human Analysis of Transcripts). The coding categories were situational variables of free choice center and elapsed time and language variables of interaction and modification. The coded data were then analyzed using CLAN (Child Language Analysis) programs.

Results showed that while all target children interacted more frequently after the intervention, one child, Tiffany, far exceeded the others in the quantity and

quality of interactions with second language learners. She greatly increased the proportion of time she spent with them, initiated conversations more frequently, and took more turns talking to L2's than the other target children. She spent most of her time with second language learners with Khmer-speaking girls assuming a teaching role. She employed known-answer questions and organizational comments while directing the play schedules of her charges.

This study shows the potential of introducing an intervention in multicultural classrooms to encourage native speakers to interact more optimally with second language learners.

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S HELP TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY OF TIFFANY[1]

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Research in second language acquisition has shown the importance of social contact between second language learners and native speakers. In Lily Wong Fillmore's study of first grade Spanish speakers learning English, she identified a child named Nora who was far superior as a language learner to other children in the class (1976). What distinguished Nora from her peers was that Nora seized every possible opportunity to use her English skills in social contacts with other children. Even early in the school year when her English was very limited, she was not afraid to produce her rudimentary language. At the end of the school year, Nora had learned more English than some of her peers would learn in double that time or more if they continued at their established rate.

Not all second language learners interact with their native speaking peers as freely or as willingly as Nora did. Some are relatively isolated in the classroom whether because of reluctance to interact while they possess only limited language skills (Wong-Fillmore, 1985), because the organization and activities of the classroom are not conducive to social interaction (Enright, 1982; Fathman, 1976), or perhaps because of infrequent meaningful language initiations by English-speaking

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peers (See Garnica, 1983 for a discussion of social isolation of children in a first language setting). Tabors (1987) found that in the early months of the school year, most second language learners had very limited communicative interactions with peers. When communication did occur, it was primarily with teachers.

Interactions do not occur as frequently as we would wish for second language learners. Yet while organizational and personality variables frequently hinder interactions, one of the major language resources in preschool classrooms is the native speakers. With their language expertise, what role do they play in helping second language learners acquire their new language? To my knowledge, the native speakers' role in initiating interactions with second language learners has not been addressed. Yet these initiations are the key which opens any conversation and, as noted by McTear (1985) in Children's Conversations: "...(conversational) beginnings are often fraught with difficulties" (p.75).

In the study reported here, I will first examine the nature of native speakers' interactions with second language learners. I will then describe the training of native speakers to increase the frequency and facilitative nature of their initiations to second language learners. Finally, I will reexamine native speakers' interactions to determine the effect of the training. This paper reports particularly on one child, Tiffany, whose initiations to second language learners distinguish her from the other target English speakers in the classroom.

Related research

Peer interaction among preschoolers. The interaction that goes among preschoolers is largely social (Peck, 1978), directly largely to peers (Innocenti et al, 1988), and directed toward play (Garvey, 1980). Play has a differential effect on conversation according to the physical setting around which it is organized. For example, language has been shown to be more mature during play in the "kitchen corner" than with other toys such as blocks, wagons, and dolls (French, Boynton, & Hodges, 1988).

The social interaction of children plays an important part in the acquisition of language. Even in early infancy, mothers treat babies' incomprehensible utterances as bona fide conversational contributions and respond with speech altered to offer appropriate, contingent support (Bruner, 1983; Snow, 1977, 1984; Snow & Ferguson, 1977; Wells, 1978). In the preschool setting, the child is expected to negotiate an environment in which language partners, their peers and their teachers, do not offer such personalized support. Sometimes children are even excluded from peer groups in which interaction might take place. Corsaro (1979) has shown that even after preschool children had gotten acquainted with one another after a few months of school, half of all initial attempts to gain access to a group were rejected.

Ability to adjust to language characteristics of addressee. Interactions between children of unequal linguistic proficiency can still take place because children are capable of adjusting

their speech downward to meet less proficient interlocutors' needs (Cross, 1977). When they see evidence of the interlocutors' increasing language processing capacity, they increase the complexity of their speech. Shatz and Gelman (1977) have shown that even children as young as four years old can adjust the complexity and topic of conversation they address to young peers. Change of rate, improvement of enunciation, more concrete references, use of shorter and less complex structures, use of repetition and rephrasing, and the addition of more gestural and extra-linguistic clues are among the adjustment children make to both first and second language learners who are less proficient (Hatch, 1983).

Language addressed to second language learners. Presented with a classroom of second language learners, teachers make many of the same adjustments that children do in addressing these less proficient interlocutors. They speak more slowly, simplify vocabulary, and repeat utterances (Hatch, 1983, Henzl, 1979) in a register often called "foreigner talk".

Of some interest is the question of whether the language addressed to different cultural groups of second language learners varies with the group addressed. It is hypothesized that people learn a second language at different rates based on characteristics of their cultural group, their sense of social identity within that group, and the relationship of their cultural group to the dominant culture (Giles & Byrne, 1980). If a group holds a strong social identity, members of that group may be more reticent interlocutors and invite fewer and substantively

different interactions with native speakers (Hirschler, 1990).

The relationship of input to second language acquisition. Krashen (1985) argues that the input addressed to second language learners must be "comprehensible," that is it must be presented at the appropriate level of difficulty for the learner - not too easy and not too difficult. Specific modifications also have differential effects on perception and comprehension of a second language (Chaudron, 1983). For example, repetition and restatement are helpful because they allow for more processing time and left-dislocation of the topic helps second language learners better identify the topic (Hatch, 1983). In a test of young adult second language learners, Chaudron (1983) found that a combination of those two modifications resulted in greater comprehension. Noun topic reinstatement such as "The beer...the beer tastes terrific" was understood better by second language learners than other modification devices such as using synonyms. Another study (Pica, Young, and Doughty, 1987) showed that repetition and redundancy were more important in increasing comprehension than was reduction in linguistic complexity. The value of clarification requests and comprehension and confirmation checks were determined to aide comprehension because of their use of repetition.

Social skills training. In determining the feasibility of designing an intervention in the form of a kind of training for social skills in which native speakers are trained to help second language learners, it was important to study previous similar attempts. It was in the field of handicapped children that such

an attempt was found to have been made with some success. Goldstein and Strain (1988) who reviewed various descriptive studies and interventions for training peers as intervention agents for handicapped children report that "...training normally developing peers to interact and use (language) strategies to encourage severely handicapped children to communicate has proven rather successful (p.46)." Training in structured free play settings as well as sociodramatic play has resulted in more on-topic verbal responses, encouraged maintenance and generalization of the effect and improved initiation rate when there was also reinforcement of the handicapped children. Many of these interventions relied on extensive teacher prompting but the children maintained the strategy even in the face of a decline of this prompting.

The research questions

The study reported here explores the nature of preschool native speakers' interactions with second language learners and tests an intervention to train native speakers to offer better support tc second language learners. This paper reports the answer to this question: What behaviors will a "star" pupil of the intervention exhibit when trained tc interact more optimally with second language learners?

METHOD

The study was conducted as a microethnographic study concentrating on five target children in a natural preschool classroom setting.

Site

Research was conducted in a mixed-age (3 yr.- 5 yr.) preschool classroom, the Demonstration School of the University of Lowell (MA) and the Lowell Public Schools. The school opened in September 1990 as a model site for second language acquisition in a multicultural setting. The class of forty children ranging from 3.4 to 5.6 year olds was approximately 50% English-speaking, 25% Khmer-speaking, and 25% Spanish-speaking to reflect the proportions of the predominant language groups in the city. The school's language goals for the children were to teach English to the Spanish and Khmer-speaking children while maintaining and developing their first language. For the English-speakers, the school sought to develop English skills and to introduce them to the notion of a foreign language and culture as well as to introduce some vocabulary and formulaic expressions in Khmer and Spanish. Unlike many Demonstration or Laboratory Schools which serve primarily a middle-class population (Berg, 1990), the Demonstration School was one of the school choices of Lowell parents within the Lowell Public Schools. The program was offered without cost to Lowell Public School students. There were three teachers, one of each language dominance, in charge of the class.

Five target children, all English speakers, were selected at random within their age groups. They were Tiffany (5.1 yr. in September), Walter (4.9 yr. in September), Arthur (4.2 yr. in September) and Robbie (3.5 yr. in September). Janine (4.8 yr. in September, was selected to test the intervention with a child

judged to be gregarious by the teachers and me.

The classroom was organized in various free choice areas. These areas were: art, dramatic play, large motor, manipulatives, replica play, puzzles and games, science, books, easel, snack, listening, and blocks. For most of the school day, and during all of the time that data was collected for this study, the children were in mixed age and language groups.

Procedure

There were three phases to the data collection.

Phase I : September 19 - November 1. During this phase, the interactions of target children and interlocutors were taped. Children wore a backpack containing a tape recorder. A small microphone was attached to the children's lapel so that I could obtain good audio recording of both target child and the immediate interlocutors. During the "backpackings" I noted elapsed time at free choice centers and took field notes.

Phase II : November 5 - November 19. The intervention took place in this phase. First, interaction strategies were introduced to and practiced by the class during class meeting time. Then, target children were removed one-by-one from the classroom to reinforce the strategies. The strategies, developed from the review of the literature on input that is most beneficial for second language learning, were:

1) Initiation- children were taught to approach other children, establish eye contact, and ask the children to play with them or with a particular toy;

2) General Linguistic Aspects- children were taught to

speak clearly with good enunciation;

3) Reinitiation- children were taught to repeat the initiation if it is met with non-response;

4) Request Clarification- children were taught to request clarification of a response by the second language learner if the response is not understood;

5) Recast/Expansion - children were taught to repeat an utterance with slightly different wording when the second language learner indicates a lack of comprehension through non-response, non-contingent response or other non-verbal signs.

In general, children were told that we were going to show them how to get children in the class who didn't speak English to play with them. An assistant and I modelled the strategy in a role play situation and then got volunteers to repeat the role play with us. The same procedure occurred in the individual training which followed. Posters were placed in the class and a small bracelet was worn by target children on which there was a mnemonic symbol related to the content of the strategy taught that day.

Phase III: November 13 - December 21. During this phase, post-intervention data was collected. Some prompting was added to my procedure and the children were asked to wear the reminder bracelets when they had a turn.

After all of the transcripts had been coded according to the Codes for Human Analysis of Transcripts (CHAT) format (MacWhinney & Snow, 1985), data was analyzed using the Child Language Analysis (CLAN) programs.

RESULTS

The results presented here tell the story of Tiffany, one of the five target children of this study. Tiffany, a five year old, was not the target child selected as a likely candidate for success with the intervention. She, nevertheless, demonstrated use of language to L2 children that was most optimal and showed the greatest improvement after the intervention than the other target children.

Tiffany was an eager participant during all of the phases of the research. She readily accepted to wear the backpack and even sought it out throughout the three month period of data collection. She also participated willingly in learning the language modification strategies during the intervention. During the role play sessions, she was able to reproduce all of the strategies except the recast strategy. However, none of the target children could produce a recast during the training, even though several of them used recasts in their natural interactions with L2 learners.

Before the intervention, not all evidence suggested that Tiffany would become the best L2 communicator. She spent only 53% of her observed time in free choice groups with L2's compared to the groups' mean of 62%. A few indicators, however, did portend success to come. For example, Tiffany initiated more conversations with L2's than the mean rate of initiations for all target children - an initiation once every 6 minutes of time with L2's compared to once every 15 minutes for the group. Her total number of turns talking to L2's was high as well - a turn every

.7 minutes compared to the groups' mean of a turn every 6.5 minutes. Another feature of her early interaction with L2's was that she spent more time in groups with Khmer speakers (69%) than the group did ($\bar{x}$ = 51%) and less time with Spanish speakers (49%) than the group did ($\bar{x}$ = 66%). This feature would become significant as the research progressed.

After the initiation, Tiffany's interactions with L2's blossomed. First, the proportion of her time spent in free choice groups with L2's increased from 53% to 89%. Tiffany actively sought out second language learners in the classroom. The mean amount of time all target children spent with L2's was only 63%. From the beginning, she had shown a preference for being in groups with Khmer-speaking children. That preference revealed itself further after the intervention. Time spent with Khmer-speaking children increased from 69% to 74% where $\bar{x}$ = 55%, while time spent with Spanish speakers was initially lower (49%) and increased less (52%) where $\bar{x}$ = 56%.

Target children tended to spend a greater proportion of their time in groups with at least one female second language learner (83%) than in groups with at least one male second language learner (20%). There were 60% girls and 40% boys in the class so this fact had some effect on the gender of potential interactants. But Tiffany showed an even greater than average inclination to interact with girls: in Phase I before the intervention she played in groups with at least one female 68% of the time; in Phase III, she spent 94% of her time in these groups.

Tiffany's initiation rate increased from once every six minutes to once every two minutes in Phase III ($\bar{x}$ = 6). She initiated much more than the mean to Khmer-speaking children - once every five minutes ($\bar{x}$ = 22) than to Spanish-speaking students - once every twelve minutes ($\bar{x}$ = 22).

During the period after the initiation, Tiffany's efforts to interact with Khmer-speaking children was remarkable. She placed them under her tutelage for both academic and social matters. In the following example we see that, from her base in the dramatic play area, she juggled her time between several L2 learners trying to meet the needs of all much as a teacher would do in the classroom. At the same time, she made a move to make contact with Matthew, a socially dominant child in the class, through the good offices of Therry(KH):

Tiffany: Come on, Therry. now we have to... (She has something in mind for Therry but Chanthy(KH) interrupts to show her a drawing on which she has tried, with little success, to sign Tiffany's name for her.)

Tiffany: oh, is this mine, chanthy? Chanthy, this mine? let's see. That's nice, chanthy. hmm. Chanthy, you signed my name? Can you sign it for me? oh my god. I have to write my name.

Now back to Therry. Tiffany develops a fantasy play in the house corner.

Tiffany: Therry, are you sick? Come on. We'll put this in here. Come on. Ok, we have to go in here. Now Therry, I want you to sit. Oh, Therry did bad. You ever did it as bad. Where's the... now where's that? excuse me, Therry. I have to get in here. ok, Therry, ok, sit down.

She now tries to get Therry to make a contact with Matthew. She asks Therry if she likes Matthew but, in reality, Tiffany, is the one after him.

Ok, Therry, do you like Matthew? Tell me xxx. You gonna tell him that? Gonna tell him that? Come on, you have to tell Matthew that. Ok, you can't be shy, you have to tell him that, ok? Oh,

oh. Ok, come on. Let me see where Matthew is.

Tiffany now approaches Teresa(SP).

Tiffany: That's mine?
Teresa: Ya, I make it for you.
Tiffany: Teresa, it that mine too? Mine? No?

She continued to try to get Matthew's attention through Therry and now includes Merry in a guessing game to make her point.

Tiffany: Michael! Merry. Merry, come here. Merry, sit here in that chair. Ok? Now sit down.... Whoever likes Matthew raise their hand. Do you? Cause you're going xxx to vote. Do you? Ok. Now, are you going to tell Matthew that? Want me to? And whoever starts with "T" likes him. Who starts with "T"? Me? Do I starts with T-I-F-F-A-N-Y? That's xxx. I start with T.

In this charming scene, Tiffany involved Therry(KH) and Merry(EN) in a game involving them in a strongly evocative contextual use of English while, at the same time, trying to further her own social interests.

Tiffany spoke very frequently to L2 children. If we count the total number of turns speaking, she took a turn once every six-tenths of a minute after the intervention compared to the groups' mean of once every 2.5 minutes.

It is not too surprising then that Tiffany received only a slightly higher rate of responses directly following initiations than the mean rate (Tiffany = .26; x = .22). One reason for this may be that, given her high initiation rate, second language learners with limited English proficiency could not stay apace with her many initiations.

Tiffany's mean number of utterances per turn was almost double the mean of the group - 4.46 utterances per turn for Tiffany and 2.27 utterances per turn for the group. In the following example, Tiffany led a game of "Duck, Duck, Goose".

Vanna (KH) declined the invitation but Sonia(SP), Therry(KH), and Kurt(EN) played along while Tiffany did all the talking herself. The L2 children did not need to use language to participate in the game. Kurt, who is an immature and low-verbal English speaker also found a comfortable place here.

Tiffany: Vanna, want to play Duck-Duck-Goose? Want to play Duck-Duck-Goose? No?

She goes to get Angelica(SP) from the house corner.

Tiffany: I'm going to start over again. Just sit down. No, just us three, ok? Ok, come on. Just us three. Come on. Come on. Just us three. Sit down. Sit down. Ok, ready? I'm going to start. Just us three, ok? Ok, sit down. Sit down. Ok, ready? Duck, duck, duck, duck.

Later, she continues.

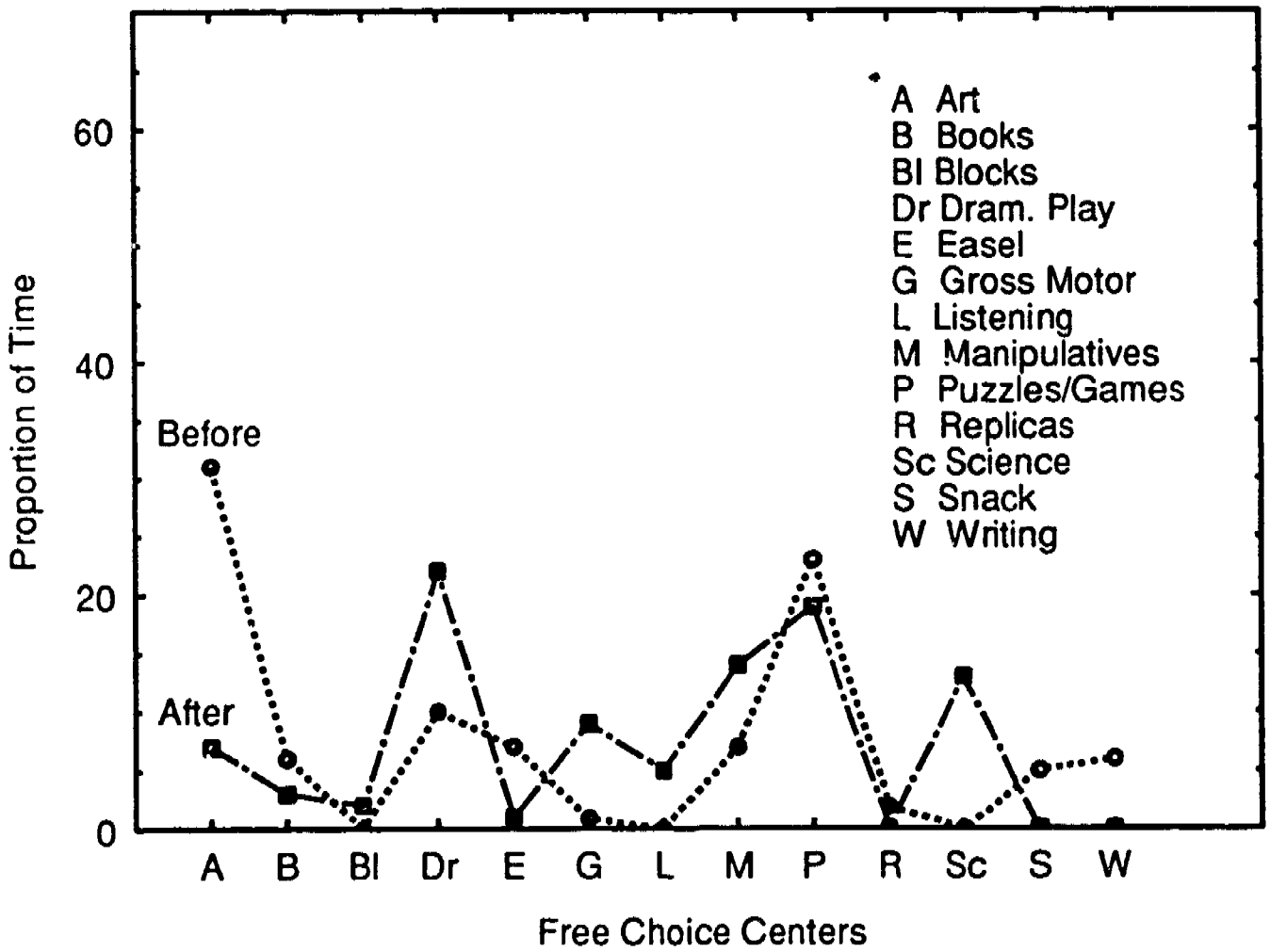
Tiffany: Duck, duck, duck, duck, duck. I'm thinking who I'm gonna pick. Duck, duck, duck, duck, duck. Watch out, Doung! Duck, duck, duck, duck, goose! Duck...(18 times) Who wants to be goose? Duck, goose! You're in the middle. If xxx xxx xxx, you're in the middle. Ok? I go again. Duck, duck duck, duck.

Tiffany tires of the game and attempts to lead them into another game of her choice.

Tiffany: Let's not play this game, ok? Ok, come on. Let me see what we're going to play. Let's get back in line. Get in back of me. No, get in back of therry, ok? ok. Ready? Come here, Therry? I'll hold your hand. Now don't suck your finger. Come on. Come on over here.

The change in Tiffany's location of play was also, perhaps, indicative of potential changes in her use of language (Fig.1). Most notably, the proportion of her time spent at the art table decreased considerably between Phase I and Phase III - from 31% to 7%. During the same period, she spent more time in the dramatic play area increasing from 10% to 22%. Previous research (French, Boynton, & Hodges, 1988) has shown that time spent in the house corner, one kind of dramatic play area, was associated

Figure 1 Proportion of Time Spent in Free Choice Centers - Tiffany



with more mature talk. Here, it appears to be associated with more talk to second language learners. At the same time, the current study shows relatively little talk by target children at the art table - an area that Tiffany eschewed in the post-intervention period of the study.

But Tiffany managed to use even the science area and puzzles and games as locations for an L2 interchange. In this example, she showed Therry the shells on the science table and has her smell them. Therry was quite receptive to this lesson only trying to wiggle away at the end.

Tiffany: Ok, have to smell this. xxx smell, ok? that don't smell, does it? ha! that don't smell. that don't smell.
Tiffany tests several shells trying to find one with an odor.
Therry: (giggles)
Tiffany: come here. come here. (She calls Angelica.)
Tiffany: Hear the ocean? Hear the ocean? Hear it? xxx ocean. Oh, this one is loud! You can hear this one. Can you hear it? Wait, come here. Come here. Want to hear it? Look, hear this. Hear the ocean?

Vanna, who was also present got his lesson next but there was some question about how to arrange themselves around the table for the lesson:

Tiffany: Vanna, you have too... vanna! Ok, wait. Can you go... Can you go over there? Please? Want to come here? Oh let me over there.
Tiffany: Move over, Therry. Ok, ready? xxx shells. Ready? Ok, now don't touch anything. Don't touch.

As a final indicator of her status as excellent communicator with L2's, Tiffany increased in total number of language modifications (repetition, reinitiation, recast, clarification request, confirmation request, and confirmation check) from 23 in Phase I to 54 in Phase III. Tiffany was the only target child to use language modifications to any extent after the intervention

although, for the other children, different language indicators showed changes in the post-intervention period. In one of the sequences in which Tiffany played in the house corner with Therry, Bopha (KH), Marina (SP), and Yola(SP), we see several instances of recast and repetition:

Tiffany: Ok, we have to have our little talk. Ok, can you come over 'cause we have to talk? this is where we talk, ok? When we're all done, you can come ok? See, we have to talk in here. Here, come one, Bopha, come on. And Therry. Oh, first we have to go this way, Bopha, Bopha. Therry, come on. Hold my hand. Come on. Ok, we have to have a little talk. We have to have a little talk, ok? (12/11)

In addition to showing the many repetitions and recasts in Tiffany's language to L2 children , this example also illustrates a key to understanding Tiffany's interaction with second language learners globally. Tiffany seemed to focus her attentions on L2 children in the dramatic play area organized around the theme of "having a little talk". I came to believe that Tiffany had interpreted my instructions to use language in certain ways to second language iearners, as I had done during the intervention phase, to mean that she should have "talks" with them. Consequently, she chose a site that was somewhat separate from the rest of the play taking place in the room, the house corner, to teach language lessons to her charges.

DISCUSSION

The design of the current study does not allow us to draw conclusions about the efficacy of the intervention to cause a change in the language interactions of target children and second language learners. What we can do is observe the changes that

of Tiffany. Tiffany undertook a new role in the class: she became the self-appointed teacher of some of the L2 children. She directed the play schedules of her charges, "Let's not play this game, ok? Ok, come on. Let me see what we're going to play."; asked questions with known answers, "Whose name starts with `T'? Do I start with `T'? Me? Do I starts with T-I-F-F-A-N-Y?"; engaged in task organization talk, "I'm going to start over again. Just sit down... Sit down. Ok, ready? I'm going to start."

The L2 children recognized Tiffany's instructional role. Chanthy wrote a "signature" and brought her work up to Tiffany for approval; Teresa made a drawing for Tiffany as preschoolers often do for adults. Most remarkable is the fact that several of the Cambodian children willingly spent large amounts of time with Tiffany while she micro-managed their activities. The Cambodian girls almost never spoke to each other in any language and only at the very end of the study did I hear them respond with as much as a "yes" or "no" to Tiffany. This mute attitude did not bother Tiffany at all while she continued doing her job. She was dedicated to her teaching.

Most teachers who have had non-native English speakers in their classes have learned that these children begin the school year without much productive language. Most teachers also know that forcing them to speak is futile and quite likely, counterproductive. Often they put non-native speakers near each other to create a "comfort zone" of interaction. The results of this study suggest that, perhaps, even during the early periods

took place during the intervention and after the post-intervention period and describe the trends.

Tiffany showed a propensity toward interacting with second language learners. The intervention struck a resonant chord with her; it encouraged her to do more of what she had already been doing. She gravitated toward L2's with the least English ability, perhaps because they needed the most help.

What can this mean? We would expect that, if left alone, eventually native speakers and second language learners would come to interact more and more with one another. Surely, the passage of time with the concomitant improvement of L2's English skills and the habituation of target children to non-English speakers in their midst would have the same effect. But Tabors (1987) found that as late as January, in a study that began in September, L2's had adults as interlocutors 41.4% of the time. In that study, there was a jump in native - speaker - second language learner interaction from 10.2% to 40.1% between December and January - somewhat later than the post-intervention period of the current study.

Perhaps, then, we can conceive of the intervention as a catalyst of native speaker - L2 interaction. For native speakers, the intervention serves the function of sensitizing them to the fact that the L2 children are not just lacking enthusiasm to communicate and to play but that they lack the skills to do so. It also shows them how to go about the task of drawing these children into play.

Of particular note in this study is the interactional style

of second language acquisition, some benign forms of social engineering could act a catalyst to language development.

But does this approach suggest that a sort of linguistic morality be established in classrooms? Is this the job of the schools? Alfie Kohn in his article "Caring Kids: The Role of the Schools," (Phi Delta Kappan, March 1991) points out that many studies have shown that children show a readiness to help other children from an early age. He says that we must develop in our classrooms a group commitment to values by posing the question, "How do we want our classroom (or school) to be?" He also laments the fact that "interaction between students is rarely seen as integral to the process of learning... (pg. 498). In the case of multilingual classrooms, interaction is not only a value that should be established for the "good" of the group but also for the success of second language acquisition.

Of course, this study only looks in a preliminary way at the possibilities for encouraging more efficacious native speaker - second language learner interactions. Many more questions remain to be answered.

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