How Newcomer English as Second Language Learners Become Experienced Learners Through Socialization in Classroom Communities

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This study is a case study of language learning in the ESL classroom context, as demonstrated in Lave and Wenger's communities of practice (1991). The study examines the learning experiences of an international student learning a second language while being exposed to various new social practices and attempting to understand the role of participation in an English learning classroom community through interaction. A Japanese female student taking the General English for Academic Purpose course in Australia in a group of nine students was this study's primary subject. This study documents the participant's first self-reflection on her language learning to identify how she became accustomed to various social practices by interacting with people inside and outside the community. Discourses from the classroom observation were analyzed to explore how novice and experienced learners participate in peer discussions in a small community. Because learning occurs when students participate in tasks and use language for interpretation, one implication of this study is that the model of language learning education shifts from knowledge transmission to active participation to better account for how learning occurs in a classroom.

Keywords: Communities of Practice, Social Practices, Classroom Discourse Analysis, Sociolinguistics, Second Language Learning, Classroom Research

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the process of English as second language (ESL) learners joining different academic learning communities in Australia. Using a sociocultural lens and Lave and Wenger's (1991) Communities of Practice (CoP) Model, this research investigates how newcomers became experienced learners through interaction in classroom communities by documenting their engagement with and participation in peer and classroom discussions. In particular, two fundamental ideas from the social theory of language learning form the basis for this investigation. Firstly, the concept of CoP, introduced by Lave and Wenger (1991), emphasizes that learning occurs through the participation of members within a community as part of social practices in relationships (Wenger, 1998; Mickan, 2006). Secondly, to make sense of communities of social practice, newcomers are required to familiarize themselves with the appropriate use of different social practices and semiotic resources (Halliday, 1978; Mickan, 2006). One aim of this research is to identify the diversity of social practices which learners experience that are embedded in their ESL classroom communities. This study investigates the process of accustomization to the classroom community through discussing the case of a Japanese student (J1) and her peer interactions, with particular attention to how she and her classmates develop relationships and access community resources. In this paper J1's self-reflection and interviews are analyzed from both a macro perspective and a micro perspective with discourse analysis as lens to examine how her and her peers' roles develop over the course of a semester of study. One of the findings of this research is that the diverse social practices necessary for J1 to accustomize herself to her classroom CoP are clearly describable, illustrating the applicability of social theory to language education, which can help teachers understand how ESL learners participate in classroom communities. Furthermore, the interactions and self-reflection described here reveal language learning in classroom communities is different from learning about language rules and grammatical patterns of usage, a finding that resonates with Mickan (2013). Learning

occurs when students participate in ongoing communication tasks through using the target language to make meaning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section explains the CoP model and its relevance to language classrooms.

The CoP Model

This section outlines the functions of CoPs. CoPs are groups of people who share goals or concerns and who interact regularly in order to learn (Wenger, 1998). The perspective taken in this study is that learning occurs through participation in communities, as described by Lave and Wenger (1991). Participation is essential not only for learning but also for the development of a community. The degree of participation in a community falls into one of the three groups: peripheral, active and core (Wenger, 2002), as shown in Figure 1.
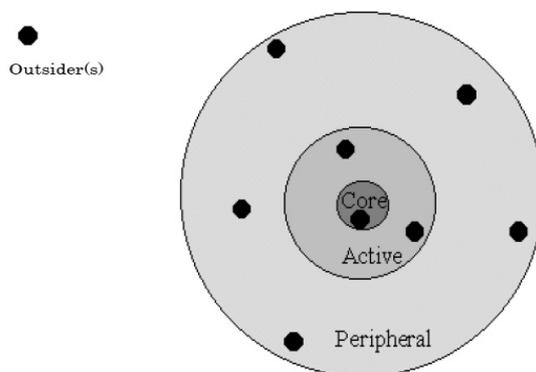

FIGURE 1
Wenger's Degree of Community Participation
(adapted from Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002)

Core members engage in interactions and take on community projects, assuming the roles of leaders and coordinators (Wenger, 2002). Peripheral members keep to the sidelines, watching interactions between core and active members instead of participating in discussions (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Over time, novice learners can move from the periphery to the more active, constructing identities based on their experiences and relationships within their CoP, which in turn can transform the community itself. This accommodation and transformation of CoPs through changes in members is referred to as "legitimate peripheral participation (LPP)" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 29). It should be noted that in this study, the word "identity" does not define identity by racial, national or social group; rather, it relates to the degree of participation and the roles assumed by the students in their communities. The next level of community participation is active members, those who attend activities and events such as regular meetings and occasionally participate in community forums, albeit less often than core members. and understanding compared with other members because they have had opportunities to work in different contexts and situations in the community.

Social Practices and Semiotic Recourses

Chapman and Pyvis (2005) state that in social practices learning is viewed as "a situated activity in which issues of cognition, context and social interaction cannot be considered in isolation from each other" (p. 40). From a socio-cultural point of view people learn because they want to be involved in new activities, to complete new tasks, work out new functions, and to gain new understandings. These new activities, tasks, functions, and ways of understanding are elements of social practice which require participants to learn and use resources for participation (Mickan, Lucas, Davies & Lim, 2007, p. 21). In a community participants continually focus on their ability to perform the required social practices of the community. These social practices are regular patterns of actions, socially constructed, which represent

recognised ways of doing things in the community (Lemke, 1995). Social practices are diverse and are produced and transformed in CoPs according to stated and unstated rules (Gee & Green, 1998; Luke, 1993; Mickan et al., 2007). The generation, transformation, and acquisition of social practices are part of the learning process for community participants through using language to make meaning in interaction with other community members (Mickan, 2004; Knobel & Healy, 1998).

Semiotic resources in learning include print materials, the physical environment, gestures, classroom discourse, and individual mental processes, all of which are part of the socially-mediated activities of the classroom (Lantolf & Lantolf, 2000; Kabuto, 2009; Chu, 2007). In other words, semiotic resources are not only materials but also actions which help human beings to communicate with purpose (Leeuwen, 2004). For instance, physiological aspects of semiotic resources are characterized as vocal apparatus, gestures, and facial expressions; technologies as semiotic resources are categorized as pens, hardware, and software; modes of communication as semiotic resources are language, gesture, images and music (Leeuwen, 2004).

The CoP Model and Social Practices in Classroom Communities

Although scholars have explored social practices in classrooms, patterns are not easy to identify. One common finding is that participants employ prior knowledge of similar social practices which guide them in classroom activities (Gilbert, 1992). In Mickan et al.'s (2007) study, one participant, an African refugee, recognised a pattern through interactions with his teacher when he informed his teacher he had completed his homework, indicating he understood the importance of homework as "a valued social practice" (Mickan et al., 2007, p. 15) in the classroom community, and simultaneously as a means to more active membership in the community. Thus, social practices in a classroom involve more than simply completing pedagogical tasks and activities. In turn, socialisation into community practices requires

making choices and accepting the practices of the community. Through this process learners can transform their level of community participation.

Community participants may have different levels of mastery of the different community practices, meaning that they may become more and less active as different resources which they are more or less familiar with are called for in their various interactions, adding a level of complexity illustrated in Figure 2.
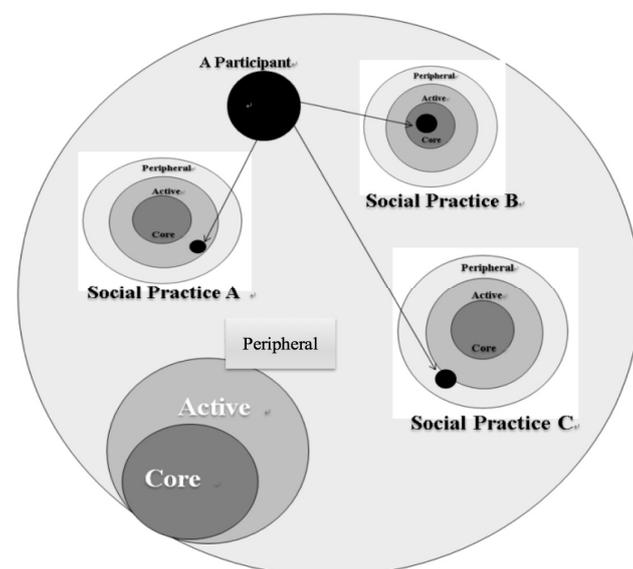

FIGURE 2
A Complex Model of CoP for Classroom Communities

Self-Reflection

Learners can also learn through reflecting on their experiences (Dewey, 1993), which is a highly cognitive process. As Daudelin (1997) explains, "when a person engages in reflection, he or she takes an experience form the outside world, brings it inside the mind, turns it over, makes connections to other experiences, and filters it thought personal biases" (p. 39). According to

Bell (1998), learner self-reflection is an opportunity to evaluate study and learning approaches to better manage learning performance, thus illustrating the interrelatedness of learning and reflection. Reflection is the process of stepping back from an experience and allowing one to ponder the experience, and then to be influenced by the reflection and "learning is the creation of meaning from past or current events that serves as a guide for future behaviour" (Daudelin, 1997, p. 39). Self-reflection allows learners to acknowledge their transforming identity through the process of reflection. Learners efficient at the process of transformation through reflection tend to be critical thinkers regarding their area of specialization, understand the relative nature of knowledge, and its socially constructed nature (Waguri, 2010). These learners understand themselves, their knowledge, and their roles in society as defined by their interaction with others through their reflections, which can eventually lead to learner autonomy (Waguri, 2010).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The concept of core, active, and peripheral community membership can be applied to English as second language learners in classroom community situations to illustrate how newcomers become more experienced learners through interaction with their classmates. To understand how J1, a novice in this community, gains this experience it is necessary to analyse her classroom interactions. Toward this end, the following research question was examined: What varieties of social practices does J1, an English as second language learner, experience in moving from the periphery toward the core of her learning community?

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: Classroom Observations and Interviews

This study employs a qualitative approach with triangulation in terms of data collections. Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of reality. A field study approach was the most appropriate choice for my classroom observations. J1's interactions with her peers and teachers were observed and recorded over a period of one semester for between 2007 and 2008, 90 to 180 minutes per class every week during the semester. J1' interviews, which were semi-structured interviews, were conducted immediately after each classroom observation, which took between 60 and 120 minutes for each session. Interview data were chosen selected, three different separate times, at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester for this analysis. Mainly the interview data collected at the later beginning of research period (November 2007) were chosen for the particular interview and classroom discourse analysis in this study. I chose this particular data because my participant J1 had exposure with varieties of social practices and peer/group discussions during the lessons, which were new experiences for her. Secondly, J1 as a newcomer expressed her challenges and difficulties in order to manage all social practices with her classmates and herself, which can be one of the evidences to understand how novice learners need to gain particular knowledge other features in order to become experiences learners. This study is designed around the fundamental concepts of interaction analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic procedure in order to explore how newcomers become established members in the CoP. Data was analysed regularly throughout the collection period to clarify problems and answer questions. All in-class participant interactions with her peers were recorded and transcribed. Field notes taken during classroom observations were used for the macro analysis to understand the classroom dynamics.

I, as a classroom observer and a data analysist, explained this study purpose and methodology (classroom observation and recoding) towards all participants and teacher at the beginning of the research using information

sheet. After all participants understood and agreed with involving in this study project, they signed in the consent form. All participants were told to be able to withdraw from this study whenever they wanted. I obtained permission to observe in the English Language Center at the Australian University after meeting with its Director. Permission from all students to record and write about their classes was also granted. Classroom observation was decided by negotiation with the Director of the School and the classroom teacher. I observed these lessons from a position behind the students who were seated in small circle. For interviews with J1, I as the interviewer explained the research purpose and data collection methodology such recording using video and IC recorder again in order to get permissions from J1 before these interviews started.

Participants

This research followed J1 and her eight classmates over the course of a semester in Australia. J1 will be the focus of analysis to describe how she transformed her role from that of a new student to an experienced learner. I chose J1 as a key participant because as an ESL and EFL learner myself I have encountered similar struggles and challenges in terms of learning through participation in different social practices. My belief is that such challenges and difficulties are not specific to particular classrooms and individuals, but are universal to EFL and ESL learners.

J1's classmates comprised a variety of nationalities, and their level of English proficiency was advanced. Five students were from Kazakhstan and the rest were from Asian countries. All students were aiming at entry into an Australian university. Most had completed the previous five week English program and had been studying English for over five months in Australia before J1 jointed their class.

J1's Educational Background

J1, a Japanese student, had recently enrolled in an English language course at an Australian University. J1's educational background in Japan comprised studying English under a teacher-centred, grammar-based approach. J1's learning history interview revealed she gradually lost her passion to learn English, except for before final assessments and examinations. Further, J1 reported preferring a passive learning style, making active learning a challenge. This is not surprising since the typical Japanese classroom requires students to listen and take notes during lectures, and while J1 may have had sufficient English proficiency from her past education, she was new to the Australian communicative-based English learning environment and English-focused study. Therefore, as a newcomer to Australia, J1 was expected to learn the rules of community participation that shaped her new context.

Research Site

The research site for this study is a General English for Academic Purpose class in the English Language Centre for Professional and Continuing Education at a university in Australia. At the advanced level of classes, where I observed, the program aims to develop learners' oral and written communication skills. It also teaches skills required for tertiary level study at Australian universities. Students are expected to spend considerable time outside the classroom practicing and improving their English language proficiency. A genre-based approach to reading, writing, and presentation was introduced in the class I observed. The idea of a genre-based writing approach is that texts differ in their purposes, and different cultures achieve their purposes through language in different ways, depending on their discourse communities (Lingzhu, 2009). The genre-based teaching and learning approach was developed from child language studies undertaken within the systematic functional model (Halliday, 1978; Lingzhu, 2009).

Genre-based language learning approaches involve participants sharing the same experiences and goals (Lingzhu, 2009), and learners in a particular discourse community usually share the same goals and interests in achieving their aims (Bielaczyc & Collins, 1999; Harris, 1989). Through the genre-based approach to writing practice, learners can gradually distinguish different texts, understand the texts' purposes as well as develop texts. Thus, the genre-based learning approach shares many similarities with the CoP model (Wenger et. al., 2002).Students learn to critically analyse written texts, research essay questions, and construct and develop logical arguments through a genre approach of language learning following Feez's (1998) cycle of learning. Students acquire the skills to present their ideas in different written styles through practicing a variety of written genres through a large number of peer and group activities.

RESULTS

This section begins with a macro analysis of the interviews. The second section is a discussion of the interviews with J1, considering the extent to which she was conscious of her own growth and increasing community involvement, followed by an analysis of her self-reflection on her learning experience. This macro analysis is intended to explore the role power and dominance play in terms of teaching and learning among students and teachers. Next a micro analysis of social aspects of classroom interaction between J1 and her peers is presented, with data taken from the beginning and end of the semester, focusing on situated discourse in use, or how language is used as an activity in the classroom. Both of these macro and micro levels of discourse analysis are essential (Gee & Green, 1998; Derry et al., 2010)

Interview Analysis: Awareness of Transformation from Newcomer to Experienced Learner

Data was analysed regularly throughout the collection period in order to clarify problems and answer questions that arose. One concerned whether J1, as a newcomer, would feel more experienced through interactions with her peers in group discussions. To answer this question, J1 was asked to answer the following questions at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester:

(1) In what situations do you feel that you are a member of the community?
(2) In what situations do you feel that you are not yet a full member of the community?

First J1's interviews were analysed to see how she went from newcomer to experienced learner through participation, showing J1's awareness of her change. The observations and interviews suggest how she developed in her new community of practice. At first, she wanted to be welcomed by the other members and acknowledged a gap between knowledge from her previous experience and her new community's expectations. After recognising differences between herself and other members, she tried to acquire the knowledge and techniques to integrate into the group. For example, in an interview (18 January, 2008) she said she was used to being an experienced English learner in her home country. However, since entering the ESL class she no longer felt this way. She brought prior experiences including techniques, semiotic resources and English language skills, which were essential in her previous learning environment. These prior experiences were based on grammar translation and reading English literature, which provided little preparation for discussion with classmates. When J1 came to Australia the focus on verbal interactions between peers using a communicative teaching methodology was difficult to adapt to, and her inability to engage in discussions made J1 feel isolated. However, by listening to other members'

discussions J1 acquired the skills necessary to participate in the community. Thus, J1 noted she became a more experienced learner by the end of the semester (Table 1).

Table 1
Summary of Interviews with J1

	Interview 1 (the beginning of the semester)	Interview 2 (the middle of the semester)	Interview 3 (the end of the semester)
Data	19th November, 2007	18th January, 2008	26th February, 2008
1. In what situations do you feel that you are members of the community?	She felt she was the outsider and struggled with verbal participations.	New members came into the group. She gradually regarded herself as the member.	J1 believes she is the member when she could help new members to engage in group conversations.
2. In what situations do you feel that you are not yet full members?	She could not express her opinions without peers help.	She managed to have further discussions with peers during her presentation: Q&A.	

J1's Social Practices and CoPs

I conducted self-reflection interviews with J1 about her studies over the six months to gain a better understanding of her development within her community of practice. J1's self reflections included a narrative account to express her progress in developing speaking and writing proficiencies through working on an essay using authentic reading materials. J1 was expected to complete all of these sequenced tasks: reading, text summary, group discussion, individual presentation, and argumentative essay. I

interviewed her after each task and analysed her self-reflections within a socio-cultural theoretical framework. This allowed discovery of the strategies she used to make meaning as she engaged in literacy practices and managed a variety of roles to become an experienced learner within her community of practice. Thus, some of the features explained below are social practices in the classroom community of practice J1 joined.

First Experience Writing an Argumentative Essay

Assignment task sheets were distributed and students told to read them. J1 reflected on the experience.

> I was surprised and afraid when I read the due dates and the procedure on the task sheet. I did not know how to start with the tasks and felt it might be impossible to complete all the tasks. It is my first experience to write 600 words and read such a difficult topic. And I was so confused when trying to understand the topic, which my teacher asked us to read. I thought it was useful to use the dictionary to find difficult word but even so I could not understand the meaning. (27 November, 2007)

Understanding task requirements by reading a task sheet is one of the social practices in J1's classroom. She found the list of tasks students were expected to complete daunting and that it might not be possible to complete them because it was her first experience of learning through a text-based and genre approach. Figure 3 shows a sample from the task sheet J1 was presented with.

Due dates
Reading Tutorial: 20/11/07
Text Summary: 26/11/07
Text Seminar Presentation: 26/11/07 or 27/11/07
Essay: 5/12/07
Individual Presentation- 10/12/07 or 11/12/07

Text Summary Assignment
Length: 300 words
Structure:
- Introduction (approx.10% of total review)
- Body (approx. 80% of body)
- Conclusion (approx. 10% of total review)

Introduction
- The introduction should have a sentence that introduces the title of the article or book, the year it was published and the name of the author (The bibliographic details)
- It also needs to outline the central theme of the article and what point of view the writer presents.
(Continued)

FIGURE 3
Part of J1's Task Sheet for the Unit of Work: Writing an Argument Essay

When J1 read the requirements of the essay, she was confused by unfamiliar words. She found it particularly difficult to understand the topic sentences. The topic for the essay was as follows:

> Contemporary Reproductive Technology has reached a point in which parents have a number of different options regarding the way their child will be conceived and developed before birth. Surrogate parenthood is one available option for parents in some states of Australia. Through it is not legal in some states of Australia parents can still go to other states. Therefore the federal government should intervene and outlaw this practice nationally. Argue.

Words related to surrogacy, medical procedures, and politics were found within the topic sentences which J1 found difficult to understand, and

technical words such as *reproductive technology* and *surrogacy* were new to her. The last part of the essay topic, *Therefore the federal government should intervene and outlaw this practice nationally. Argue*, made her stop and think, as it reveals the student is expected to make an argument based on the topic. However, J1 could not work out what was required for the task because she did not understand the lexis. Her classmates had similar problems and discussed the matter in class, with J1 listening and taking notes as the teacher explained the meaning of the technical words. However, when we discussed the assignment a few weeks later in an interview, J1 felt the class discussion did not increase her understanding. Thus, a lack of English vocabulary proficiency, a very basic knowledge of the specific topic, and little experience of a text-based and genre-based teaching approach limited J1's meaning building strategies and understanding.

Awareness and Motivation

In J1's case, her teacher chose four different articles and decided who would read them. J1 reflected on her teacher choosing this article for her:

> I realised that the teacher chose the article for me. The article was the easiest one compared to other students' articles. My English is probably lowest in the classroom. Other students especially Kazakh students can speak English very well and I am a slow reader so it takes me a long time to read an article and understand it. That's why my teacher chose the easiest article for me. I know I have to improve my English skill to be able to catch up with other students. So I decided to read all articles at home until I understood them. (27 November, 2007)

J1 interpreted her being assigned an article to read as a sign of her low English proficiency, which increased her motivation to learn English. This highlights her conscious awareness of her role as newcomer to the classroom,

and shows how she sought strategies that would enable her to become a more active participant. She felt that through reading all the articles, she would be better placed to verbally participate during peer discussions, which would give her a more active role in the classroom community, as J1 wanted to be accepted by the other students in verbal interactions. This process of looking for an appropriate strategy to improve her English may be considered a social practice J1 engaged in.

Social Practices in Reading Tasks

J1 reflects on the first task:

> For the first task (reading seminar) I read the article and took notes. It is one of the tasks for this writing activity. There was a note-taking sheet provided by the teacher so I had to use it. In the reading some parts were hard to understand because I was unfamiliar with the vocabulary and had to guess the meaning. So I read some sentences and stopped when I encountered unfamiliar words and read it back again. I decided to use the Japanese-English dictionary to check new vocabularies. This time I made a vocabulary list so I could better remember the vocabulary compared to writing the translation next to the word in the text. This is because I wanted to remember the meaning of the new words for classroom discussion. (27 November, 2007)

By writing notes on a task sheet J1 intentionally established her own reading strategy to understand the article. She assumed that understanding the article would enhance her classroom performance, especially her ability to participate in peer discussion. One of J1's meaning-making strategies was to find unfamiliar words and create a vocabulary list. Definitions of new terms such as *surrogacy* were recorded in her L1 on the list. She did not write on

the reading materials with the intention of facilitating her future oral interaction in the classroom, for which memorization and a clear understanding of the vocabulary would be necessary. This making vocabulary lists was a useful strategy for J1 and so represents a personalized learning methodology intended to facilitate her participation in her community of practice.

Social Practices: Seeking External Help

J1 read the article three times. Motivated by a lack of confidence, she also asked her host sister to check her notes.

> I was not sure whether I understood the article well so I asked my host sister to help me reading and check my notes. If I did not understand the article well, it will be a problem because I have to give a small presentation in the reading tutorial. (27 November, 2007)

J1 wanted to clarify her questions concerning the article and so summarised each paragraph to better understand it. When she encountered sentences she did not understand, she asked for help to identify particular words. For example, she would ask her host sister, 'What does infertility treatment mean?' and 'Could you explain what this sentence means?' In responding to J1's questions her host sister recontextualised the terms and concepts into everyday speech, so J1 was able to understand the meaning of the sentences through this interaction. Asking someone for help can be a form of social practice, and in this case created the opportunity for J1 to join another community of practice. While J1 was unable to understand the sentences in the article by herself, through working with her host sister she could recontextualise the written text into spoken text, thus enhancing her learning. This is an example of J1 discovering new ways of organising the meaning-making process in her target language outside the classroom context.

Proofreaders

One of J1's new methods of organising the meaning-making process in her target language outside the classroom context was to work with a proofreader.

> I asked my host sister to check my English in the essay before I submitted it. She said she tried to keep my writing and changed only my grammatical mistakes. But when she started to correct my grammar mistakes she sometimes changed my entire sentence. I found many grammatical and word choice's mistakes in my writing. To talk with her is very helpful for me because she taught me proper language choice (27 November, 2007).

Asking someone to proofread can be a social practice because "the proofreading process [is] a constant conformation with one reader's meaning making operation" (Teramoto & Mickan, 2008, p. 52). J1's host sister tried to respect J1's lexical and grammatical choices. However, those choices were, at times, incorrect. J1 was satisfied that her written sentences became more like those of a proficient English user. For example, at first she tended not to use causative verbs such as 'make' to express the idea that a person requires another person to do something. Her host sister encouraged J1 to use 'make' as a causative verb in her writing, which gave J1 the feeling of writing sentences like a proficient English user. After J1 discussed this with her host sister, she realised that the majority of her notes were written verbatim from the article and it was necessary to change them into her own words. She understood the benefits of recontextualising the formal written language of the article into everyday speech in order to explain the content of the article to peers in the classroom. Using everyday speech rather than technical language was a better way for J1 to help her listeners understand her explanation.

Peer Discussions

One classroom task involved a discussion of the assigned reading texts. There were eight students in a group and another student acted as chairperson to ensure the discussion kept within the time allocated. A student-centred teaching approach was maintained during the lesson with the teacher's role one of providing scaffolding by asking open-ended questions and monitoring the time for the chairperson. The classroom discussion was based on the four assigned articles, and all students had to read one in advance. J1 was in charge of the discussion for her assigned reading. Students were given a task sheet at the beginning of the lesson which included questions about the author's profession, opinion, intention, perspectives on surrogacy, and the data presented. J1 reflected on the class discussion:

> I could not speak up when my classmates were discussing about article one, two, and three. This is because the first article was too difficult to understand for me therefore I decided to become a listener. It was hard for me to understand because of the speaker's pronunciation. During the discussion about the second and third articles, I was also unable to participate in the discussion but I wanted to say something because I understood both articles. However, when the chair person introduced the explanation on the fourth article I contributed to participate with my classmates. I thought I knew the article better than the other students and therefore pushed myself to speak up. I might have confidence to interact with other by asking questions spontaneously. (27 November, 2007)

J1's challenge was to interact with others by taking turns and expressing her opinion verbally. During discussion of the first article, she listened, nodded, and took notes, activities which could be considered passive and classed as taking a minor role in the peer discussion. While engaging in

verbal discussion is considered the role of core group participants, to take on a more peripheral role such as listening and nodding is also an essential part of participating as a member of a community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). New students are not usually asked to take on core duties but, rather, are expected to take on less central responsibilities while they are still developing their participatory skills. Fulfilling these less important roles is an important part of newcomers enhancing their confidence and satisfaction in community interactions (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

At times in class, J1 participated at both peripheral and active levels. Particularly when discussing the article she was assigned to read, she became an active student who took turns and expressed her opinion. Other times she was a peripheral participant who watched other students' interactions, particularly in the discussion of the three articles she hadn't been assigned to read. This suggests that it may be difficult to distinguish precisely whether a person's participation is active or peripheral and students may take on both roles, changing from one to the other depending on their interests, English proficiency, and knowledge of the topic. This is illustrated here with J1 assuming different roles according to the situation, which appears to be a natural part of her becoming an experienced learner within her classroom community.

After the discussion of the reading articles, students summarized the articles and presented their contents to the class. During the presentation activity, there were some interesting features of J1 and her peers' language that warrant further discussion. From here, a microanalysis of their interactions at the middle and the end of the semester will be discussed.

Classroom Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis of J1's common interaction patterns from the middle and end of the semester can provide increased insight into the nature of her development from newcomer to experienced learner. To accomplish this, two class discussions, one from the middle and one from the end of the semester,

were selected for analysis.

   At the middle of the semester, J1 was frequently supported by other students' participation in peer discussions. She resolved to be an active listener and provided a large number of minimal responses to show she was listening. Furthermore, J1's interaction patterns show she cooperated with other students to solve problems at the beginning of her studies. Example 1 shows J1 and her classmates interacting around the topic of surrogate motherhood. J1 was presenting her essay plan to her peers and the teacher. She stated her support for surrogacy by pointing out her title, 'The federal government should not outlaw surrogacy nationally.' Student M misheard and thought J1's argument was against surrogacy, believing her title to be, 'The federal government should not allow surrogacy nationally.' In Turn 6, student M clarifies the mistake and suggests J1 correct herself. J1 accepts the suggestion by apologizing in Turn 8. After the silence, JA seeks clarification in Turn 9, a trigger for peer rebuttal. Students continue to disagree about J1's thesis in turns 9 through 23. However, J1's apology in Turn 31 and students' laughter resolves the problem and helps maintain a harmonious group relationship. During the student negotiation (turns 23 to 30), a typical pattern of interaction is found. The students co-participated in the discussion to gain an advantageous position through negotiation of power. For example, in Turn 23, JA remarks, 'before she said allow,' emphasising his opinion that J1 supported surrogacy. This is supported by other students in turns 24, 25, 26, and 29. Here students seem to use synonyms to assist others' understanding. For example, after Turn 23 other students use synonyms of 'allow' such as 'not outlaw' (Turn 24), 'not admit' and 'permit' (Turn 29) to support J1.

Example 1 (The middle of the research period: December 2007)

Line	Speaker	Content
1.	J1	good afternoon everyone ... today I'm going to talk about essay plan about surrogacy ... and so first … I … why I explain … my::: position and … these situation … a::: Federal Government should not outlaw surrogacy (that's

		about it) so … I agree surrogacy so Federal Government should admit the surrogacy ... and my point is I focus on four point ... a::: increasing demand of surrogacy ... and human rights ... and supporting money about surrogacy ... finally a::: edu- education ... I divided four parts four body parts ..and firstly
2.	M	(J1's name)
3.	J1	yes
4.	M	are you are you for or
5.	J1	yes==
6.	M	==or against for and then you 'should', '[should] not' is wrong
7.	JA	should should
8.	J1	should? …sorry [four seconds of silence which J2 is changes her text to follow M's suggestion]
9.	JA	for surrogacy
10.	J1	for surrogacy
11.	JA	you A::: I think that
12.	J1	government should==
13.	JA	==government SHOULD
14.	JB	yeah
15.	M	no
16.	J1	allow allow allow surrogacy
17.	JA	why SHOULD NOT? ... should outlaw right?
18.	M	should not
19.	JA	got it?
20.	M	should not surrogacy
21.	JA	before before before you said
22.	M	no she is against
23.	JA	before she said allow
24.	JC	should not outlaw
25.	JD	should not outlaw you are correct

26.	JC	yeah you you you are correct
27.	J1	should not admit should allow
28.	JA	YEAH
29.	E	you permitted permit permit
30.	JA	so you don't need to change [students laugh]
31.	J1	so sorry
32.	Teacher	you should have confident what you wrote

By the end of the semester J1 was able to help a newcomer student, illustrating her transformation from a learner who needed considerable support to one who could provide such support to others. This is illustrated in Example 2, recorded at the end of the semester. New students joined the class, changing the classroom dynamics, moving J1 out of the newcomer position. Here J1 and M, experienced students, are having a casual discussion about a written text on an art museum with the new student.

Example 2 (The end of the research period: late January 2008)

Line	Speaker	Content
140.	New	I think it's just a:::: general A::: a::: expression of about this …[2 seconds silence]
141.	J1	paint one painting [J1 helps to complete New's sentence]
142.	New	painting Aboriginal
143.	M	[mumbling and reading the article]
144.	J1	not so detail
145.	M	not detail BUT can you see on the:::: on the right side
146.	J1	yeah
147.	M	on till December
148.	J1	'temporally exhibition' [J1 read the article] [N's facial expression demonstrates his confusion]
149.	J1	it's very special ....exhibition [to New]

J1 is interacting with a more experienced classmate and a newcomer

concerning their reading of three arts/museum reviews. The newcomer gives his opinion in Turn 140, 'I think it's just a general expression of about this…' However, his utterance is an incomplete sentence, so J1 assists by adding 'one painting' in Turn 141. In line 145 M suggests looking at a small notification mentioned in the reading article which read, 'temporary exhibition.' J1 realises the new student is struggling to understand this and therefore explains in simplified language in Turn 149, supporting the new student in the meaning-making process.

DISCUSSION

This study explored a Japanese ESL student and her peers' participation in language classroom social practice using Lave and Wenger's (1991) CoP model. It described how newcomers engaged in social practices to become experienced learners in their communities. The social practices central to J1 becoming an experienced learner in her classroom community suggests language learning education should be viewed through a participant metaphor rather than a knowledge transmission metaphor.

From the classroom observations, it is clear that interacting with peers and exchanging opinions is an essential element and focal literacy activity in discussion between partisans. In each of these practices students may participate at a core, active, or peripheral level in order to complete tasks. Some students' participation levels in a community may not be easily classified as peripheral or active as Wenger (2002) has demonstrated. J1 moved between peripheral and active levels and took both active and listening roles in the community depending on her understanding of the reading. Thus, students can take on both roles and alternate between them depending their interests, English skills and knowledge of the topic.

J1 in her CoP was required to complete the following tasks in one unit of work: reading tutorial, text summary, seminar presentation, writing essays, and individual presentation of a writing plan. These tasks are part of social

practices within her community of practices. During encountering these tasks, J1 needed to experience particular social practices regarding these tasks. (1) Lack of knowledge about the reading topic: J1 understood the definition of surrogacy in her L1. Her experience of watching a television program about the subject in Japanese enhanced her initial understanding of it in English. However, she did lack substantial basic knowledge on the topic. (2) Lack of proficiency in reading and listening to English: J1 struggled to read efficiently and was a slow reader. When reading she was able to read back and improve her comprehension and solve any issues she had with the text. In contrast, when participating in discussion she was unable to stop the speaker to help solve her problems. She felt that it would have been inappropriate to disrupt the flow of the conversation. (3) Lack of experience in the academic genre: this was the first time that J1 had read an academic article. She thought that the article was too long and involved too many technical terms. While she had gained some reading experience in the previous semester, those articles were less academic, having been chosen from the Internet, IELTS texts and school textbooks by her teachers. (4) Lack of experience in text-based learning: this was one of her first experiences with text-based learning and she was not familiar with the various steps that were involved. These are J1's social practices which she needed to be accustomed to in order to become an experienced learner in her community. Thus, peer relationships are extremely important in the process of socialisation. Learners acquire a variety of social behaviours, attitudes and perspectives, and become familiar with expectations, models and reinforcements through imitating each other's actions and identity (Johnson, 1981). J1's lack of experiences in reading and lack of knowledge on the topic made them aware of social practices which required them to participate in their own communities. Participants became aware of gaps between their own English proficiency and the expectations of required tasks. J1 thought that if she could not read the article she would not be able to participate in the discussions. She tried to find a new learning tactic so that she could contribute to her community. J1 wanted to belong to the group through verbal participations. Thus, participants feel accepted by

others when they engage in new social practices in a classroom community.

To identify and describe social practices which J1 encountered in a community suggest answers for the question: how does J1 engage in social practices in order to become an experienced learner in a community? Analysing interviews with J1 can identify necessary social practices and semiotic resources in order for J1 to become an experienced learner in the community. Initially, J1 became self-aware of her role as a peripheral participant when joining the community. As a new member she felt that she needed to be accepted by other members during verbal interactions in her particular community. This self-awareness of acceptance as verbal interactions is one of the social practices. J1 followed the same procedures that the majority of students adopted in order to complete tasks such as reading authentic articles. However, that learning strategy proved inappropriate for J1. As a result, she discovered her own strategy by asking for extra help from native English speakers to finish the reading assignments. J1 understood the importance of verbal interactions in the classrooms and was aware that a large number of classroom activities were designed to be carried out in pairs and groups. J1 realised that her speaking skills were inadequate to fully interact in the classrooms therefore she decided to use English more frequently both in and out of the classrooms. J1 knew that being able to interact verbally with others was the first step towards being accepted as a member of the classroom communities as well as any other community. This awareness and understanding is the part of the social practices in her CoPs. This study of J1 represents just one case, however the result can show us the varieties of social practices and complex processes which can be involved, which allow particular participants to develop into experienced learners from novices. The results indicate that teachers need to understand that the processes of transformation from novice learners to experienced learners are complex.

People learn language through interacting with other people and creating a community. A social view of language acquisition maintains that through their interactions learners negotiate not only meaning but also their roles in

their relationships and their cultural and social identities in a community (Ellis, 1999). Consequently, the process of community building and participating in a community is a natural human process which people do every day. However, a large number of language learning methods and techniques have been introduced which are far from natural. Common language learning methods such as memorization, filling in gaps and grammar drills are still employed in the majority of language learning classroom communities. These methods are divorced from the processes of socio-cultural language learning. This research shows how a learner developed her English language skills by interacting with other members of her classroom community and that the learning process is located in a particular social context. People such as teachers and peers in the community can help the learners by providing scaffolding, and multiple forms of assistance to make the learning environment a community of practice.

CONCLUSION

Learners negotiate meaning of languages, their roles, their culture, and its social identities in a community (Ellis, 1999). These findings in particular language classroom social practices, in the framework of Lave and Wenger's CoP model, may suggest the enhancement of communicative approach to language teaching. One implication of this research is that the model of language learning education should shift from only focusing on individual learner's target language proficiency improvement to participants' community involvement learning takes place within classroom CoPs through diverse social practices.

People learn and gain knowledge and skills to engage from community building and participating tasks through their interactions, which are based on social culture of language learning. However, some language learning classroom environments, which is based on behaviourism, is far from it. While the concept of communities of practice is not limited to English

learning, the fundamental idea of communities of practice can be embedded into language learning and makes the learning experience more authentic, as it facilitates the transfer of skills learnt for use in the wider community to the classroom. Teachers, peers, and others in the wider community can help learners by providing support, consisting of multiple forms of assistance, to learn the communicative culture and the language (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). Through interaction with other learners can gradually be encouraged to help newcomers become more proficient in the language and the culture, moving from the periphery toward core participation in their L2 language community.

Many issues regarding communities of practices which have arisen from observations and analyses could not be dealt with in detail because this study consists of short term observation with a small number of participants in a particular classroom. A longitudinal study into learners' development as community members would enrich this present study. While the length of this research allowed me to clarify the process of how novices become experienced learners, a longer period of observation would be required to identify how learners, as peripheral learners, becomes full members of the community. In order to maintain my subject's motivation in terms of learning the target language, I chose to converses with her mainly in English. As a result, misunderstandings occurred during interviews and her English proficiency was not high enough to allow her to express her feelings properly. Therefore it was necessary to further data such learners' self-reflective writing. The other limitation in this study is how the result of data analysis of a small scale study can be generalised.

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