

**CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS OF TEACHERS AND
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PUPILS THROUGH A MUSICAL
PROJECT: AN ANALYSIS FROM A SOCIO-CULTURAL
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**




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Introduction

- In the year 2011, the official requirement of “foreign language activities” (English) planned for 5th and 6th graders at public elementary schools will be introduced in Japan under the guidance of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).
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Introduction

- However, research addressing the need of EFL classroom teaching at Japanese elementary schools is **scarce**.
- How learners engage in classroom activities in collaboration with experts or more capable interlocutors has yet to be fully examined. It is critical that **we understand teacher-student and teacher-teacher interactional patterns in classroom activities in an FL context**, because this will help us better understand language development in the classroom and **benefit teaching practices**.

Literature Review

- Research in the field of SLA has conventionally focused on the learners' L2 development as *input* (Krashen, 1985) and *output* (Swain, 1993).

Recently, however, researchers' attention has shifted toward a process oriented approach that seeks to examine "the learning process between the time of receiving the input and time of producing utterances on their own" (Takahashi, 1998, p.392).

Literature Review

- Under these circumstances, much attention has been paid to **the socio-cultural theory** that regards learning as a socially mediated process and human cognition as developing through social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory asserts that the psycholinguistic process is not separate from its social setting (Lantolf, 1994; Newman & Holzman, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978): **the two are mutually constitutive.**

Literature Review

- In order to understand the process of solving tasks and problems in L2 learning, **the zone of proximal development (ZPD)** has been the subject of growing interest among SLA researchers (e.g, Ohta, 1995; Adair-Hauck & Donato, 1994; Takahashi, 1998).
- According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is defined as “**the difference between the child’s developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p.86)**”.
- When young learners are learning languages, teachers or practitioners fill the gap between the learner’s actual level and the potential level with **their assistance, or “scaffolding”**.

Literature Review

Authors	These are the examples of classroom related studies based on the notion of the ZPD
Takahashi (1998)	on the longitudinal study of young learners' scaffolded collaboration in the ZPD in an elementary school Japanese class in the US
Adair-Hanch & Donato (1994)	teacher-learner collaboration within the ZPD analyzing communicative dynamics in studying French grammar
Ohta (2000)	learner-learner collaboration in the ZPD with students studying Japanese in the US
Kanegy (1999)	classroom interaction and socialization of children using video-recorded naturalistic data to analyze daily routines at an immersion school in a JFL context

Objectives of the study

The objects of the current study are to investigate :

- (1) how teachers scaffold students' language performance and how their scaffolding patterns change over time;
- (2) how student-student interaction patterns in the classroom change over time;
- (3) how the pattern of teacher-teacher interactions change over time.



Methodology

The present study employs qualitative research :
mainly **discourse analysis** of classroom
interactions .

In this study, we obtained **naturalistic data**
including **video recordings** and **observation**
notes in which teachers' narratives were
included.

Study Contexts



The study was conducted in a public elementary school in **Osaka, Japan**.

Team-Teaching Style	
HRT	Homeroom Teacher
JTE	Japanese Teachers of English (the language specialist)

*Team-teaching style is common in the Japanese elementary school context.

Study Context: The Musical Program

- The story was adapted from a well-known American movie. In the musical script, the original story takes place in a kingdom of animals in Africa where a lion rules over the other wild animals. Upon the death of the old king, the kingdom is invaded by hyenas. In a climactic battle, the king's son, leading the other animals, defeats the hyenas, and all the animals are happy to have a new king.

LION KING

because these students love to sing songs and play their roles in front of their parents.



Scenes

The musical was consisted with 8 scenes so each class was responsible for 2 scenes. But all students had to learn all scripts.

Study Context:

Time schedule up to the Musical Project

Dates	Scenes	Songs
Day 1: September 11, 2007	The Scenes 1, 2	One song
Day2: October 9, 2007	The Scenes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	One song
Day3: October, 31, 2007	The Scenes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	One song
Day 4: November, 26, 2007	N/A	Three Songs
Day5: December, 13, 2007	N/A	Three Songs
Day6: January, 18, 2008	The Scenes 3, 7	Four Songs
Day7: January, 24, 2008	The Scenes 3, 7	Four Songs

Note: We had only 7 classroom lessons .
The seven classroom lessons were lasting 45 minutes each.

Methodology: *Participants*

Participants	Boys	Girls
32 students 10 & 11 years old	15	17

In this study, there were 4 classes totaling 126 students who participated in the musical as a whole. We focused on one of them for analysis.

(English Experiences)

Their English experiences before the musical project was 11 hours (2 hrs in the third grade, 2 hrs in the fourth grades and 7 hrs in the fifth grade.



Methodology: *Participants*

JTE (T₁) Japanese Teachers of English <i>(The First Author)</i>	HRT(T₂) Homeroom Teacher	JTE (T₃) Japanese Teachers of English
<ul style="list-style-type: none">· the leading role in language teaching in the classroom· responsible for production of the musical, scripts, dialogs and all language related matters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· the role of classroom control <p>(Note: In a Japanese elementary school context, HRTs are responsible for taking care of students and teach most subjects)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· the assistant role in language teaching in the classroom

Methodology: *Procedures*



The study focuses on the classroom practice sessions, all of which were **video-recorded** using **two video cameras** placed at the right-front and left-front of the classroom.

Classroom discourse, consisting of teacher-student, student-student, and teacher-teacher interactions, and etc. were **transcribed into written format for analysis (Protocols)**.



And also, **JTE(T₃)'s observation notes** were obtained.

Methodology: *Procedures*

- Day3, Day6 and Day 7 were closely examined, and on all these occasions, Scene 7 was practiced.

Lessons	Protocols	Dates
Day 3	Protocol 1	October 31, 2007
Day 6	Protocol2	January 18, 2008
Day 7	Protocol3	January 25, 2008

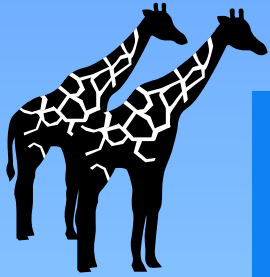
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Day6: January, 18, 2008	The Scenes 3, 7	Four Songs
Day7: January, 24, 2008	The Scenes 3, 7	Four Songs

Note: We focused on these three days for analysis.

Making the Musical: Video



Protocol1
(October 31, 2007):
The JTEs stood
behind the students to
whisper dialogs to
help them out



Protocol1 (Day3)

Protocol 1: Scene 7 Elementary School 5th Graders (Day 3: October 31, 2007)

T1: JTE (responsible for language- leading role)
T2: HRT (responsible for classroom control)
T3: JTE (responsible for language-support role)

SS: Students

S1, S2, etc.: Individual students

A1 T1: So, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight... Eight volunteers!

(T2 tries to point out voluntary students)

A2 T2: Hai, ikimasuyo.

T2: Are you ready?

A3 T1: Hai ikuyo.

T1: Are you ready?

A4 T3: Hai, ikuyo.

T3: Are you ready?

A5 T1: Moucyotto mae deyoka.

T1: Come up to front.

(all the teachers are trying to make students come up to the front and make them quiet)

(then T1 and T3 stand behind the students to whisper the dialogus)

A6 (T1: Nala?)

S1: Nala?

A7 (T3 : Who are you?)

S2: Who are you?

A8 (T1 : Simba? Simba!)

S2: Simba, Simba!

A9 (T1 : I'm Timon)

S3: I'm Timon.

A10 (T1 : I'm Pumbaa)

S4: I'm Pumbaa.

A11 (T3: I'm Nala. Nice to meet you)

S2: I'm Nala. Nice to meet you.

A12 (T1: Nice to meet you, too).

S1, S3, S4: Nice to meet you, too

A13 (T3 :Nice to meet you, too)

SS: Nice to meet you, too.

A14 T1: Very good!

Analysis of the Protocol1

- For students, it was the first time to practice the dialogs from this Scene.
- In this scene, a leading character accidentally meets an old female friend, and she introduces herself to his friends.
- Although students were willing to come up to the front to play a role, they were still not confident enough to say the words and sentences. The teachers knew the students were enthusiastic, so they always encouraged them and said, “It is OK to make a mistake”, and “We will help you”. After HRT (T₂) chose volunteer students, the JTEs (T₁, T₃) stood behind the students to whisper dialogs to help them out (A₆ to A₁₃), as they knew the students still needed teachers’ help. Although the students were not able to produce the words and sentences by themselves, with teacher scaffolding, they were able to produce utterances (A₆ to A₁₃).

Analysis of the Protocol1

- In the class, teachers always provided positive feedback to students in the form of “Very good!” (A14), as they knew positive feedback reinforces students’ confidence; all the students who came up to the front seemed to be satisfied and confident after their performance.

Protocol 12 (Day 6)

Protocol 2: Scene 7 Elementary School 5th Graders (Day 6: January 18, 2008)

T1: JTE (responsible for language- leading role)
T2: HRT (responsible for classroom control)
T3: JTE (responsible for language-support role)

SS: Students

S1, S2, etc.: Individual students

B1 S1: Hi, Nala!

B2 T2: Who are you?

B3 S2: Who are you?

B4 T2: Simba? Simba! Saisyoha hontouni Simba nanokashira no Simba, tsugiwa “aa, Simba” nanya no Simba.

T2: Simba? Simba! When you say Simba the first time, it means “are you really Simba?”, and when you say Simba the second time, it means “oh, you are really Simba”.

B5 T2: Simba?

B6 S2: Simba?

B7 T2: Simba!

B8 S2: Simba!

B9 T2: Un, sorede, Timon ga pyu-n to detekite, “I’m Timon”.

T2: Yes, then Timon rushes in and says, “I’m Timon”.

B10 S3: I’m Timon!

B11 SS: (students are laughing as HRT pushed him to the front and S3 spoke out well)

B12 T2: Pumbaa ga detekite “I’m Pumbaa”

T2: Pumbaa comes here and says “I’m Pumbaa”.

B13 S4: I’m Pumbaa!!!

B14 SS: (students are laughing as S4 acted too well).

Protocol 12 (Day 6)

B15 T2: Anatawa dare? “Who are you?”

T2: Who are you? “who are you?”

B16 S3, S4: Who are you?

B17 T2: I’m Nala.

B18 S2: I’m Nala.

B19 T2: Nice to meet you, Nala.

B20 S3: Nice to meet you, Nala.

(HRT:T2 points at S4)

B21 S4: ha.. Nice to meet you...Nala.

S4: umm.. Nice to meet you...Nala.

B22 T2: Nice to meet you too!

B23 S2: Nice to meet you too!

B24 T2: sonoato Rafiki ga arawareru. Rafiki ga
“hello!”.

T2: Then Rafiki shows up and says “hello!”.

B25 S5: Hello.

B26 T2: Who are you?

B27 S1: Who are you?

B28 T2: You are Mufasa’s boy.

B29 S5: You are Mufasa’s boy.

B30 SS: (students are laughing as S5 sounded
funny.)

B31 T2: Simba ga “you know my father?”.

T2: Simba says “you know my father?”

B32 S1: You know my father?

B33 T2: otousan shitteruno? “wait” matte!
“wait!”.

T2: you know my father, “wait” wait “wait!”.

B34 S1: Wait!

B35 T2: honde, Rafiki ga Simba wo tsurete pride
land ni kaeru. Rafiki ga tsurete kaeru.

*T2: Then, Rafiki brings Simba to the Pride Land.
Rafiki brings them back home.*

B36 T1: hai, very good!

T1: yes, very good!

B37 T1: sugoi, sugoi, yoku dekiteimasu.

T1: it was very very good!

Analysis of the Protocol₁₂

- In Protocol 2, all the characters in the musical had been decided, so students were aware of their roles in the musical play.
- The teachers' roles also had changed, as HRT (T₂) was more actively participated. Because, the HRT's understanding of the content of the musical had increased so that she could guide her students by herself.
- HRT (T₂) encouraged students to produce dialogs and also explained the situations and acting at the same time (e.g., B₄, B₉, B₂₄). For example, "When you say Simba the first time, it means 'Are you really Simba?', and when you say Simba the second time, it means 'Oh, you are really Simba!'". HRT (T₂) also changed the intonation of "Simba?" (high rise)₁ (B₄, B₅) and "Simba!" (high fall) (B₄, B₇). Students were not yet confident enough to say their dialogs, so the HRT helped students in producing the utterances mixing Japanese and English with detailed explanations (e.g., B₄, B₉, B₂₄).

Analysis of the Protocol2

- The teacher was modeling for S₃ (B₁₉) so that S₃ was able to say “Nice to meet you, Nala” (B₂₀), but S₄ was able to say: “Nice to meet you...Nala” (B₂₁) **without the teacher’s modeling**; this was the first time a student had actually even spoken those dialogs.
- About **other students in the class, they were also socially involved** (B₁₁, B₁₄, B₃₀). They were smiling and laughing, so created a comfortable classroom atmosphere.

Protocol 13 (Day 7)

Protocol 3: Scene 7 Elementary School 5th Graders (Day 7: January 24, 2008)

T1: JTE (responsible for language- leading role)

T2: HRT (responsible for classroom control)

T3: JTE (responsible for language-support role)

SS: Students

S1, S2, etc.: Individual student

C1 S1: Nala?

C2 S2: Who are you? Simba? Simba!

C3 T1: sousousou, Simba? Simba!

Odoroite kudasaine

T1: *Yes, yes, yes, "Simba? Simba!" Please be surprised*

C4 SS: (students are smiling as T1 acted like very surprised).

C5 S2 :Simba? Simba!

C6 T1: Good!

C7 S3: I'm Timon.

C8 S4: I'm Pumbaa.

C9 SS: (students are laughing as S4 acted dramatically)

C10 T2: *mochotto serifu attayaro? ... who are you?*

T2: *You had a little more to say.. who are you? (said in a low voice, so students were not able to hear that)..*

C11 S4: e?

S4: *umm?*

C12: S3: Who are you?

C13 S4: aa, Who are you?

S4: *a-ha, Who are you?*

C14 T1: I'm Nala.

C15 S1: I'm Nala.

C16 T2: san hai

T2: *one two*

C17 S3,4: Nice to meet you, Nala.

C18 T2: san hai.

T2: *one two*

C19 S3,4: Nice to meet you, Nala.

C20 S2: Nice to meet you, too!

C21 T1: Good!!!

Analysis of Protocol 3

- In Protocol 3, both JTEs (T₁, T₃) and HRT (T₂) tried to interact with students only when they needed teacher scaffolding.
- When they interrupted students' discourse, they tried to show them how to act by showing emotions (C₃), praised them (C₆), or gave them a cue (C₁₀) so that the students were able to say the words or sentences.
- In the study, S₄ forgot to say a line of dialog so the HRT (T₂) assisted and said "You had a little more to say.. who are you?" (said in a low voice, so S₄ was not able to hear it) (C₁₀). In Protocols 1 and 2, either JTE (T₁) or HRT (T₂) modeled and students repeated; but, in Protocol 3 HRT (T₂) only gave students a cue, saying, for example, "You had a little more to say...". Scaffold patterns were obviously changed in Protocol 3 compared to Protocols 1 and 2.

Analysis of Protocol 3

- Though the HRT (T2) added in a small voice “Who are you?”, S₄ did not hear the HRT saying “Who are you?”. S₄ said “umm?” and forgot completely what to say (C₁₁). S₃ realized what S₄ was supposed to say, so S₃ cut in and helped S₄. **S₃ performed peer scaffolding**, saying to S₄ “Who are you?” (C₁₂). Then S₄ finally remembered the dialog and said “aa, Who are you?” (C₁₃). It was the first time that peer-scaffolding was observed in the whole practice.



In Protocols 1 and 2, students were still unsure about what to say and how to act, but in Protocol 3, students seemed to understand the meaning of their dialogs in the musical and produced utterances more emotionally in tune with their acting. Compared to Protocols 1 and 2, HRT (T2) showed greater contextual understanding and was more involved in the practice sessions.

Changes in Scaffolding Patterns

Figure 1: September 2007

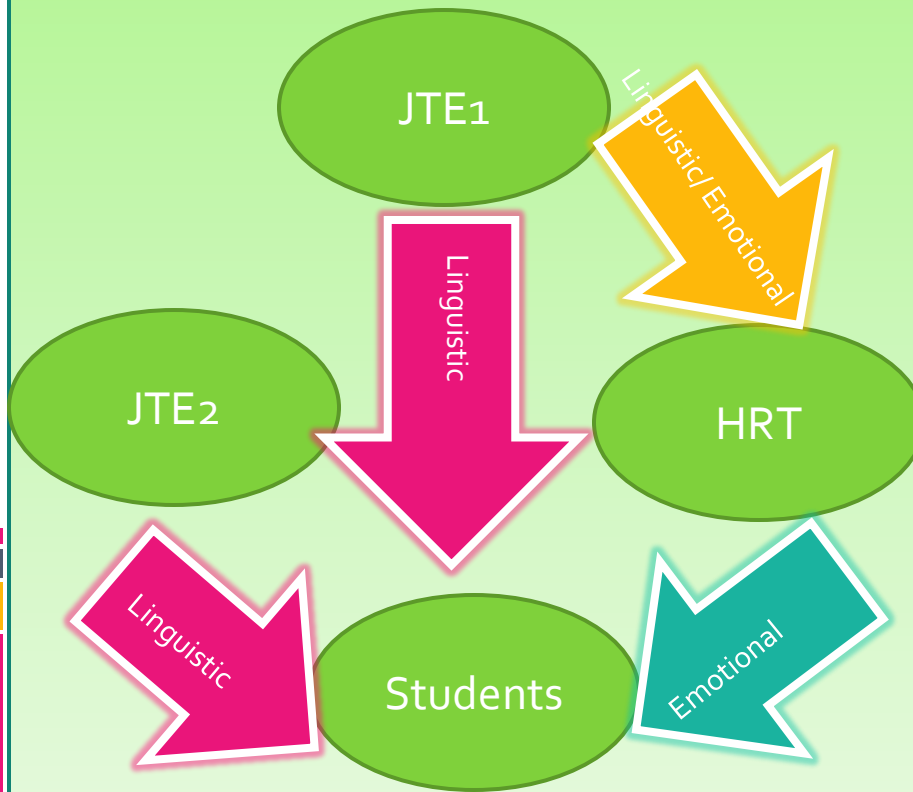
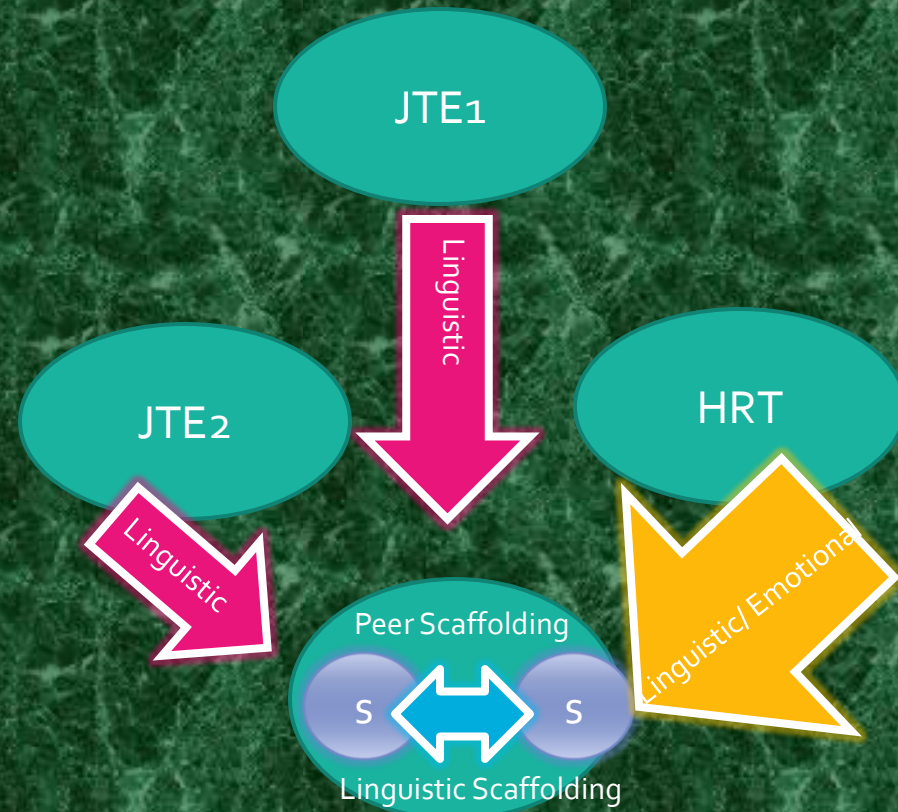


Figure 2: January 2008



S: Individual Student

Discussion

- The aim of this study was to investigate:
- (1) how teachers scaffold students' language performance and how their scaffolding patterns change over time,
- (2) how student-student interaction patterns in the classroom change over time and
- (3) how the pattern of teacher-teacher interactions change over time.

Discussion: RQ1 (T-S)

- In Protocol 1, JTE (T₁) mainly focused on modeling and repetition and all the students' utterances were produced after first being modeled by the teacher. JTEs (T₁, T₃) stood behind students in order to support them when students tried to say dialogs in L2.
- In Protocol 2, the HRT (T₂) was more involved in the musical practice and tried to explain the context in which each line is uttered. The HRT showed emotional involvement and interpreted the scenes using Japanese and English at the same time.
- In Protocol 3, both JTE (T₁) and HRT (T₂) supported students only when students needed their scaffolding; for instance, HRT (T₂) only gave a cue to students. From Protocol 1 to Protocol 3, the teachers' scaffolding style had obviously changed and it was evident that their scaffolding in Protocol 3 was not as prevalent as in Protocols 1 and 2.

Discussion RQ2 (S-S)

- In Protocols 1 and 2, peer scaffolding was not observed at all; however as lessons moved on, students started to help each other when their friends had trouble speaking in English.
- In Protocol 3, students' active participation as well as interdependence had become more obvious (C12, C13), and their active participation became more dynamic in the course of time.

Discussion RQ3 (T-T)

- In Protocol 1, the JTE (T₁) had a leading role in teacher-student scaffolding including modeling and repetition. At this point, HRT (T₂) depended on JTEs (T₁, T₃) linguistically, so HRT (T₂) was not teaching but observing and learning.
- Teachers did not discuss who was to be the main teacher; however, by Protocol 2 (Day 6), HRT (T₂) started to play the main role, tried to be actively involved, and taught students by herself.
- In Protocol 3, a good team-teaching style was observed: both JTE (T₁) and HRT (T₂) were actively involved. JTE (T₁) assisted both HRT (T₂) and students in Protocol 1; however, assistance to the HRT was reduced in Protocol 3.

Conclusion

- In the study, the findings indicate that teachers' scaffolding patterns changed over time as shown in the three protocols. By the time they moved from Protocol 1 through Protocol 3, peer-scaffolding was revealed for the first time and teacher scaffolding was gradually reduced as students had learned to produce their dialogs.
- Although this musical project was quite challenging for learners as they had had little exposure to English prior to the project, the study shows if sufficient scaffolding is provided, learners may be able to "outperform their actual level and extend to their potential level" (Takahashi, p.401, 1998).

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