A linguistic ethnography of negotiation of meaning in English for medical purposes classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Negotiation of meaning refers to intricate processes through which interlocutors can modify their speech to ensure the production and reception of comprehensible input. This empirical study aimed to thoroughly investigate the multifaceted aspects of negotiation of meaning and identify the influential factors shaping this process during classroom interactions within an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) class at a medical college in Saudi Arabia. Employing an eclectic qualitative methodology that incorporates key principles of Linguistic Ethnography, this research presented a comprehensive analysis of data collected throughout the entire fall semester of the academic year 2020/2021. The rich dataset stemmed from meticulous observations of ten EMP classroom sessions. Findings from this study shed light on the teacher's strategic employment of various techniques, including confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests, and other forms of repairs, to effectively negotiate meaning in the classroom. Moreover, the investigation underscores the significance of factors such as familiarity with topics, students' proficiency levels, and nature of tasks undertaken, as critical determinants influencing the negotiation of meaning in classroom interaction. By emphasizing the positive and essential role of negotiation of meaning, this study underscores its contribution to optimizing input comprehensibility and enhancing overall classroom interactions.

Contribution/ Originality: This research is unique in its contribution to explore how various linguistic strategies, such as confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests are employed in EMP context to facilitate meaning-making and to ensure input comprehensibility. By shedding light on these aspects, this research contributes valuable insights to the field of language education, specifically in the domain of English for Medical Purposes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Classroom interactions have received increasing interest in recent years and have changed the role of learners and teachers and their patterns of interactions. Students are no longer passive receivers of learning and skills. They

are active members in classrooms and more engaged in the dynamic student-oriented learning in which they have to participate, negotiate and reflect on classroom learning. During classroom interactions, students look for clarification, ask questions, and demand an explanation in case of a communication breakdown. They also engage in meaning-making process and negotiation of meaning to make their input comprehensible and clear.

Classroom interaction brings in the concept of negotiation of meaning, which entails the positive learning resulting from interactions. Negotiation of meaning refers to interactional practices that arise when two or more participants work together to establish a bi-directional comprehension of a particular utterance. During the negotiation of meaning, a receiver demands clarification or confirmation of a particular utterance, and the speaker replies to the request by simplifying, elaborating or repeating the utterance (Flora, 2020). Negotiating meaning usually involves certain discourse stratagems, such as clarifying a request, confirming understanding, repeating, recasting or restating, which are considered essential in developing learning (Baharun, Harun, & Othman, 2018; Kaivanpanah & Miri, 2017).

Students' engagement in classroom activities enables them to participate actively in classroom interactions and practice target language, thus improving language competence (Al-Smadi & Ab Rashid, 2017). If a student can speak, he/she can communicate information, opinions, and ideas effortlessly. Some students experience some difficulties in speaking, as they lack adequate lexical items, insufficient grammatical knowledge, inaccurate pronunciation or shyness to talk to class members. In this vein, Rafika, Hidayat, Husna, and Alek (2022) stated that students should employ negotiation of meaning strategies to avoid misunderstanding in conveying information. Negotiation of meaning is the glue to fixing communication breakdowns. Negotiation of meaning enables speakers to construct and reconstruct intended meaning to secure comprehension and avoid misunderstanding (Awalin & Purwanti, 2021; Ginting, 2017). Thus, this study adopted an empirical approach to thoroughly explore the intricate aspects of negotiation of meaning and identify the influential factors that shape this process within the classroom interactions of an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The interaction hypothesis by Long (1996) suggests that the negotiation of meaning is a critical element of classroom interaction. The regularity of certain occurrences in the target form produces input adjustments and adverse evaluations for increasing content expectedness and clarity. Such processes encourage observing innovative conditions, breaks in inter-language, a divergence between output and input and connections of innovative forms of meaning. Interactions enhance understanding, negotiation of meaning and mastery of semantically conditional talk. Role-play, class participation, group and pair work, and teacher and student talks are among the tasks and activities which excite classroom interaction for negotiating meaning (Flora, 2020; Rahmah, Komariah, & Samad, 2020).

According to Pica, Holliday, Lewis, and Morgenthaler (1989), the negotiation of meaning comprises several strategies. For example, a listener may trigger a signal that indicates an incomplete understanding of the speaker's exchange; the listener, in this case, may signal a confirmation check through repetition with raising intonation, or he/she may signal a clarification request. The speaker, in this case, modifies or repeats information to the listener until comprehension is achieved.

Several studies have investigated the importance of negotiation of meaning in promoting classroom interactions and language learning (e.g., (Al-Smadi, Rashid, & Altamimi, 2020; Irmayani & Rachmajanti, 2017; Rafika et al., 2022)). These studies will be reviewed in this section as their findings serve as the backdrop for understanding how meaning is constructed through the negotiation of meaning.

Irmayani and Rachmajanti (2017) asserted that teachers must vary the teaching styles and topics to enrich classroom interaction and negotiation of meaning. The students must be offered opportunities to negotiate meaning as the negotiation of meaning stimulates students' talk and language varieties. Teachers should allow for more

student(s)-student(s) interaction, more teacher-student(s) interaction, and more repetition of the target language to enrich the classroom language and interaction.

Rahmah et al. (2020) employed a qualitative methodology to investigate the negotiation of meaning strategies used by English teachers in classroom interaction. Findings revealed that negotiation of meaning strategies was often employed by the English teacher. Trigger was the most frequent strategy employed by the teacher, while self-modification was the teacher's most significant way to respond to the student's comprehension requests. This study concluded that negotiation of meaning strategies handling communication breakdowns in classroom interactions is vital for improving language competence and skills.

Al-Smadi et al. (2020) in their study of classroom discourse in EMP context, observed the modification and simplification in classroom talk to account for different levels of students in the classroom. Repetition and paraphrasing were rich in classroom discourse to ensure input comprehensibility and to clarify medical language to class members. Classroom interaction drives teaching and learning processes as it involves teacher-student(s) interaction and student(s)-student(s) interaction. The teacher and the students modified their talk to ensure input comprehensibility, avoid confusion and stimulate classroom interactions. Negotiation of meaning effectively engages students with different levels and ensure input comprehensibility.

Rafika et al. (2022) analyzed negotiation of meaning strategies in graduate students' classroom discussions. Findings revealed that self-modification, self-repetition, confirmation check, and clarification request are marked in classroom discussion. Self-modification was the most frequently used strategy in classroom discussions as a teacher need to respond to students' request by making modifications to their speech. The study concluded that negotiation of meaning is key to language improvements and helps to overcome misunderstandings between students and teachers in classroom interactions.

Overall, while the existing literature provides a foundation for understanding negotiation of meaning in classroom interactions, there still exist certain gaps in the literature that warrant further exploration. One notable gap is the limited focus on the specific context of an English for Medical Purposes (EMP) classroom. While some studies briefly touch upon the EMP domain, there is a lack of comprehensive research specifically dedicated to investigating the negotiation of meaning within this specialized field. Given the unique language demands and communicative needs in medical settings, there is a need for more empirical studies that specifically address the negotiation of meaning in EMP classrooms. Such research could shed light on the specific strategies, challenges, and effective instructional practices that contribute to successful negotiation of meaning in this context.

3. METHODOLOGY

This empirical work aimed to investigate the processes of meaning-making in an EMP class in one of the medical colleges in Saudi Arabia. This study used a qualitative approach to collect data through classroom observation techniques. The following subsections offer detailed descriptions of the research methodology used.

3.1. Study Context

This study was conducted at a medical college in Saudi Arabia. The college comprises departments such as Emergency Medicine, Nursing, Medical Imaging, Health Administration, and Laboratory Science. In Saudi Arabia, undergraduate students must undertake a Preparatory Year before they start studying their preferred discipline. Students in the Preparatory Year must study several courses, e.g., English, Biology, and Computer Science to qualify for their desired field of study. Students in the Preparatory Year take 20 English classes a week.

3.2. Sample

The sample in this study consists of one (01) English language teacher and 20 male students aged 18 to 22 years. The teacher in this study has a master's degree in teaching English as a foreign language. He is Arab with

over 20 years of English language teaching experience. The students, on the other hand, are all Arabs, and they are at A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for language learning (CEFR). A2-level students can handle specific, simple information and can express themselves in familiar settings.

3.3. Data Generation and Analysis

Data in this study were collected through classroom observation. Ten classroom observations were carried out. Data generation in this study was undertaken during the fall semester of the academic year 2020/2021. As a consistent method, every time the classroom observation took place, an informal chat with the teacher was carried out to get further clarification of what had happened during the observation. All the observations were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. Data in this study were analyzed inductively by Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic approach, which comprised six stages: a) familiarizing with data, b) generating initial codes, c) searching for themes, d) reviewing themes, e) defining and naming themes, and f) producing the report.

Recorded data were all transcribed for analysis. The following codes were used in the transcription: (CO1) for classroom observation number one; (M10) for minute ten and (IC) for informal chats. The teacher's name was replaced by (T), and the names of the students were replaced by (S1), (S2), (S3) and so on. For analyzing data, various exchanges in class were compared: teacher to student(s) versus student(s) to student(s) in group work, instructions for initiating group work versus feedback on them. These items were examined to identify how members of the class reacted to one another and how the meaning was constructed in the EMP classroom.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Negotiation of Meaning Process

Negotiation of meaning involves teacher-student(s) interaction and student(s)-student(s) interaction. It was found that the teacher employed the following types of negotiation of meaning strategies: clarification request, confirmation check, comprehension check and other repair, which are represented in recast and correction. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of each strategy.

Table 1. Number and frequency of negotiation of meaning strategies employed by the teacher.

Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Comprehension check	22	7.19
Clarification request	36	11.77
Confirmation check	43	14
Other repairs	205	67

As shown in Table 1, other repairs (e.g., teacher's correction of students' inappropriate language use) are the most frequent strategy used by the teacher. Students' wrong or inappropriate exchange requires the teacher to modify student(s) exchanges or replace them with accurate ones. It is worth mentioning that the teacher's experience and preparation (the lesson plan includes a section about anticipated problems) enabled him to understand the meaning of the exchange that the student(s) were trying to communicate. This section briefly examines each of these meaning strategies.

4.1.1. Other Repairs

The 'other repairs' was the most frequent strategy used by the teacher. For instance, when the teacher found ungrammaticality and inappropriate utterance made by the students, the teacher would move to offer feedback and place appropriate and correct language model/s. The following transcript offers an example of 'other repairs'.

Extract 1

1   S9: Subjective notes are what a nurse sees in the patient.

2   T: Subjective notes are what the patient says about his or her problem.

3   Ok… Subjective notes refer to the patient description of his or her.

4   Condition… Nurses' notes are called objective… Alright… objectives.

5   Notes are made by Nurse. One more time S9.

6   S9: ok ok objective notes.   (CO4, M 26).

In Extract 1, the topic was Subjective- Objective Assessment Plan (SOAP) notes. The student provided the wrong answer which required the teacher to correct him (line 2). Offering the correct model and asking the student to confirm it (line 5) is an effective strategy for both the teacher and the students. In one of the informal chats, both the teacher and the students said that repair and recast are more time-saving and it minimizes demotivation and discouragement (IC, 6). Other repair triggers negotiation and offers chances for making input comprehensible. Offering repair is considered an efficient strategy as it saves effort and time compared to asking questions, offering cues and/or asking students to clarify their answers, especially low-level students whose English competence is still low.

4.1.2. Confirmation Check

Confirmation check is the second most frequent strategy used by the teacher. A confirmation request is made by the receiver to make sure what is said, comprehended, and heard. Confirmation requests are usually repetitions with higher intonation. The following transcript provides an account for confirmation requests in data.

Extract 2

1   S20: Smoking cause cardvisclor /kɑːrdvæskr/ disease.

2   T: Do you mean cardiovascular?

3   S20: Yes… cardiovascular disease   (CO9, M13).

In Extract 2, the student needed to pronounce the word *cardiovascular* correctly which made the teacher ask for confirmation about what had been said (line 2). Therefore, the teacher repeated the word cardiovascular with higher intonation as a sign of a communication breakdown. The word *yes* in the third line indicates the end of the negotiation and a confirmation of the word.

4.1.3. Clarification Request

Clarification request was the third most frequent strategy used by the teacher. Clarification request refers to instances used by the hearer when they do not comprehend the instance and looks towards clarifying it. In case a student failed to deliver an utterance, it results in a communication breakdown and therefore the teacher requests clarification to indicate that what is said needs to be understood. Student(s) then reply to the request by paraphrasing or clarifying the instance to make it more comprehensible. The following transcript provides an account for clarification requests.

Extract 3

1   S11: The patient fall in forms.

2   T: I don't understand.

3   S11: The patient fall and sign form before go surgery.

4   T: Oh, yeah… the patient needs to FILL IN some forms and sign them. Ok

5   S11: Yes … fill in forms.   (CO9, M8).

In Extract 3, the student explained that the patient is required to fill in some forms before he or she is admitted to surgery. Though the teacher did not understand at first what was meant by the first sentence as the student said *fall in* (line 1) and requested the student to clarify his utterance by saying *I do not understand* (line 2). The phrasal

verb *fall in* (line 1) triggers negotiation. The teacher's clarification request is made declaratively in this example. The student then moved to clarify what he had said earlier (resolution) by adding more words to his exchange but failed to pronounce the word 'fill' correctly (line 3). Therefore, the teacher offered the target word and understood what the student tried to communicate with a rise in his intonation saying the word *fill in* (line 4).

The use of clarification requests as a sign of negotiation of meaning is related to the roles of students and the target language goals. The classroom language offers students chances to learn the target language, incorporating opportunities for negotiated knowledge and meaning. It was apparent that the clarification request had a significant role in learning a language as it encouraged students to clarify and adjust inaccurate exchanges during teacher negotiations.

It was noted in the observation that the teacher demanded clarification when the meaning of instance was not understood or even when he comprehended what had been said despite the inappropriateness of the instance. In both ways, it is evident that the teacher gives the feedback about the appropriateness of the students' utterance and student(s) adjust or clarify the instance regarding the teacher's feedback. It was also noted that clarification requests allowed, in some instances, self-correction and the avoidance of repeated mistakes during the course. The following transcript illustrates how the teacher offered the appropriate language model for the student.

Extract4

1   S13: Nurse don't like the patient.

2   T: The nurse does not get along well with the patient.

3   S13: Yes, teacher (CO10, M20).

The students in the Extract 4 needed to provide correct language forms about the relationship between the nurse and the patient. The teacher understood that the student was trying to use the term *get along well* in his answer (Line 1). Therefore, the teacher corrected the student's input by offering the appropriate language model to *get along well* (Line 2).

4.1.4. Comprehension Checks

Comprehension checks are expressions used by the speaker to make sure that what is said is understood by the receiver. The teacher uses various terms to check students' comprehension, such as 'Do you understand?', 'Is that clear?' 'Are you following?', 'Do you have any questions?' and like. The teacher explicitly checks students' comprehension and stimulates confirmation about what was said. The comprehension check is seen as an interactional tool for avoiding breakdowns in communication. Comprehension checks appear mostly after lecturing and providing instruction for students to work on a specific task. The following transcript offers an account for comprehension checks.

Extract 5

1   T: Patients need to inform the GP about any supplements or over the.

2   Counter drugs that the patient is taking. What is meant by over the counter?

3   Drugs are any medicine the patient can buy without a prescription, such as.

4   Vitamins. Again… medication without prescription… ok… We call them.

5   OVER THE COUNTER DRUG… Do you understand?   (CO9, M 37).

In Extract 5, the teacher explicitly asked students if they understood what is meant by over-the-counter drugs after introducing the term and explaining it by saying *do you understand?* (Line 5). This kind of checking permits the teacher to move on with the lesson. Also, in the previous example, the teacher clarified what is meant by over-the-counter drugs and repeated the term three times with exaggerated pronunciation (indicated with capital letters) to make the term comprehensible.

Briefly, comprehension is stretched when the teacher and the students restructure and modify their interactions through confirmation and clarification of their input, they actually make sure that their output is comprehensible.

4.2. Aspects Affecting Negotiation of Meaning

It is found in this study that negotiation of meaning depends to a larger extent on students' proficiency level, the familiarity of topic and type of task.

4.2.1. Students' Proficiency Level

Based on classroom observation, negotiation of meaning is highly dependent on the student's language level. High-level students were more active, engaged, confident, able to express their ideas and, ask about other ideas and modify their output. While low-level students were seen struggling while expressing their views to peers or to the teacher. Low-level students were seen as less engaged in the process of negotiating meaning. The following two transcripts show how the students' level affects meaning-making processes.

Extract 6

1 S16: Annabella is recovering from varicose vein surgery. Annabella suffers.

2 From asthma and a BMI of 30. Because of her weight, she finds it difficult.

3 To exercise. Also, she has suffered from mild depression in past. (CO8, 40).

Extract 7

1 S8: Annabel good at home now after hospital. Annabel is fat and don't.

2 Exercise. Annabel is past sick. (CO8, 43).

The teacher presented a patient case and asked the students to discuss it. It can be seen from Extracts 6 and 7 that S16 was able to talk about the case and give specific details about the patient and her history by giving the type of surgery (line 1), patient's body mass index (BMI) (line 2) and patient's previous health status (line 3). However, S8 is at a lower level, which is reflected in how he talked about the case. He failed to provide specific details about the patient's current and past health status.

It was also noted in the observation that those low-level students were more likely to engage in the negotiation process with their peers than with their teachers. One explanation is that students wanted to avoid the teacher labelling them as low-level or having the impression that they were unable to process whatsoever goes on in the classroom (IC, 6).

The following transcript shows how the same student is engaged in meaning-making with the teacher and another student.

Extract 8

1 T: How does the nurse facilitate communication with the patient?

2 S12: ... laughs.

3 T: laugh? … What do you mean?

4 S12: … nurse … (facial expression, smile).

5 T: Do you mean smiles?

6 S12: Yes (CO2, M22).

Extract 9

1 S13: How does the nurse facilitate communication with the patient?

2 S12: Nurse smiles… looks into the patient eye, and sits with the patient.

3 S13: What does it mean to sit with the patient?

4 S12: Sits in a chair and looks into the patient's eye, and talks.

5 S13: Do you mean the nurse sits at the same level with the patient and keeps a direct eye

6 contact to be friendly?

7 S12: What eye contact?

8 S13: Looks into the patient's eye when talking, not plays with the phone

9 S12: Ok, ok (CO2, M28).

The same student (S12) answered the question two times in these two extracts. The first was when the teacher asked him (Extract 8), and the second was when he responded to the same question but was asked by his colleague (Extract 9). In Extract 8, the student answered the teacher's question with the word *laughs* (line 2). When the teacher asked for clarification, *what did you mean*? (Line 3), the student paused and then chose to offer a non-verbal response in terms of facial expression acting and smiling, which is evident in (line 4). While in Extract (9), the student interacts with his colleague, it can be seen that the same student talked about three strategies for successful communication with patients (line 2). Also, the student clarified his input (line 4) after his colleague asked for clarification in (line 3). Moreover, S12 requested clarification (line 7) on the meaning of *eye contact*. It can be noted that the S12 was more engaged in the meaning-making process with his colleague than the teacher.

4.2.2. Familiarity with the Topic

It is apparent in the class observation that familiarity with the topic in classroom interaction initiates more processes of negotiation of meaning. Students are more confident to participate and take part in classroom interaction. Pica et al. (1989) claims that familiarity with the topic initiates less negotiation of meaning because students face little breakdowns in communication. However, it was seen in this study that familiarity with the case resulted in more practice negotiation of meaning with fewer communication breakdowns. When the case is familiar, students feel confident to send across messages, agree and disagree in discussion and it offers an opportunity to practice previously learned material. On the other hand, when the topic is unfamiliar, communication breakdowns occur.

The following two extracts show examples of meaning-making in familiar and less familiar topics.

Extract 10

1   T: Let us talk about healthy eating habits.
2   S3: Do not eat fatty food.
3   T: Good idea, S3… It is important to avoid fatty food.
4   S6: Eat little.
5   T: Brilliant S6… It is advised to eat small portions of food.
6   S19: Focus on vegetables and fruits.
7   T: Yes… Brilliant S19… It is advised to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables.
8   S17: Use little sugar and salt.
9   T: Yes … Yes … It is important to cut down on salt and sugar… Bravo…
10   S20: Always eat breakfast.
11   T: Brilliant … Do not skip breakfast.
12   S8: Avoid snacks, junk food.
13   T: Great idea, S8… Eating home-cooked food is better than junk food   (CO6, M8).

Familiarity with the topic stimulates more classroom interactions and meaning-making. The students offered several ideas for healthy eating habits. Also, it can be seen in the previous extract that there was no sign of communication breakdowns. The students offered several ideas for healthy eating habits, and the teacher responded to the students' input by confirming and submitting the appropriate language model (lines 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13).

In the following extract (Extract 11) , the lesson topic could have been more familiar and even new to some students, which resulted in more communication breakdowns during interactions. The following transcript illustrates how a less familiar topic initiates more communication breakdowns.

Extract 11

1   T: What are the symptoms and causes of Asthma?
2   S18: Weze.
3   T: What do you mean?

4   S18: Noisy breath.

5   T: Ok … Ok… WHEEZING … wheezing means to breathe nosily and.

6   With difficulty… Again S18.

7   S18: Wheezing.

8   S7: Smell of flowers.

9   T: Bravo S7… We call it Pollen … again … Pollen.

10   S1: Liquid.

11   T: Liquid? I do not understand.

12   S1: Liquid from the nose.

13   T: It is called MUCUS … Ok… MUCUS   (CO8, M10).

The teacher and the students talked about the symptoms and causes of Asthma. The student failed to correctly pronounce the word wheezing (line 2), which stimulated the teacher's request for clarification (line 3). The teacher's request for clarification here is in the interrogative form. The student then offered clarification regarding substitution (line 4) *noisy breath*. The teacher then provided the appropriate language model (line 5) and asked the student to repeat the answer. Also, the teacher requested clarification about the student's input and expressed declaratively; I *do not understand* (line 11). After the student clarified his input (line 12), the teacher offered the appropriate language model and repeated the term twice for confirmation (line 13).

Looking at the previous two extracts (10 & 11), it can be noted that in the first extract (10), the topic of the lesson was more familiar than in extract (11), which is evident in the number of clarification requests during the interaction. The first extract has no sign of communication breakdowns, while in the second extract, two clarification requests were made to ensure comprehensibility.

In classroom interaction, students were offered chances to work on communicative activities and initiate negotiation of meaning to express opinions, thoughts and intentions to secure mutual understanding. It was noted through the observation that communicative activities were more operative than other tasks for stimulating the negotiation of meaning. Also, it was pointed out that communicative activities in pair and group work initiated more meaning-making processes.

These factors were found to be of significant importance in the meaning process and therefore the study suggests that fewer communication breakdowns occur when the topic is familiar, while less familiar topics stimulate more communication breakdowns.

5. DISCUSSION

Negotiation of meaning is a positive and essential part of classroom talk. Both the teacher and the students employed several strategies to communicate meaning, seek confirmation, ask for clarification and ask about comprehension. This study has shown that the negotiation of meaning strategies ensures input comprehensibility and mutual understanding of participants involved in interactions and facilitates classroom learning. In this vein, Irmayani and Rachmajanti (2017) and Rouhshad, Wigglesworth, and Storch (2016) argue that negotiation promotes language acquisition as it enables students to understand language and varieties of language forms beyond their current competence level.

The teacher in this study employed negotiation of meaning strategies, i.e., clarification requests, comprehension checks, confirmation checks and other repairs. The most frequent method used by the teacher was other repairs. This teacher practice entails the teacher's attempts to correct students' output by providing students with a language model. The reason behind the highest frequency of other repairs can be explained as it is easier to offer correction than deal with communication breakdowns in terms of time and effort. This finding contrasts with Baharun et al. (2018) results in which confirmation request was the most dominant type. The students' output can explain the difference in findings. Confirmation requests indicate that the students offer an output which initiates

the teacher to confirm what he has heard. On the other hand, clarification requests and other repairs suggest that the student's work is incorrect or not understood, which demands further elaboration or correction.

Clarification requests were the second most frequent strategy by the teacher. The students' inadequate output triggered the teacher's clarification signals. In this manner, when the teacher detects a problem in students' production, the teacher attempts to modify the output or substitute it with an adequate language model. Using clarification requests as a negotiation signal is linked to the goals and roles of language classrooms. The language classroom aims to provide students with an environment that maximizes chances of interactive negotiation among partakers. For this reason, clarification request is essential as it enables students to modify or clarify input when interacting with the teacher. This is consistent with the findings of Pica et al. (1989); Rouhshad et al. (2016); Omar (2017) and Ginting (2017) who claim that clarification request indicates students' unclear exchange, and it affects the students' modification of their exchanges.

The findings of this study showed that negotiation of meaning depends on students' proficiency level, familiarity with the topic and type of task, which is consistent with the findings of Pica et al. (1989) and Awalin and Purwanti (2021). However, their conclusions were based on experimental studies in the language laboratory, while the results of this study reflect what was happening in the classroom. Students' proficiency level was a central aspect that influenced the amount of classroom negotiation and meaning-making. High-level students could present and discuss their ideas and were more into the negotiation of meaning.

The findings also show that type of task influenced responses to a large extent in classroom negotiation. This is in line with the results of Kaivanpanah and Miri (2017); Eslami and Kung (2016) and Baharun and Zakaria (2017). These studies investigated jigsaw and information gap tasks. Signs of negotiation of meaning were evident in those tasks, such as asking for help, clarification request, confirmation check and a demand for an explanation during classroom interactions. Similarly, in this study, information gap activities-initiated signs for negotiation of meaning and accounted for increasing students' interaction.

From the findings of this study, several pedagogical implications can be drawn. First, this study is valuable for English language teachers to introduce the advantages of negotiations of meaning in language learning. More importantly, English language teachers must construct learning materials that empower students to negotiate meaning during classroom interactions. Second, specific communicative tasks such as jigsaw and information gap tasks offer students additional opportunities to negotiate to tell, thus improving and sharpening language competence and skills. Third, English language students should be urged to use and practice communication strategies, for instance, negotiation of meaning strategies in classroom interactions. They should use communication strategies to convey meaning successfully.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated meaning-making processes and how they were negotiated to offer comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is essential in classroom interaction to avoid and overcome misunderstanding and communication breakdown. This study found that the teacher employed negotiation of meaning strategies in the form of clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks and other repairs represented in recast and correction.

On the other hand, students' proficiency level, familiarity with the topic and type of task affected the negotiation of meaning. High-level students were able to communicate meaning more than low-level students. Familiar topics account for fewer communication breakdowns and more student talk. Also, communicative tasks initiated more classroom interactions and students' talk. Since negotiation of meaning enables speakers to understand each other and offer chances to practice the target language, teachers should support learners with the strategies needed to communicate comprehensible input when interacting with each other.

In light of the findings of this study, future studies can explore types of communicative tasks that trigger the negotiation of meaning strategies and the role of non-verbal signs.

Also, future studies can focus on finding the negotiation of meaning patterns in other modes of communication, like instant messaging applications. Furthermore, students' proficiency level as an aspect which impacts negotiation of the meaning process can be the focus of future studies; students in this study were all at (A2) level based on the CEFR, and future studies with students of different language levels can yield additional findings.

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