1. Introduction

Many analyses of intercultural communication are based on a Gumperzian model of mismatch. According to this view, conversation between speakers of different cultural backgrounds is seen to often go awry because of contrasting discourse styles and the mismatched interpretation of contextualization cues, or framing conventions of talk. What to a speaker from one cultural background implies anger, for example, may suggest simply foregrounding emphasis to a speaker from another cultural background. The result is that both speakers may misinterpret the metacommunicative cues of how to frame the surface-level linguistic signals of conversation. If the misunderstanding multiplies, the speakers can become sucked into a progressively discordant and potentially acrimonious spiral of inadvertent miscommunication that serves to reinforce negative stereotypes about cultural groups and contribute to racial discrimination against minorities.

This approach to intercultural and interethnic communication has been widely influential in pragmatic analyses of native speaker (NS)-nonnative speaker (NNS) conversation, especially in institutional contexts. The model is significant in part because it specifically addresses issues of discrimination in language use, seeking to create a more tolerant awareness of different cultural styles of speaking, and in part because it recognizes the sociolinguistic grounding of language and how culturally situated background knowledge informs the way speakers talk. Nevertheless, in spite of its widespread theoretical acceptance and common-sense appeal, there are serious problems with an approach to NS-NNS interaction which assumes that culturally specific discourse conventions (and culturally determined interpretive processes) generate misunderstanding. An overemphasis on this type of analysis not only slight the mediated character of interaction, but also tends to obscure discriminatory social attitudes and practices which unfairly marginalize NNSs.

In this paper, I want to challenge the Gumperzian analysis of mismatch and miscommunication in cross cultural conversation, particularly in terms of...
contextualization and the micro-level signaling of context. Instead of relying on a contrastive approach to "culturally different" communicative styles, I situate the metacommunicative framing of utterance cues within the social character of interaction which speakers jointly structure. I argue that interpretation is mediated by the character of the social activity in which it is situated, and that the discourse of the NNS is in part constructed by the NS's either amplifying or reducing response to the interlocutor's speech. I illustrate my argument with the analysis of four excerpts taken from naturally occurring conversations involving Japanese speakers of English and their NS interlocutors in the U.S. The discussion focuses principally on the means by which conversational participation is structured along the interactional axes of perspective and production, according to the manner in which a congruous or incongruous referential point of view is recognized and a symmetric or asymmetric interactional authority granted. Thus, I contend that "successful" interpretation is not primarily a matter of chance match or mismatch, but is rather situated within discursive practice that allows a reciprocal, balanced participation which can incorporate different cultural "styles." At the same time, speakers can also structure a distinct and asymmetric participation wherein the NNS is characterized as different and inappropriate. In the final section of the paper, I consider the implications of this view as opposed to a Gumperzian approach to intercultural discourse and suggest that a mismatch analysis is potentially disempowering for NNSs because it unintentionally supports the political and economic status quo of a society unjustly biased against minority cultural groups.

2. Contextualization in intercultural conversation

2.1. Culturally mismatched signaling strategies

Gumperz's (1982, 1992a, 1992b) discussions of contextualization have helped shape understanding of the dynamic way in which context is interactively negotiated and made accountable in conversational interaction (Auer 1992; Goodwin & Duranti 1992). Reacting against structural theories of language use as a static reflection of predefined social categories, Gumperz proposed contextualization as a means to capture the situated categorization of social identity in everyday speech (Gumperz 1992b).

Contextualization reflects a dynamic, constructivist shift away from a structural analysis of context as a "preexisting" social or physical environment toward an understanding of situated interpretation in which social identity is presented and actively categorized (Gumperz 1992b). Rather than viewing talk as a reflection of environmental constraints, contextualization presents a flexible and dynamic understanding of context in which participants evoke the frames which situate utterances and thus steer interpretation. Social roles and categories are not given a priori, but are malleable, subvertible, and reflexively accomplished in interaction (Auer 1992).

There are two primary features of a Gumperzian analysis of intercultural interaction, based on contextualization. The first involves locally instantiated interpretation whereby messages are framed according to the metalinguistic signals that accompany them. Following the notion of the metalinguistic frame (which
Bateson [1972] discussed in terms of how monkeys understand the same denotative signal — biting — as play rather than aggression), Gumperz (1982) defines a broad range of discursive features of "contextualization" that are used to make the appropriate interpretation of a speaker's intended message, indicating how explicit linguistic messages are to be understood. These metalinguistic contextualization cues include *inter alia* prosodic and paralinguistic signals of intonation, rhythm, and stress, as well as code and register choice (Gumperz 1992a). Employing the wide variety of metacommunicative resources which are available, interactants signal metalinguistic frames which indicate salient (or insignificant) features of the talk, setting off new *vis-à-vis* given information and indexing relationships of coherence and expectation, and so on. These signaling strategies are flexible and reflexive, allowing participants to "rapidly invoke within the talk of the moment alternative contextual frames" (Goodwin & Duranti 1992: 5), making relevant the necessary background knowledge to allow successful interpretation.

A second feature of a mismatch analysis involves the culturally specific character of interpretation and the association of in-group membership with interpretability. Culturally "different" individuals are "often less successful in managing interaction" than speakers who share contextual presuppositions and signaling conventions (Gumperz & Roberts 1991: 52). Sociocultural knowledge is seen to shape speaking practices, grounding the interpretation of linguistic messages uttered in conversation according to culturally located presuppositions concerning "the nature of the situation, what is to be accomplished and how to be accomplished [sic]" (Gumperz 1992b: 43-44). Contextualization thus relies on inferences which are socially and culturally "determined," a "function of shared interactive history" that is acquired unconsciously in the process of socialization within the "networks of relationships" of speech communities (Gumperz 1992b: 49-51). Accordingly, when speakers from different cultural backgrounds come into contact, they often find that the interaction fails to go smoothly because of mismatching contextualization conventions and assumptions about appropriate communicative behavior. In reference to Indian immigrants in England, for example, Gumperz describes the taken-for-granted character of inferential processes implicitly learned within the Indian speech community that are unexpected to "British-English" speakers accustomed to different conversational conventions:

"Since contextualization conventions are automatically applied without conscious awareness, British-English speakers, relying on their own native language-based interpretive conventions, are likely to encounter problems in determining how [an] argument coheres." (Gumperz 1992a: 240).

Thus, it is assumed, participants fail to agree on the nature of the communication and the direction it is going. Because these metacommunicative interpretive processes are tacitly situated below the level of ordinary awareness, speakers do not realize that in relying on first language inferential processes, they inadvertently misinterpret the other speaker's intention. Participants tend to unthinkingly attribute the communicative difficulties they encounter to the negative personal (or cultural) traits of the other speakers.

Accordingly, the unintended result is that the misinterpretation is taken personally, creating resentment and negative attribution. Efforts to correct the situation (using the same contextualization cues that caused the misunderstanding
in the first place) only exacerbate the problem, resulting in a progressively "schismogenetic" (Bateson 1972) spiral of mutual recrimination and communicative breakdown. As a result, racial prejudice is seen to be reinforced and reproduced in everyday interaction.

2.2. Mediated interpretation and the diversity of cultural voice

There are two possible criticisms of contextualization theory which challenge its value if considered as the exclusive explanation of the interactional dynamics of conversation (including the success or failure of communication) in intercultural and interethnic contexts. First, contextualization theory slights the mediated character of interpretation. Focusing on the signaling function of metalinguistic cues and how inferences are "ultimately based on empirically detectable signs" (Gumperz 1992a: 234) runs the risk of positioning the analytic lens too narrowly on "bottom-up" (Kleifgen & Saville-Troike 1992) features of messages, thus missing how the interpretation of linguistic and metalinguistic cues is itself mediated by "top-down" extra-textual or "pretextual" assumptions (Hinnenkamp 1987) about social identity that speakers bring to the interaction and which skew "accurate" (and "intended") interpretation.

In other words, a Gumperzian analysis of contextualization fails to adequately account for such ideological assumptions as racial prejudice. While Gumperz (1990: 237) and other proponents of contextualization readily admit that minorities face "power and economic inequality" in minority/majority contact, there is little recognition of how ideological bias fundamentally saturates everyday consciousness as a "lived system of meanings and values" (Williams 1989: 57), inevitably shaping the way in which linguistic utterances are framed. In this respect, all interpretation is biased and there can be no "fair" or "neutral" interpretation of a speaker's talk along which contextualization can proceed. This is particularly the case when the NNS is a member of a socially marginalized group with little social prestige and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977; Hinnenkamp 1991). Such prejudice, however, is not restricted to radical cases of explicit class bias or racism, such as what skinheads might exhibit toward Asian immigrants. The extent of unstated, pretextual discrimination is suggested in research such as the matched-guise study by Rubin (1992), who demonstrates that the mere association of an Asian face with standard English speech is enough to impede its comprehensibility to "white" U.S. college students. It is echoed in the contrastive study by Meeuwis (this volume), who shows, among other things, that Flemish teachers' differential perceptions of the personality and professional competence of African and Korean engineers-in-training relates to negative stereotypes about the respective cultural groups.

All understanding is permeated by implicit presuppositions about the world and assumptions about what is right, truthful, necessary, proper, et cetera (Fish 1989). The meaning of any discursive signal, then, is unremittingly relative and shaped by the perspective from which it is heard. To this end, interpretation is always ambiguous and open to a contradictory interpretation, one which is less valid only because its proponent lacks the political authority (in the broadest sense of the term) to make it hold. This is precisely why contextualization alone cannot stand as a theory about the mismatched interpretation of linguistic cues in intercultural
contexts, since it presumes an unmediated inferential process within the speech community (that NNS does not share) which insures accurate, successful interpretation. There is, in fact, no foundational base on which to lay such claims. Rather, the grounding of linguistic signals of contextualization is located not in culturally specific linguistic systems, but in the social context of conversational participation, a matter of negotiated perspective and the authority instantiated (or asserted) in relation to it, both of which are informed by ideological presuppositions or discourses (Foucault 1972) about the world.

Second, in speaking of "culturally determined" and "culturally conditioned" discourse conventions, the Gumperzian mismatch approach slights the heteroglossic and "polyphonic" (Quantz & O'Connor 1988) diversity of cultural voices. Arguing that "differences in prosodic conventions may create processing difficulties for listeners relying on the native English contextualization conventions" (Gumperz 1992a) only serves to create the false unity of a "native English" speech community. It not only glosses over the diverse and contentious forms of discursive practice that "native" English speakers actually use in different situations for different purposes, it also discounts the creative flexibility speakers employ in adjusting to and even adopting different speech conventions. Moreover, it begs the historical and ideological questions of who is a native speaker and who is a member of an "ethnic" group, when and for what reasons (Day this volume; Moerman 1974).

Culturally "specific" communicative styles are present only in a broad, contrastive outline that does not recognize the diversity and contradiction of intracultural conversational practice. Speaking of "English" conventions is valid only in comparison with non-English speaking "outsiders" who are different — or, importantly, who are indexed as different. This kind of dichotomous contrast reduces "English-English" (Gumperz & Roberts 1991: 69) interactions within the "host society" (Gumperz 1992b: 51) to an essentialist formulation of cultural consensus. English becomes a monolithic unity when understanding is predicated on the similarity of discursive conventions, and ordinary adjustments made to accommodate (and successfully understand) nonnative English speakers are branded somehow incidental or atypical. Instead of the unidirectional assertion that "cultural differences influence interaction" (Gumperz 1990: 225), a more dynamic formulation would refer to the way in which speakers use cultural differences to influence interaction or, perhaps more appropriately, to the way in which speakers create new micro-cultural contexts to overcome (or embrace) cultural differences, extending and redefining the already fuzzily outlined conventions of culturally situated discourse practice.

While contextualization theory with its understanding of metalinguistic framing has significantly shaped our understanding of intercultural conversation, introducing such key notions as the reflexive instantiation of context and the local construction of social identity, it is necessary to pursue a broader analysis of intercultural conversation, one that recognizes the way discourse is interactively structured within the social activity of interaction. What a nonnative speaker can say in conversation — and how it is to be contextualized — changes according to the quality of participation in the communicative activity. If, following Voloshinov (1986: 37), we view the negotiation of utterance meaning as a process inevitably fused to the social situation in which it is implemented, we are led to look not simply at culturally contrastive signals of linguistic systems, but at the character of discursive activity
through which speakers construct meaning. In this respect, a more inclusive analysis will consider the quality of the engagement, or participation, in NS-NNS conversations and the kind of speakers that are actually constructed in the interaction.

3. Positioning speakers

The shape of conversational participation is often discussed as participation frameworks. These structures are defined as the positional arrangement of speakers according to enacted patterns of talk involving such features as turn taking, length of turn, overlap, *et cetera*. For instance, Erickson and his colleagues (Erickson 1989, Erickson & Schultz 1981, Schultz et al. 1982) have analyzed the various participation frameworks evident in narratives told by the members of a large family at a dinner table conversation. The shifting alignments of speakers and listeners (delineating who speaks and who listens, and with what degree of narrative control) are correlated with positions of authority established among the family members. The various permutations in the participation frameworks reflect the interactive construction of family structure, producing and reproducing the local constellations of social roles (Erickson 1989).

In intercultural contexts, participation frameworks are frequently used to distinguish culturally "isomorphic" (Tharp & Gallimore 1983) conventions of speakership, following a contrastive approach that is complementary with a mismatch analysis. Philips (1972), for example, describes differing speaker-audience patterns of talk in Indian Reservation schools. Detailing conflicting expectations of Anglo teachers and Indian children about speaking individually and authoritatively in front of the class, Philips argues that the requisite participation structure of Anglo educational practice proves incompatible with less individualistic and more taciturn Indian ways of speaking. Similarly, Au (1980; Au & Mason 1981) analyzes reading lessons of disadvantaged Hawaiian children according to the culturally specific participation structures of "talk-story" (Watson 1976) where conversation topics are jointly developed in patterns of contrapuntal response. Au finds that when the participation structures of reading lessons are made congruent with native patterns of interactional participation, instruction is more successful.

However, speaking of conversational participation as the structure of speaker-listener alignment misses much of the interactive construction of how such structure is brought about. In much the same way that Bauman (1992) shifts the analysis of folklore tradition to "traditionalizing," by recognizing the instantiation of tradition as a practice which authenticates a teller’s narrative (and the teller’s authority to tell the narrative), it is useful to shift the understanding of participation structure from the analysis of speaker *positions* toward a more dynamic and interactive understanding of speaker *positioning*, from the analysis of structure toward an understanding of *structuring*. Interaction can be analyzed as the character or quality of engagement wherein speakers mediate each other’s participation, creating "localized collectives" of shared activity (Wertsch et al. 1984) in which the discourse of one speaker is shaped by the interactive response of the other.

Recognizing the collaborative influence of the audience on the production of conversational texts, Goodwin & Goodwin (1992) extend the understanding of
participation framework beyond a description of speaker alignment through their discussion of assessments. They show how the evaluative assertions of interactants work to align other participants: "Recipients are not simply listening to the talk but dealing with it in terms of how they are positioned by it" (Goodwin & Goodwin 1992: 181). Assessments provide versions of events that are contested or accepted by listeners and which provide a "field of relevance" which implicates those present in the local organization of participation.

The analysis of participation can be taken even further when we recognize that all talk is implicitly evaluative and asserts a particular version of events that positions other speakers, shaping the content and force of the discourse. Within the symbiotic social activity of conversation, the talk of one speaker is always mediated by the response it receives. This reciprocal character of discourse is particularly important in developmental contexts of second language use, where the proficiency of NNSs (even "advanced" speakers) is shaped by the "scaffolding" response of the NS interlocutor. I now turn to look at this interactive structuring of speakers in terms of perspective and production.

4. Intersubjectivity and interactional control

Rommetveit's (1985, 1987) seminal analyses of intersubjectivity demonstrate that, with the pragmatic rejection of acontextual literal meaning, the interpretation of communicative messages is fundamentally a matter of the reciprocal adoption of a proposed referential perspective. The same word or phrase can have a radically different meaning when uttered from a different point of view or commitment to the activity at hand. Faced with such a pluralist world of potential meanings, successful communication becomes a function of a jointly proposed and ratified orientation between speakers (Rommetveit 1987).

The recognition of the inextricability of the linguistic sign and the social situation thus places critical emphasis on the coordination of perspectival relativity:

"Interactional features of verbal communication such as states of intersubjectivity and social reality and patterns of dyadic communication control must be made the foci of renewed theoretical analysis." (Rommetveit 1985: 184)

Since all speakers have the capacity to adopt a whole range of perspectives, the commitment which they demonstrate to this mutual orientation becomes a critical factor of discourse analysis. Interpretation made from within a jointly adopted alignment will be substantially different from that made outside such coordinated engagement. Consequently, it would be unfair to compare the talk of a NNS in a conversation where there is a high degree of reciprocal commitment to a shared social reality, with that of a NNS in conversation where there is little intersubjectivity and joint attendance, simply on the basis of categorization according to similar "cultural" background. It is far more important to look at the quality of participation in order to see how speakers go about taking the perspective of their conversational partners.

While the pragmatic adoption of a referential perspective is a precondition for successful communication, such intersubjectivity is not an *a priori* given. It has to be
negotiated, which inherently involves, as Rommetveit (1987: 97-98) points out, the issue of equal control over the communication. The assertion of one particular perspective over another is a matter of interactional authority, whether this is freely given or unilaterally imposed. The right to define the world, to determine what aspect of meaning will be made salient, to make explicit interpretations about how to see "reality" and talk about it are matters of power (Skutnabb-Kangas 1994) and are consequently the "right" of the powerful (Lakoff 1993: 382). On a macro level, ideology "interpellates" subjects, serving to establish or sustain hegemonic relations of domination (Fairclough 1992). On a micro interactional level, we can trace interactional authority in terms of the instantiated control over discourse production: whose voice is heard, whose point of view is adopted, whose interpretation is acknowledged, whose definition of the situation prevails. This interactional power can be assessed according to several indices of overall balance and equality in dyadic conversation. For example, is there equitable access to the conversational floor, or does one speaker dominate the conversation through strategies of interruption and overlap? Do the patterns of assertion and solicitation flow reciprocally between speakers, or does one speaker maintain a disproportionate right to make assertions that is not balanced by authentic solicitation of the other speaker's opinion? Moreover, does one speaker's discourse elicit the other's engaged response, where what is said is taken up and incorporated into the conversation, or is the talk ignored, discounted, and excluded?

On the basis, then, of this pragmatic, constructivist understanding of conversation, I propose to analyze NS-NNS conversational data in terms of intersubjectivity and interactional control, which I delineate heuristically as axes of perspective and production. Rather than looking at contrasting cultural discourse styles and communicative signaling resources, I propose to look instead at the quality of the social activity and how speakers interactively structure participation in talk.

The conversation selections which are presented in the following sections illustrate four distinct patterns of interaction that differ both in terms of perspective, the degree of intersubjectivity that is negotiated, and production, the interactional control over the talk. Although in two extracts, the speakers can be seen to be negotiating a shared referential perspective, in the other two extracts, the speakers instantiate distinct and discordant points of view. At the same time, unequal patterns of interactional authority, established according to explicit control of the floor and asymmetric patterns of solicitation and uptake, are evident in two conversations, while two others are characterized by interactional symmetry and dyadic control. Thus four general patterns obtain: (1) the lack of a reciprocally shared perspective and the unbalanced production of talk; (2) divergent perspectives that accompany equal control over discourse production; (3) shared perspectives that accompany asymmetric productive control; and (4) shared perspectives associated with a balanced production of talk.

5. Qualitative analysis of NS-NNS conversation

In order to investigate the social dynamics of intercultural conversation, I utilized methodological procedures of qualitative research (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Patton 1990; Strauss 1987) to collect and analyze data. Recording and observing four
Japanese NNS informants as they interacted with a variety of friends, colleagues, and teachers, I triangulated conversational interaction with interviews and participant observation to obtain a theoretically informed data sample. Over a six month period, thirty hours of informal conversation, and an additional thirty hours of interviews were recorded and analyzed. All interaction took place within a U.S. university setting, adhering to institutional review board procedures for research on human subjects.

The four data selections under consideration in this paper are taken from conversations recorded by the informants themselves, using hand-held micro-cassette tape recorders which I loaned them for the duration of the study. Conversations were discussed in interviews to insure as grounded an analysis as possible. After transcription, I analyzed each conversation, generating "open" and "axial" categories (Strauss 1987) of interaction (such as "adopted voice" and "shared construction") based on intensive, line-by-line analyses. Generated categories were compared with data from interviews and participant observation, which were then used to theoretically inform subsequent data collection and further analysis. The interpretive categories were thus refined as they were compared within and across conversational samples, throughout the course of the study. The core category generated was structuring, which I present in this discussion.

As advanced speakers (loosely defined as sufficiently proficient to successfully pass regular academic courses in a U.S. university), the three Japanese NNS informants (Kazuko, Fumiko, and Jiro) have approximately the same proficiency in English, although there are noticeable differences in such macrosociological indices as age, gender, educational level, and length of residence in the U.S. Thus the informants fall into the category of NNSs who arguably have acquired "a nativelike fluency in the majority language, which is not paralleled by a shared knowledge of the ways of thinking, acting, and speaking which enter into and are usually taken for granted in interaction." (Knapp & Knapp-Potthoff 1987: 1)

This approach was taken in order to insure as representative a sample of NS-NNS interaction as possible, allowing comparisons within the overly inclusive and undifferentiated category of the "Japanese speaker."

In the following sections, the four extracts of NS-NNS conversations and the accompanying analyses are presented. With each excerpt, I discuss the character of the responsive engagement which serves to structure the discourse of the nonnative speaker and thus facilitate (or impede) successful communication across cultural borders.

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2 Transcription conventions used in the extracts appear in the appendix of this article. A more detailed discussion of methodological procedures is included in Shea (1993a). All names used throughout the study (and this paper) are pseudonyms, designed to reflect informant nationality, gender, and relative age, but to disguise actual identity.
5.1. Jiro and his advisor: Incongruous perspective and asymmetric production

The following selection is taken from Jiro's visit to his academic advisor's office where he has gone to get the official approval he needs to register for the upcoming semester. Jiro is an undergraduate junior majoring in international business, with two semesters remaining before graduation. His advisor (an adjunct in the department who advises undergraduates on a full-time basis) is attempting to judge whether Jiro has successfully met university coursework requirements needed to graduate:

(1) Jiro and his Advisor

1 A Okay I need to get that and your phone number. Have you changed your phone number also?
2 J Yes, er, [uh
3 A I have that you are Town Apartment # 897
4 J Yes that's right [uh but uh
5 A [That's correct'
6 A <....>
7 J What else did you take?
8 A I took Chemistry 2-, er, Chemistry/ 215?
9 J [215
10 A Okay that showed up. What else' Anything else/
11 J [a::nd uh-
12 A [at your other
13 A College?
14 J I took the tennis/
15 A Okay, the PE, that's fine. Okay! good, we're okay, , okay, let's see:e, , , , Okay, I have that you have, two major required courses left, to take, , {unhun/} And your choices for those are PS 571 and Business 663. You must' [get==
16 A ==these classes because see PS 571's only offered, once a year,' [yes
17 J Oh really?
18 A So if you don't get it, you will have to wait till next Spring. And if you don't get it when you register,' you need to go to the PS department and tell them that you must have this class because you won't be here' next Spring, and you have to get it to graduate
19 J [I see
20 A [Because see, <....> that, department must, grant you permission to take that class, so if you don't get it during registration, , you need to go to the department directly and tell them, that you have to have it to graduate, u::m,
21 J You mean [Political Studies?
22 A [In fact I'll write it on your sheet, "Must, have, to, graduate"
23 A <....>
24 J Do you still have your check-sheet? This thing that I gave you?
25 A [Okay let me go and update it, and make sure everything's-, see' you keep all these old ones and I want you to throw' them away!
26 J Yeah hhh I er, [I uh-
27 A [This is the one I want you to keep, this is the only one I want you to have {yeah} I want you
After first checking administrative information on Jiro's personal record (turns 1-5), the advisor confirms the Chemistry and PE classes which Jiro took during the summer term at another college (turns 5-14). She realizes the remaining courses Jiro must take to graduate and offers a positive evaluation of the situation ("that's fine"), before explaining in detail the required courses he needs and the registration procedures he must follow (turns 14-20). When she notices that Jiro has kept his old registration forms from previous advisement sessions, she instructs him to throw them away (turns 25-27), in spite of his protests.

Throughout the exchange, the advisor demonstrates little recognition of Jiro's referential perspective on the matter. Neither does she attempt to incorporate his point of view into her own talk. She shows a minimal concern to refer, for example, to Jiro's prior experience or to solicit his feelings about the procedure. There is no effort to include Jiro's own evaluation of the courses he has taken, or to take his goals into consideration. There is no substantial recognition of Jiro's definition of the registration process, in terms of his impressions, opinions, or ideas.

The incongruous referential frame of the conversation is indicated by the deictic marking of distinct pronominal identification, the lack of rhythmic synchrony and other indices of accommodation, the absence of friendly reference to common experience, and the limited recognition (and uptake) of information which Jiro provides.

At the beginning of the exchange (turns 1-5), for example, when the advisor is checking on Jiro's address, she asks him for the information, but she grants only time for a one word reply before beginning her next turn. Jiro is attempting to explain that he has recently moved (turn 2), but the advisor interrupts to clarify the address she already has on her records. When Jiro confirms this ("Yes that's right"), he again tries to explain, but is again interrupted with the advisor's clarifying restatement ("That's correct"). The falling tone of her utterance lends weight to its summary quality, as she asserts the interactional authority to decide what information is allowed to be introduced and made relevant in the conversation. The asymmetry of the exchange is echoed throughout the conversation, and is accentuated by the falling tone with which many of the interruptions are made (e.g., turns 5, 10, 16, 18, 25). Her statements reinforce the impression that Jiro should simply answer yes or no, and follow directions quietly.

At one point, however, the advisor indexes a nominally collaborative identification with Jiro when she offers the pronominal deictic (turn 14, "we're okay") that possibly suggests a joint orientation to the talk. But this evaluation is placed within the referential frame of her own responsibility to enforce university requirements, rather than something which would benefit Jiro, and the positive appraisal holds only at the point where everything is fine from her point of view. Moreover, this congruence quickly disappears when the advisor tells Jiro what he "must" do next, defining his responsibilities in terms that are explicitly different from her own situation and obligations. Her contrasting identification, evident in the statement, "I have that you have," reflects the divergent orientation of interests that becomes more pronounced as the advisement session progresses.
The differing frames of referential identification accentuate the asymmetrical control over the discourse production. This unequal access is evident in the series of interruptions, explicit commands, negative evaluations, and failures to respond to Jiro's assertions. During their brief, fifteen-minute conversation, the advisor interrupts Jiro repeatedly, reducing his participation to little more than affirming the information she presents to him that, as the advisor, she feels he needs to know. When asking about the registration check-sheet (turn 23), for instance, she cuts off Jiro's answer, overlapping the rest of his statement with her next comment (turn 25). When she notices ("see!") that Jiro has kept his old registration forms, she reacts critically, explicitly commanding him to throw the old forms away, an injunction made sharper by the emphatic, downturned intonation. Jiro tries to explain (turn 26), but she only interrupts to restate the command, which she repeats again for added emphasis.

Although in the advisement session, Jiro is able to hear what courses he needs to graduate (he also learns how intimidating an academic advisor can be), and in this respect, it is a successful interaction, the conversation cannot be said to go well for Jiro. He is reduced to a passive listener who simply affirms the talk of a more "knowledgeable" speaker, with little opportunity to articulate his own ideas and opinions. Through highly unequal access to the floor, asymmetric turn length and patterns of interruption, and explicit commands and negative evaluation, the advisor indexes a firm control of the conversation and its topic development. As evidenced by the distinct deictic identification and lack of perspectival congruence, the advisor also demonstrates an incongruous point of view and definitional frame of the activity. She is defining the interaction in terms of the stipulated requirements which she imposes and which, as the representative of the university, she interprets as her responsibility to insure Jiro's compliance. This institutional frame of reference that the advisor imposes does not necessarily entail that Jiro be granted no authority. As Freire (1993) points out, the institutional authority of education can be an exercise of domination or a "co-intentional" engagement of dialogue. In this interaction, what is critical is that there is little accommodative shift on advisor's part which would serve either to bring the two perspectives closer into congruence or to grant Jiro more active control over the interaction.

5.2. Fumiko and her professor: Incongruous perspective and symmetric production

In the second data selection, Fumiko, a new first-year graduate student, has arranged to meet Dr. Hughes, a professor in her department. This is their first meeting. On the recommendation of another teacher, Fumiko has arranged the appointment in hopes of getting ideas for her upcoming M.A. thesis. She wants to talk about Hughes' research on local businesses and she asks a number of questions about the methodological procedures he employed (a questionnaire survey of consumer attitudes and purchasing patterns).

In this excerpt, Fumiko has just expressed surprise that a telephone interview would prove unwieldy and more costly than a written questionnaire. She then suggests that perhaps Hughes could have asked the survey questions over the phone, and the professor responds:
Fumiko and Dr. Hughes

1  H  Yeah I don't think we could use the same survey, over the phone because, {hhh} people won't be able to, it would be harder to, you know, {unhun} elicit responses

2  F  You have to keep them for an hour hhh, you just say, "yes yes yes"

3  H  So, (7 sec pause)Hughes replies to Fumiko's suggestion (turn 1) by noting that using the telephone would not only prove impractical, it would also be difficult to elicit informant opinions. Fumiko then responds to Hughes' comment by portraying herself as the professor keeping informants on the phone for an hour to answer an impractically long list of questions. Fumiko is literally illustrating what Hughes has just explained to her, adopting his voice to dramatize his argument. The response captures exactly what Hughes has said about the defects of the phone interview as a research methodology.

Ironically, however, Hughes makes no response to her humorously tentative adoption of his position ( (turn 3). After a one word comment ("so"), he lets the matter drop without providing any uptake to her construction. Fumiko's identification with Hughes' perspective is not reciprocated, an imbalance which is also evident as the conversation proceeds.

After a few informational questions about the survey, Fumiko runs out of things to say and admits, "I can't think of a good question." For the first time in the meeting, Hughes solicits information from Fumiko. At that, it seems half-hearted:

4  H  Uh, wh-, what's your, objective?

5  F  Um, I'm, , I'm interested in any movement that's, like against for, against the, the regular flow of, of maybe capitalist system of this society movement, {um} so like-,

6  H  I would say this um, , , this is really, the intent of this study is to influence the attitude of the consumer, {unhun} but it's not to impose, , uh, rules, in other words, it allows free markets to work, but try to influence the attitude of the consumer so that he realizes, the benefits and costs, associated with his purchases and purchase decisions

Fumiko (in turn 5) haltingly describes her interest in anti-capitalist social development. In an agonizingly slow response to Fumiko's explanation of her objectives, an explanation which he solicited, Hughes neglects to address her point and returns to talk about his own research from his own perspective. This shift is illustrated by the deictic "this," which follows the noticeable pause (in turn 6) and serves to reference his own study. The marker carries a flat intonation; it is not offered contrastively. That is, Hughes does not say to Fumiko, "This study," (as opposed to your study). Rather, the uninflected tone suggests that Hughes is returning to talk about various aspects of his study without reference to Fumiko's point, creating distance and discontinuity between the turns.

Yet Hughes does not attempt to deny Fumiko's right to speak. Although he does not actively grant Fumiko control of the talk, he neither tries to take it away. Unlike
Jiro’s advisor, Hughes does not imperiously interrupt Fumiko, or usurp her interactional authority to speak during their conversation. She is allowed a chance to articulate her opinions, and Hughes makes no explicit attempt to take away the floor. He provides more than sufficient wait time for Fumiko to respond, and he does not dominate the flow of the conversation by patterns of interruption and overlap.

Hughes is simply passive and, in this sense, ignores what Fumiko has to say. He makes little effort to understand the genesis of her talk and the overall result is a sense of frustration on Fumiko’s part at not being taken seriously or responded to. He does make minimal effort to solicit Fumiko’s opinion, but the solicitation is unmatched by a corresponding engagement of her opinion, a perspectival incongruity which is particularly striking in light of Fumiko’s adoption of his point of view (literally, she adopts his voice) to talk about the telephone survey. Hughes’ answer is certainly a defensive rejection of her opinion, which offers little if any recognition of her perspective. The single focus on his own agenda only serves to affirm his point of view, one that remains unaffected by Fumiko’s interests.

5.3. Kazuko and her colleagues: Congruent perspective and asymmetric production

Two of Kazuko’s academic colleagues, Sandy and Valerie, are in town for a professional conference and are having dinner at Kazuko’s house. The three colleagues are all post-doctoral researchers in chemistry, approximately the same age. Kazuko had hosted Sandy when she visited Japan two years earlier on a research exchange program, but it is Kazuko’s first time to meet Valerie. Sandy and Valerie are close friends who were in graduate school together. Overall, the tone of the dinner conversation is positive and light-hearted, with a good deal of humor and shared laughter.

In this excerpt, taken from early in the conversation, Sandy and Valerie are asking Kazuko about her present research position at the university and her general impressions at living in the United States:

Kazuko, Sandy, and Valerie

1 V Do you feel accustomed to it yet?
2 K Yeah, , after, we-, you know we spent a three nights, four nights at the conference, we feel this our home hhh (hhh)
3 S Oh so its good to go away
4 K [Yeah, right
5 S [So you can do that
6 V And this is your first time to be, in the United States?
7 K [or have been-
8 V [For her but,
9 K not for you
10 V not for me, yeah
11 K Where were you before?
12 V In the North/ [University of-
13 K [And were you working there?
14 V Yeah with Dr. Mary Brown/ um,
15 K Yeah
16 S Valerie asked, how did you get this post doc, I couldn’t remember, Now, {K: oh} did she write you?
Sandy and Valerie both employ strategies of accommodation and inclusion which emphasize their solidarity (i.e., perspectival congruence) with Kazuko. In asking Kazuko about her impressions of the States, the university, etc. (turns 1, 6, 10, 12 & 14), Valerie is getting to know what kind of person Kazuko is and, at the same time, politely expressing an interest in her new acquaintance. Through their questions, both native speakers are constructing a closer social proximity, the basis for a shared, in-group identification and point of view. Sandy illustrates her understanding of Kazuko's referential perspective through rephrasing and restatement (turns 5 & 26), as well as through completion of Kazuko's statements (turn 8), comments which are offered in near synchronous rhythm with Kazuko's utterance.

A number of other pragmatic strategies which instantiate this interactional cohesion are also evident: solicitation of background information, reference to similar experience and shared values (illustrated by the comment, "I feel the same way too!"), foreigner-talk adjustments, and friendly, good-natured teasing. These discourse strategies serve in this context to establish a sense of a collaborative perspective and joint identification. They reference positive affect and locate an increasing sense of solidarity in which a highly synchronous referential perspective is attained. The degree of this shared understanding is also indexed when both Sandy and Valerie complete utterances which Kazuko begins (turns 8 & 24), as they adopt Kazuko's point of view and, demonstrating their joint alignment, speak in her voice.

The development of this shared frame of reference is not, however, a completely beneficial arrangement for Kazuko. While Sandy and Valerie's response strategies do indeed function to include Kazuko within a mutually constructed perspectival frame of reference, they also serve to reduce the quality of Kazuko's participation within that framework, instantiating an asymmetrical balance of interactional authority in which Kazuko's discourse is limited, and her participation reduced, in critical ways.

For example, one question comes on the heels of another, with little wait time which would grant Kazuko sufficient opportunity to answer as fully as she might if allowed more time to reply. The validating support carried in Sandy's rephrasing of Kazuko's comment (turn 3) about feeling at home after returning from the conference is undercut by Sandy's restatement (turn 5) which interrupts and overlaps Kazuko's reply. Valerie's next question (whether it is Kazuko's first trip to
the U.S.) leaves no room for elaboration and quickly shifts the focus to a new topic. Sandy’s response for Kazuko (“not for you”), as she adopts Kazuko’s voice, demonstrates an understanding of what Kazuko wants to say, but it also serves to appropriate her right to actually say it. Kazuko is again interrupted (turn 12) when she tries to respond to Valerie’s question about her previous university, an interruption which illustrates how a potentially elaborated narration (“University of-”) is cut off by another solicitation (“Were you working there?”).

Valerie’s and Sandy’s questions, while expressing their concern to understand Kazuko’s point of view, also inadvertently function to block Kazuko’s access to the floor and her full participation in the conversation. Kazuko can answer her colleagues but only in a restricted way, according to the tacitly held expectations of the NSs and their standards of when, how, and to what extent information is to be presented. Ultimately, what is defined is whose voice is heard and whose interactional agenda shapes the conversation.

Of particular note is Sandy’s attempt to refer to similar experience with Kazuko (turn 18) by mentioning (in a humorously ironic tone) Kazuko’s boss, with whom Sandy knows Kazuko did not get along. Sandy’s first reference to Kikuchi (“Which boss was this?”) actually interrupts Kazuko’s explanation about obtaining her present position at the university, an explanation which was actually begun in response to Sandy’s solicitation. After Sandy’s interruption, Kazuko attempts to continue, but is again interrupted. This time, Sandy comments about the food, an even more sudden and incongruous topic shift, which effectively ends Kazuko’s narrative. When Valerie continues the solicitation (turn 22), by asking whether Kazuko’s appointment is for one or two years, Kazuko begins another explanation, but Sandy interrupts yet again, cutting in to answer for Kazuko and explain what she imagined Kikuchi had told Kazuko.

Sandy and Valerie’s referencing of shared background serves to index a relaxed, in-group familiarity and humorously characterize the situation at hand, but it simultaneously takes words out of Kazuko’s mouth and, with them, her interactional authority to shape the conversation. The native speakers, in adopting Kazuko’s point of view, also reduce her rights to hold the floor with the same degree of authority and discursive control they themselves implicitly assume. While this appropriation of Kazuko’s interactional right to speak is almost certainly accomplished inadvertently, without negative intention on the part of the two friends, it nevertheless highlights the micro-politically charged atmosphere in which discourse is situated and in which Kazuko is positioned as a junior partner, rather than a fully equal participant. In the name of solidarity, the native speakers are imposing control over the shared in-group intersubjectivity which their talk instantiates.

5.4. Kazuko & Lilly: Congruent perspective and symmetric production

The fourth and last selection is drawn from a lunch conversation between Kazuko and Lilly, the technician in the lab where Kazuko conducts her research. At the time of the recording, Kazuko and Lilly had been working in the lab for approximately six months. In interviews, they described themselves as friends who often stood together facing the difficult challenge of working under the sometimes contentious
direction of the department head who was their boss and who supervised the lab's activity.

In this selection, Kazuko has just turned on the tape recorder and commented about being the subject of my research attention:

(5) Kazuko and Lilly

1 K But it's, rather strange to see my conversation on a neat typed written, {hhh he even, he even, he pointed out what does this mean and, {unhun} that's rather embarrassing hhh {hhh} , , , ,

2 L Yeah, I can't imagine what, , what it would be like to record your, everyday/ {unhun/} for the whole day what it would be like, {right} you know after you recorded it, {unhun/} and run it out, it's like, "I said that? Boy, I sound stupid!" [hhh

3 K [hhh right yeah, , I hate to hear my speaking in-, from a you know a tape recorder or a videotape, it's always very-, sounds stupid hhh {hhh} "Am I that stupid?" [hhh

4 L [hhh well, I don't know if you noticed this or not but, when you hear yourself talking inside your head, {right} you sound like one tone, {right} and then when you hear it on a recording {unhun} it's like you're in a different iright) tone and it's like, {unhun} "I don't sound like that do I⁉" {unhun} you know, {right} cause there's,

5 K Yeah maybe we, hear from, inside of you know {unhun} head or something,

6 L unhun, cause-, cause-, you know to me, I think I have somewhat of a low voice/ {oh} and in reality, I have a quite high voice, {hhh} and it's like, hhh {hhh} well how come it sounds low here {ah} and it, sounds high there

7 K Unhun, yeah, , but it's not only a matter of, you know, sound difference, {unhun/} but also a sound stupid hhh

8 L Yeah cause you actually end up completing what you're trying to say in your head {unhun} and you don't actually say it {unhun} completely, {unhun} I do that all the time,

9 K So maybe everybody must think themselves {unhun} little bit cleaver than every other people think [hhh

10 L [hhh "What do you mean you don't understand? {unhun/} I understood myself completely!" {unhun/} hhh

11 K "You should know what I mean" {hhh} hhh

The exchange illustrates a pattern of what I call "shared construction," a highly synchronous and jointly constructed discourse characterized by both balanced production as well as a referential congruity where the two speakers view the interaction from a unique, integrated perspective.

When Kazuko asserts that she is embarrassed having her taped conversation played back to her, Lilly agrees with the sentiment (turn 2), imagining what it must be like and offering a response that hypothetically presupposes she is faced with the same situation. She illustrates her feelings as if she were in the position Kazuko has just described ("I said that?"). In turn, Kazuko elaborates on Lilly's statement, using a similar hypothetical example spoken in the same adopted voice ("Am I that stupid?"). Lilly then extends the theme (turn 4), commenting the tone of her taped-recorded voice and maintaining the same hypothetical persona that speaks on the basis of Kazuko's experience. In response to Lilly, Kazuko contributes further description, to which Lilly replies, and so on, back and forth. Each speaker adds a
descriptive variation to Kazuko's original comment about being recorded. The result is that the perspective from which the talk is generated begins to merge, as the two speakers affirm the other's discourse in a layered, textured structure, culminating (turns 10 & 11) when each speaker provides a complementing piece of the same illustrative comment, made by the same imaginary speaker hypothetically responding to then again another imaginary speaker who did not understand what she meant.3

One of the striking aspects of this exchange is the quality of Lilly's engaged response to what Kazuko says. Whereas Sandy and Valerie often change the subject or rush ahead to ask new questions, Lilly is more receptive to Kazuko's ideas and opinions, incorporating them into her own talk as restatements, extensions, and illustrations of the topic under discussion. In effect, Lilly shapes her discourse according to Kazuko's. Her adjustments go beyond simply modifying her rate of speech and imitating lexical and paralinguistic features.4 To describe Lilly's response solely in terms of such features of accommodation (Beebe & Giles 1984) would restrict the analysis to fundamentally autonomous speakers who make adjustments in their individual ways of speaking. While this certainly does occur, it would not capture the interdependence of the two speakers and their talk, and how Lilly's response integrally positions Kazuko speech: what she says and what she is indeed able to say. Through her engagement, Lilly not only takes what Kazuko says and incorporates it into her own talk, she also grants Kazuko interactional authority to shape the direction and character of the conversation. The effect of Lilly's responsive engagement is to extend Kazuko's participation, supporting a far more fluid and articulate discourse than is evident (or possible) in the dinner conversation. In a profoundly social way, Lilly is part of Kazuko's discourse as a NNS.

Another notable characteristic of the lunch conversation is the use of reported speech. Kazuko and Lilly both assume a hypothetical perspective based on what the other speaker is saying, and then speak in an adopted voice as if they were actually standing in that position, responding to its contingencies. Both speakers reply as if they were the constructed third person, expressing what she would be feeling based on what the other is describing. For instance, when Kazuko mentions her embarrassment (turn 1), Lilly replies from the point of view of that embarrassment, expressing the same sentiment and feeling of discomfiture and self-reproaching chagrin: "Boy I sound stupid." When Kazuko mentions that everyone must imagine themselves cleverer than they really are (turn 9), Lilly replies from the perspective presupposed by the comment, and says, "What do you mean you don't understand?" as if she were responding to someone who did not understand what she had said, precisely because, as Kazuko states, she thought herself more articulate than she actually was. Kazuko then builds upon this textured representation (turn 11), adding a similar comment from the same unique point of view: "You should know what I mean." Within these reciprocally adopted responses, there is little referential

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3 The ability to maintain the complex laminations of this imagined role play recalls Goffman's (1974) description of framing, with its recursive potential for multiple reinterpretation. It attests both to the coordination between Kazuko and Lilly and the texture of the perspectival frame which is constructed.

4 Interestingly, Lilly makes few if any syntactic simplifications characteristic of foreigner-talk.
distance separating the two speakers. They see the world they are describing with similar eyes, as they instantiate a mutually constructed understanding, a shared point of view from which their discourse is generated. This reciprocal perspective, woven throughout the conversation, critically informs the participation and shapes the negotiation of meaning.

Using reported speech, Kazuko and Lilly are able to become in effect one person looking at the issue from an adopted perspective which is different from their respective individual points of view. A truly collective definition of the situation is attained, a context of reciprocally shared and collaborative construction.

6. Structuring participation along two axes of interaction

The four conversational excerpts illustrate a model of interaction in which aspects of the micro-social organization of participation, jointly (if not always fairly) structured by the speakers, mediate the communication and its success (or failure). The selections suggest that the structuring of participation proceeds in four directions, extending along the two axes of perspective and production. On the axis of perspective, interactants position themselves referentially, defining the relative distance between their focus of attention and whether it acknowledges the other’s perspective of the world, or indexes distinct orientations and different commitments. On the axis of production, speakers reciprocally position themselves with reference to the interactional authority and control over the talk, defined in terms of such indices as access to the floor, patterns of assertion and solicitation, and the quality of uptake and extending engagement with the other speaker’s talk. Interlocutors can cooperatively share the floor, recognizing not only the other’s right to speak but also the validity of the other speaker’s ideas, or they can interrupt, exclude, and usurp the rights to unilaterally shape the direction of the talk.

Jiro’s advisor, for example, fails to adopt her student’s referential point of view during the advisement session, a perspectival discontinuity that is illustrated (see Figure 1 in the appendix) by the parallel wavelengths that do not meet. This lack of intersubjectivity, in which the advisor maintains an interactional distance that distinguishes her own point of view from that of her nonnative advisee, serves to accentuate the different and ultimately unequal responsibilities, institutional identifications, and personal allegiances that inform the interaction. At the same time, the asymmetric pattern of productive control over the conversation, determining whose voice is heard and whose definition of the situation is maintained (represented by the inclined bar tilted in favor of one speaker) serves to exclude Jiro, positioning him as a relatively powerless speaker with little authority to shape

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5 This is not, however, limited to recognizing the accuracy of the other’s position. Agreement is not presumed, although the right to speak and be heard as a valid, recognized participant, is. This position is explicitly “democratic,” as it rests on the fundamental assumption of equal right to participation on the micro level of conversation as well as the macro level of social groups.
the conversation. Drawing on her institutional status, the advisor imposes her interactional control of the talk through strategies of interruption and overlap, explicitly telling Jiro what he must do, how he should do it, and according to what timetable. Thus, there is an incongruous perspective and a highly asymmetric access to discourse production enacted in the exchange.

Fumiko’s meeting with her professor presents a similar situation, in terms of distinct, non-intersecting referential perspectives. Professor Hughes fails (or refuses) to recognize Fumiko’s understanding of research (or even her questions about it) when he demonstrates little attempt to see things from Fumiko’s orientation to the talk. Unlike Jiro’s advisor, however, Hughes does not actively deny Fumiko the floor, either interrupting her statements or restricting her participation in ways that explicitly reduce the interactional authority she has to direct the conversation. While there are distinct differences in points of view, there is little asymmetry in the production of discourse, at least in terms of quantity of talk and patterns of interruption. Thus, the conversation exhibits two distinct referential wavelengths, even though the axis of discourse production is relatively balanced.

In the dinner conversation, Sandy and Valerie make a significant attempt to incorporate Kazuko’s perspective within their own, adjusting the content and rhythm of their talk to match hers. The NSs successfully pursue a shared referential orientation, framed as the solidarity of in-group members, but the association is one that grants Kazuko fewer opportunities to speak and thus relatively less authority to shape the conversation. Although there is a degree of intersubjectivity (represented by overlapping wavelengths), there is also an imbalance in interactional rights defined in the discourse (captured by the unbalanced axis of production).

In the lunch conversation between Kazuko and Lilly, a balanced and collaborative interaction is evident. Not only do Lilly and Kazuko construct a highly congruous referential perspective, as they jointly orientate themselves to the topic. There is also symmetric construction wherein both speakers share control over the talk and interactional authority to define its import. The voices of the two speakers intermingle to create a shared, truly unique point of view. Thus the axis of perspective is congruent and the axis of production is balanced.

In many models of solidarity and status (or power) used in interactional sociolinguistics (e.g., Tannen 1984, 1986), one axis of interaction is set in

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6 By drawing on this authority, Jiro’s advisor thus acts to enact it interactionally. This enactment is not automatic, however, and she does not necessarily have to impose it simply because her institutional position conventionally allows her to do so. Moreover, the manner in which this structural authority is enacted varies according to context. In another advisement session of Jiro’s with a different advisor, a far more accommodative and collaborative framework of participation is negotiated.

7 Admittedly, Hughes does not grant Fumiko real authority by providing an engaged uptake of what she says. He neither solicits her opinion nor incorporates her ideas in his own talk, thereby granting Fumiko real interactional control over the discourse. The excerpt is presented primarily to suggest the axis of perspective, but it would not fall at the end of the axis in terms of symmetric control. It is clear that there can be no absolute distinction between perspective and production, since the two axes are interrelated. The model is heuristic to illustrate general tendencies evident in interaction. It also serves to demonstrate that high solidarity can be indexed simultaneously with high indices of control.
oppositional tension with the other. A speaker is seen to demonstrate solidarity at the expense of authority, or assert the prestige of status while rejecting the bonds of community. Tannen contends, for example, that the misinterpretation of the these two metacommunicative framing strategies (such as the "pragmatic synonymy" whereby a speaker's intended marker of high solidarity may be taken by the listener as highly authoritative) lies at the root of intercultural miscommunication (including that between speakers from different "sub-cultures").

Instead, the two axes of solidarity and status, defined here in interactional terms as perspective and production, are not seen as oppositional but as complementary aspects of the social activity of talk. The micro-level dynamics of conversational engagement implicate not only where (referentially) but also how (authoritatively) speakers position themselves in relation to one another, as they structure the kind of speaker the interlocutor can be.

7. Shaping the fluency of the NNS

For the NNS, the quality of the participation critically influences the character (and success) of the talk, shaping the coherence, force, and even fluency with which the NNS can speak. This is a central point missed by mismatch analyses that simply contrast pragmatic features of culturally specific communicative styles while paying little attention to how these features are actually structured within the activity.

In the four conversational selections, it can certainly be said that the NNSs bring culturally located discourse conventions to the interaction. But these features are not applied directly to the discourse, impeding the accurate interpretation of intended messages, simply because individual speakers come from a cultural background characterized on average by such conventions. Rather, interpretation and the communicative outcomes of the talk are integrally shaped by the kind of speakers that are interactively constructed.

For example, within the jointly attended, symmetrically balanced participation developed in the lunch conversation, Lilly's response serves to positively structure Kazuko's participation, supporting and extending her discourse. Kazuko's ideas are elicited, sustained, and developed within Lilly's engaged response. Her ideas, for example, are built up interactively over a series of turns through successive comments that add various details and extend implications as they are drawn out by Lilly's questions. Kazuko's opinions are also more significant, because they are recognized and taken seriously by Lilly. What Kazuko says shapes the ensuing discussion. In other words, Kazuko's proficiency as a NNS is extended in the collaboration beyond her "individual" competency. Lilly's engagement provides a scaffold which supports and amplifies Kazuko's talk. In an important sense, Kazuko's discourse is not solely her own but is collaboratively constructed within this dialogic relationship.

The other conversations, particularly Kazuko's dinner conversation, illustrate the same structuring relationship but offer marked contrasts to the positive character of the collaboration. It is clear that, within the shared social activity, the NS interlocutor can extend the nonnative speaker's competence not only upward, amplifying performance, but also downward, serving to impede the NNS's talk and reduce his or her discursive position (Shea 1993b). Kazuko is a more proficient
speaker in the lunch conversation with Lilly than she is in the dinner conversation with her colleagues because of the way her participation is structured by her NS interlocutors.

With Sandy and Valerie, Kazuko's discursive position is reduced and what she can say is restricted according to both the limited access to the floor she is allowed and the lack of supportive uptake and extending engagement she receives. Kazuko's colleagues are friendly and interested in what she has to say, but their activity inadvertently restricts the force and coherence of Kazuko's talk, structuring a less authoritative discursive position from which she can speak. Given this lack of supportive, amplifying response, Kazuko has no real opportunity to fully articulate her ideas, through a cooperative construction of extended discourse. As an advanced learner, she loses the chance to engage in the kind of shared construction that is developmentally so critical to improving her language proficiency.

The divergent perspective imposed by Professor Hughes' refusal to recognize his student's point of view restricts the resonance and appeal of Fumiko's English. What she says fails to communicate, not simply because it is "inappropriate" or because she is "inarticulate," but because her ideas are essentially ignored, echoing unanswered against the distant and disengaged wall of Hughes' unresponsiveness. The situation is not wholly uncommunicative because Fumiko so willingly accommodates to her professor's point of view, but the shift only reinforces a traditional transmission model of pedagogy (Freire 1993), where the teacher positions him or her self as the expert who defines the character of that expertise in part by delimiting the range (i.e., the perspective) of talk that can be taken into consideration, a situation which the student often has little choice but to accept. In other words, Professor Hughes' structuring response to Fumiko is implicated in the ideological reproduction of the social roles and relationships in which students and outsiders are defined as uninformed and lacking in appropriate knowledge.

In the advisement session, Jiro is severely reduced as a speaker. He is prevented from expressing his ideas when he is restricted to passively confirming what his advisor says for him. There is little opportunity for him to express his opinions, to hold the floor, or speak with authority. What he does say carries little weight, eliciting minimal recognition and response.

Vygotskian discussions of scaffolding (Cazden 1989; Donato 1994; Griffin & Cole 1984; Moll 1992; Wood et al. 1976) and guided participation (Rogoff 1990) demonstrate that the collaborative activity in which the teacher (or more experienced peer) sustains the learner's activity within the "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1978; Griffin & Cole 1984) is the critical means of cognitive growth. The adult's assistance serves to "support and stretch" the child's understanding and skill in using the mediated tools of culture (Rogoff 1990), including language. Given the social foundation of mental development, understanding first appears on the intermental plane of activity before it is internalized (or, rather, appropriated) onto the intramental plane of individual cognition (Wertsch 1991). Within a developmental perspective, then, the quality of conversational participation can be seen as a critical locus for the development of second language proficiency (even for advanced speakers) because the native speaker's response is a critical means of constructing the nonnative speaker's discourse.
The potential variation in the character of conversational participation, evident in the four selections, is the reason why speaking in contrastive terms of "cultural differences" serves to reduce intercultural communication to a false dichotomy of communicative styles which "may" account for miscommunication. The implicatures and interpretive inferences which Gumperz (1992a: 240) argues that speakers apply, "relying on their own native language-based interpretive conventions," are themselves structured within conversational activity. How utterances are interpreted is mediated by how speakers are positioned and their discourse structured: whether interactional authority is granted and referential perspective is recognized, or whether participation is reduced and neglected. It is not cultural differences in and of themselves, but the way they are taken up and negotiated, which critically determines the shape and success of intercultural interaction.

A specific example of the mediated character of contextualization is provided by embarrassed laughter, a discourse feature which Japanese speakers could be said to use on the whole more often than NSs of English. In awkward situations such as a personal gaffe, for example, a Japanese speaker may laugh out of embarrassment at the predicament. According to a mismatch analysis, the Japanese laugh is subject to potentially inadvertent misinterpretation because of contrasting interpretive conventions. What to the Japanese speaker, situated within the exegetic prism of Japanese culture, signals innocuous, albeit awkward embarrassment, can simultaneously signal to the American speaker inappropriate amusement connoting triviality or sarcastic derision, neither of which would be considered polite. Thus, while the Japanese NNS of English means no disrespect by laughing, he or she may inadvertently break the pragmatic rules of English appropriateness, the result of which is miscommunicative misunderstanding and potentially negative misattribution of intent (see Figure 2 in the appendix).

As I have argued above, however, this reasoning slights the mediated character of the participation in which the signal is uttered. If we look at specific examples in the data at hand, we can see that the same anxious laugh, uttered by Kazuko in the lunch conversation with Lilly, where the interaction is characterized by shared and symmetric production, has a very different meaning than the embarrassed laughter uttered in Jiro's advisement session, where there is far less perspectival congruity and balance of interactional authority.

At the beginning of the lunch conversation, Kazuko laughs ("hhh") out of embarrassment at being recorded (and possibly at having to extend the imposition to Lilly):

(6) Kazuko and Lilly

1 K She even, he even, he pointed out what does this mean and, {unhun} that's rather embarrassing hhh {hhh} , , , ,  
2 L Yeah, I can't imagine what, , what it would be like

It is important, of course, to avoid essentialist stereotypes that are based on a "rare/zero differential" (Morsbach 1988). What is absent in one culture is often seen as representative of another, even though the behavior or belief may be fairly unrepresentative. Certainly there are uncharacteristic situations in English where embarrassed laughing is present, just as there are characteristic situations in Japanese where it is not.
Kazuko's laugh, however, reverberates with a far more positively nuanced tone than does Jiro's, which is offered when the advisor instructs him to throw away his old registration forms:

(7) Jiro and Advisor

1 A see! you keep all these old ones and I want you to throw' them' aw::ay!
2 J Yeah hhh I er, [I uh-
3 A [This is the only one I want you to keep,

In both cases, the NNS laughs in embarrassment but, as a contextualization cue, the "hhh" utterance, situated and structured differently within the social activity, indexes widely different meanings because it is understood within different orientations to the talk.

We have to refigure the model of contextualization to situate the metapragmatic framing of utterances within the activity of motivated actors who do not simply interpret linguistic signals, but contend, cooperate, and compromise in a diverse social world. We have to allow that, as in Figure 3 (see appendix), speakers can be motivated to structure a joint, balanced participation that positively incorporates the cultural differences of discourse conventions and contextualization, or to structure a distinct and asymmetric participation that negatively characterizes NNSs as different and inappropriate. The linguistic signals of contextualization are pragmatic tools which speakers wield. Sometimes the instruments are forged into swords of accusation, sometimes into plowshares of reciprocal identification. Differences in communicative style, whether ethnically or culturally located, do not cause miscommunication as much as they reflect it, and without sufficient reasons for maintaining distinctions, adjustment between speakers with different styles normally takes place (McDermott & Tylbor 1988).

8. Implications of mismatch and structuring interpretations

Although the four excerpts presented in this analysis illustrate strikingly different conversations, each involves a Japanese NNS at a relatively similar level of advanced linguistic proficiency. The diversity of interactional patterns which result, and the differing communicative outcomes which are achieved, demonstrate the striking variety of discourse styles that exists among speakers from the same "cultural" background. The data remind us that culture is not an essentialist construct where members adopt similar values, maintain uniform beliefs, and share interpretive conventions. Cultural style is neither consensual nor isomorphic with ideologically constructed speech communities that are a function of "imagined" national identities (Anderson 1983). There is a great deal of diversity and conflict within any one

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9 Actually, the mismatch model of communicative breakdown serves a critical ideological function in legitimizing political discourse, particularly between the U.S. and Japan. Attributing conflicting interpretations to linguistic conventions (as President Clinton did recently when, following well-established practice, he accused the Japanese of saying yes when they mean no) shifts the emphasis onto surface features of the negotiation process, while disguising the contending
"culture," as well as within any one "speech community" (Pratt 1987). The heteroglossic and dynamic multiculturality inherent in all communities illustrates that speakers from one culture are clearly capable of adjusting to and even adopting different communicative conventions in intercultural contexts, given sufficient motivation to do so.

Focusing on cultural differences has important consequences. When contextualization theory explains intercultural and interethnic miscommunication in terms of the inadvertent misinterpretation of contrasting discourse features, it not only slights the reciprocal structuring of conversational participation, it also obscures more fundamental causes of intercultural friction. The practical result of a mismatch analysis, a call for increased awareness and sensitivity to different speaking styles, is a pale and essentially ineffective substitute for actually changing communicative practice, so that concerted effort is made to recognize the referential perspectives of NNSs and to grant real control over conversational participation, whether on the micro-level of NS-NNS conversation or the macro-level of minority linguistic and social groups involved in political discussions of social and economic policy. In both cases, a contrastive focus on differing features of discourse shifts attention away from the quality of participation and whether interactants are recognized, heard, and responded to.

This rhetorical effect is particularly evident when contrastive linguistics is used to explain divisions between cultural groups. Gumperz (1992b: 51), for instance, argues that:

"immigrant groups who enter a new language environment may become quite fluent in the basic grammar although they may map the contextualization conventions of their own native society onto their conversational practice in the host language. To the extent that this happens, the individuals in question may have difficulties in establishing significant friendship and peer relationships in the host society."

The blame for not being able to make friends and for not being able to get along in the host society is hereby shifted onto NNSs to the extent that they demonstrate unacceptable traces of foreign behavior. This logic in effect blames nonnatives for being victims of marginalization. It says, implicitly, that outsiders are responsible for miscommunication because they do not speak appropriately enough for native speakers to understand, without considering the character of the participation and the quality of the NS’s response. Further, the "host" society is unfairly defined not only as something that does not belong to NNS immigrants (who are positioned as outsiders), but as a monolingual entity where the display of another language is cause for social ostracism.

Restricted to contrastive differences in cultural communicative styles, the analysis of NS-NNS interaction is placed in an apolitical vacuum which has little if any connection to historically constructed inequalities that inform discourse. The realities of racial discrimination and the denial of economic, political, and human rights by which NNSs, both individuals and minority language immigrant groups, are marginalized and excluded by the "host society" are made external to interaction.

economic agendas of two business-oriented governments trying desperately to get the upper hand in a shrinking global market.
When contrastive features of cultural style are said to impede successful communication, privileged access to political and economic authority is treated as if it did not influence the ability to make friends, to be appropriate, or to speak with persuasive, authoritative voice. The unequal effects of miscommunication, whereby NSs merely do not get their message across but NNSs must face unjust discrimination, are treated as unfortunately accidental and of secondary concern to the interaction.

There is a double standard invoked when responsibility for miscommunication in intercultural and interethnic contexts is unreflexively assigned to the nonnative speaker (Kandiah 1991; Singh et al. 1988), even though, as I have tried to show, interpretation is jointly constructed in practice and NNS fluency is partly a function of NS response. When interpretation differs and conversation goes awry, fault is typically found with the nonnative speaker's insufficient or "inappropriate" command of English. This is demonstrated in Gumperz & Roberts (1991: 68) summary evaluation of "Asian" [sic] speakers' interactional patterns in British institutional contexts: "in identifying what they want, clients are either too general or too specific for Western [sic] expectations." By this logic, NNSs are incapable of doing anything right. Whether they speak specifically or generally, they are insufficiently appropriate to meet the expectations of Anglo native speakers.

It is critically important to reject the pervasive, socially current bias against NNSs as inappropriate outsiders, particularly when they are members of social groups that are neither rich nor white. While individual NNSs are certainly capable of being as unresponsive and domineering as the most blatant NS discourse bully, it is part of the cultural milieu in the United States and other "A Team" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1994) societies, to routinely marginalize the rights and perspectives of NNSs and minority language groups, given the pervasive "hegemonic world view" which negates what is foreign and rejects a "humanistic" affirmation of cultural diversity and thoroughgoing racial as well as linguistic equality (Kjolseth 1991). The common sense of this Anglo-centric world view permeates intercultural interaction, as NNSs regularly face NS interactants who implicitly and unthinkingly assume control of conversations and who fail to demonstrate the responsive engagement that recognizes the perspective and interactional authority of their NNS interlocutors. Because it is the social climate that NNSs, both resident "immigrants" and visitors who plan to return to their own countries, are declared inappropriate outsiders even prior to interaction, they are routinely forced to face reduction, usurpation, and marginalization in conversations with NSs. It is crucial that issues of fairness and balance be introduced into the analysis of interaction.

Harder's (1980) discussion of the reduction of the nonnative speaker, which describes the NNS's inability to express the full dimension of his or her identity in the second language, does not capture the full range of the reduction that occurs in intercultural communication, as evident in the data presented in this analysis. NNSs, in interaction with NSs who are unwilling to listen, to respond, to engage with their talk, also face being actively reduced as speakers. Recognizing the active structuring of discourse allows us to see how second language fluency can be dynamically impeded by the character of NS response. At the same time, it also allows us to see how the NS interlocutor's response can assist and amplify the nonnative speaker, supporting more equitable participation in conversation and extending the force and coherence of the discourse.
9. Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to challenge the prevailing notion of mismatching contextualization as an interpretive lens with which to analyze NS-NNS conversations. I address the conception of interculturality which assumes that differences in culturally specific communicative styles and pragmatic features of discourse cause misunderstanding. I argue that, as an explanation of intercultural miscommunication, this view fails to capture the contentious, multicultural diversity of cultural voices. It also slights the way in which interpretation is mediated by shared social activity.

In place of a mismatch approach, I have presented an analysis of the varying quality of interlocutor response, describing how the implicit social character of interaction serves to shape the force and fluency of NNSs. In particular, I analyze quality of conversational participation according to the two heuristic axes of intersubjective perspective and interactional authority (production). I contend that the responsive character of speaker engagement serves to structure the discursive position of the NNS, either amplifying or reducing the significance of what is said and thus mediating the shape and success of the interaction. The distinctiveness of the four data selections demonstrate that it is not simply "cultural" differences in communicative "styles," but how differences are taken up and acted upon within the social character of the activity, that is central in the analysis of NS-NNS conversation.

I have tried to interject the notion of reciprocality into the analysis of intercultural interaction. A critical and politically attuned interactional sociolinguistics needs to recognize the widespread and commonly accepted discriminatory attitudes toward foreigners and members of linguistic and ethnic minorities which permeate intercultural encounters, and how these common sense understandings or discourses about the world can be enacted on the micro-level of conversational interaction to deny recognition of, support for, and responsive engagement with the NNS's talk, in the inherently ideological name of appropriateness.

Recognizing the fundamental importance of reciprocality in conversation entails that communication between NSs and NNSs be democratically enacted, where interactants dialogically "share in the formulation of the conditions of knowledge and futurity" (Aronowitz 1993: 21). Such a balanced approach is important from the pedagogical point of view of developing second language proficiency through joint engagement. It is also critical to understand the dynamics of cross cultural discourse in a world faced with the pressing need to address issues of social, political, and economic inequality.
APPENDICES

Figure 1. Interactional axes of perspective and participation

Figure 2. Contextualization according to contrastive interpretative frames
Structuring conversational participation

Figure 3. Mediated Contextualization

Transcription Conventions

. . pause of approximately one-half second per comma
| | simultaneous or overlapping speech
= continuous or latched talk
[ ] overlapping speech inserted as backchannels: e.g. "unhun" and "right"
- speech clipped short or cut off
:: elongation of a sound
:: distinctly falling intonation
/ distinctly rising intonation
sentence-like concluding tone
hhh laughter
<...> ellipsis: conversation not included, either within or across turns
" " verbal quotation: speaker adopts a distinctly different voice
?? speech not understood in transcription
! distinctly excited emotion
() analyst's inserted comment or description
Under emphasis of a word by the speaker
References


