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Deciphering the Meaning of Puns in Learning English as a Second Language: A Study of Triadic Interaction

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DECIPHERING THE MEANING OF PUNS

IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE:

A STUDY OF TRIADIC INTERACTION

By

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For Gerardo, who always believed in me,
even when I didn't believe in myself,
and for Tomás, Cecilia, and John,
who supported me every step of the way.

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ABSTRACT

Recent research (Tarone 2001; Broner & Tarone (2001); Cook 2000; Lantolf 1997) in second language acquisition notes the importance of language play (LP) in the development of competence in the target language. This study investigated how five pairs of advanced proficiency adult English as second language (ESL) learners helped each other to decipher the double meaning of a series of phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical puns that appeared in common comic strips. Grounded in sociocultural theory (Vygotsky 1978), the study used microgenetic analysis of the collaborative dialogue between the participants to determine the patterns of assistance the learners employed to reach comprehension. Microgenetic analysis also revealed evidence of learner-generated attention to the aspects of language that created the ambiguity in the puns.

Analysis of the results indicated that the dialogues developed differently according to the relative expertise of the participants at the beginning of each triadic interaction. If both participants understood, they offered a joint explanation. When one understood, that participant explained while the other gave listening signals. The final scenario was that of neither understanding, in which event the participants worked together to comprehend the double meaning. In all cases, there was evidence of joint construction of meaning through such strategies as completing each other's thoughts, supplying synonyms, asking questions, paraphrasing and using gestures. The task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns also prompted attention to the aspect of language that created the ambiguity in 35 of the 40 PRDs.

Although the aim of the study was to investigate the interaction between the participants, analysis of the transcripts revealed that the researcher played a more prominent role than anticipated. The interventions of the researcher in keeping the participants on task and providing assistance were a factor in an increased comprehension rate from 28.75% at the beginning of the dialogues to 91.25% in follow-up interviews. The importance of attending to the linguistic element that created the ambiguity in the pun was underscored by the result that the participants achieved understanding in only one of the PRDs that did not contain a language focused episode (LFE).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Crimes of fashion abound in the Age of Aguilera
It's difficult to throw out the Baath party with regime
Capping off college
Lack of sweep causes lack of sleep for Nash, Mavericks
Tokyo bathhouses are hot, hot, hot

These headlines appearing during a one-week period in a local newspaper in a southern town in the United States are an indication of an aspect of second language learning that has been largely ignored in the teaching profession. English language learners in the U.S. are constantly bombarded with creative uses of language in the form of puns, music lyrics, movie and television scripts, and slang and idioms in conversation in their lives outside the classroom. Teachers, however, generally relegate these types of examples of creative language use to a second plane in the classroom, with the aim of amusing and motivating, and not as part of the 'serious' study of language. The current study proposes that it may be worthwhile to look more deeply into the use and function of such expressions.

If we get serious about language play (Tarone 2000), there are implications for setting up language programs, developing curricula, creating materials, and planning classroom activities. A previous study (Kaplan & Lucas 2001) by the researcher and a colleague indicated that when learners discussed a series of puns, they attained a greater understanding of the double meaning and the humor inherent in the puns in almost all cases. The results of the prior study motivated the researcher to undertake the current investigation.

The Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study is introduced below, and further discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter One continues with a brief overview of the theoretical framework of the current study, followed by the elucidation of the purpose and the research questions, an introduction to the methodology, the statement of the significance, assumptions and limitations, and pertinent definitions. Chapter Two develops the theoretical framework, including a discussion of the nature of language and language play, and of the sociocultural theory of learning as applied to second language learning. Chapter Three elaborates on the methodology to be applied in the current study, while Chapter Four presents the results of the data analysis. Chapter Five discusses the findings as they relate to the literature review and to the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study, explores the implications of the present study for the field of second language acquisition and ESL instruction, and offers recommendations for future research.

The present study is based on a previous investigation conducted by the researcher with a colleague (Kaplan & Lucas 2001) at a private university in Caracas, Venezuela. The objectives of the previous study were to determine if advanced ESL learners could understand the humor created by the double meaning of puns in English, and to discern the cognitive and interactional strategies utilized by the participants in their attempts to understand the ambiguous texts. The researchers had frequently employed humorous texts and situations in the classroom to attract attention and heighten motivation, but felt that understanding humor might play a more central role in language acquisition, given that humor is an integral part of all cultures (Attardo 1993), found in all languages and in every aspect of life. Medical professionals have found evidence that humor is a force for healing (Cousins 1977; Salamah 1983; Gessen & Gessen 1998). Management consultants advocate the use of humor in the workplace as an effective stress reduction technique (Fahlman 1997; Leo 1999). Psychologists look at the nature of humor to determine aspects of human personality development and social relations (Harvey 2002; La Fave, Haddad & Maesen 1976). Historians and sociologists have looked at humor to gain insights into intellectual history and popular culture (Jumonville 2002; Mintz 1983). Zillmann and Bryant (1983) investigated the effects of humor in education.

The ubiquity of humor makes the understanding and appreciation of the humor of the target language very important for second language learners who wish to achieve advanced proficiency in the language. Achieving the goal of comprehending humorous texts, and further, finding them funny, however, requires that the learner grasp the special characteristics of the target language and culture that create the significance and wit of humorous texts (Tomalin & Stempleski 1993). A great deal of humor depends on incongruity for its effect (Raskin 1985), and incongruity results from double meanings. For this reason, Kaplan and Lucas (2001) selected the deciphering of the double meaning of puns as the task for their investigation. The results of the Kaplan/Lucas study indicated that the learners advanced in their understanding of the double meanings of the puns as they conversed, and that some types of puns were easier to understand than others. The interest of the researcher of the current study in the implications of the results of the Kaplan/Lucas study for classroom practice prompted the present research.

The current study views the puns as examples of *language play (LP)*, rather than as instances of humor, although the intention of the creators of puns is often to produce a humorous effect. The term *language play* emphasizes the linguistic elements involved in creative uses of language, and is thus more appropriate in the investigation of second language learning. The theoretical framework for the present study, consisting of theories of language and of learning, is introduced below and further elaborated in Chapter Two. The theory of language considers the role of language play in the definition of language adopted for the current study.

<u>Theoretical Framework</u>

<u>The Nature of Language</u>

The present study makes the assumption that language is a system through which individuals make meaning as well as exchange information. Language can be understood only in terms of its use, and through use, the language system constantly changes. The force for change in language comes from smashing the existing conventions (Ross 1998: 27), and one way that this is done is through language play.

Language play involves the "unpredictable manipulation of language forms at different linguistic levels…to provide entertainment and amusement to the speaker and to others" (Tarone 2000: 32). LP appears early in children's first language development (Redfern 1984; Peck 1980; Garvey 1977; Cazden 1976; Weir 1962), and continues to be practiced among adults in all societies in such varied forms as "the apparent frivolity of disguised speech, riddles, and puns to the seriousness of poetry and literature" (Farb 1974: 113).

Studies of children's first language development (Cook 2000; Cazden 1974; Chukovsky 1968; Weir 1962) have shown the prevalence and importance of language play, both in private and social speech. Children seem to notice phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical elements in the language they hear, and subsequently experiment with these features in creative, playful ways in their own production (Lantolf 1997). Through this experimentation, children develop metalinguistic awareness and proficiency in their native language.

Lantolf and others (Broner & Tarone 2001; Sullivan 2000; and Tarone 2000) have recently suggested that language play may play a role in adult second language learning. Yet, very little attention has been given to language play in studies of adult language learning. The lack of attention to language play is probably due not only to the notion that play is the province of children, but also to the view that language is a transactional activity, practical in nature. In addition, positivist researchers consider science as being concerned with "useful facts rather than frivolous fictions" (Cook 2000: 38). However, by eliminating a consideration of language play from language learning studies, researchers often neglect to take into account "what humans actually use language for, or which aspects of that use are most important to them" (38). The newspaper headlines that open this paper are examples of the use of language play by adults in the form of puns in everyday usage.

To understand examples of language play such as puns, it is necessary for the reader or listener to be aware of the linguistic source of the ambiguity. Schmidt (Schmidt & Frota 1986) noted the importance of paying attention to the various aspects of language in his own learning of Portuguese. The researcher of the present study had a similar experience in learning Spanish as a second language. It was not enough to hear streams of language from the television or in conversations of native speakers for learning to occur. Being aware of the forms as they related to meaning and use was essential for uptake to occur. Schmidt (1995) concluded that "noticing", which he defined as the "conscious registration of the occurrence of some event" (Schmidt: 29), is an important factor in second language learning. This idea is not surprising since in first language learning, which is naturalistic and experiential, children constantly notice and experiment with the forms of language, generally through language play, as noted above.

Puns are a particularly apt choice for encouraging the noticing of form, meaning and use, since in them form, meaning and use are intricately related. The double meaning of the pun lies

in the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and/or lexical forms being exploited.   As seen in the discussion of the results of the present study in Chapter Four, the puns provoked a good deal of discussion centered on language form and meaning.

As noted by Schmidt (1995), *attention* precedes noticing, since the event must first be observed before it can be consciously registered. Attention is a concept that plays a primary role in the learning theory that underlies the current study. Sociocultural theory is briefly discussed next. The theory of the nature of language and the role of noticing in learning language are developed in Chapter Two.

Sociocultural Learning Theory

 Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory provides the theoretical framework for the concept of learning adopted in the present study.   The theory suggests that cognitive development occurs through the child's contact with the environment and with others, as well as within the mind.   Knowledge in children is first developed on the interpersonal plane with adult guidance or with help from more capable peers, and then moves to the intrapersonal plane, where it becomes a part of the child's cognitive ability.   This *internalization* consists of a series of transformations, denominated *microgenesis*, through which external activity is "reconstructed and begins to occur internally…and is the distinguishing feature of human psychology, the basis of the qualitative leap from animal to human psychology" (57).

The psychological space in which the process of internalization occurs is the *zone of proximal development (ZPD),* which is "the difference between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers…."(86).   According to Vygotsky, "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (89).   The process through which the adults guide the children has been termed *scaffolding* (Lantolf 2000).

While Vygotsky applied the notion of the ZPD in children to the guidance of adults or more capable peers, second language learning researchers (De Guerrero & Villamil 2000; Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997; Platt & Brooks 1994) have observed a similar process occurring among adult learners.   Their contention is that learning can occur not only in the relationship between a child ('novice') and an adult ('expert'), but also in the process of peers working together.   In this scenario, knowledge is said to be '*co-constructed*' through the dialogic process occurring between the peers, and then becomes internalized.

In the current study, the dialogic process through which learners co-constructed meaning is centered on the task of deciphering the ambiguity of the puns.   The researcher adopted the concept of 'triadic interaction' from the work of van Lier (2002) to indicate the importance of the role of the task in the meaning making activity. Triadic interaction refers to the interface among two learners and the task being performed. The learners in this type of interaction do not speak "face to face bridging some sort of information gap, but work side by side, with a joint focus of activity, the object…as a third interlocutor…" (147-8).

The Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study upon which the present research was based supported the idea that knowledge of language is co-constructed in peer interaction, even though the previous study was based on a cognitive view of learning.   The researchers chose the pair think-aloud protocol as the methodology for the prior investigation as a means of observing the cognitive strategies employed by the participants when they attempted to decipher the double meanings of

the puns. However, the results indicated that the interaction between the participants played an important role in their coming to an understanding of the double meaning of puns: "verbalizing with a partner allowed an increased understanding of the puns from the initial to the final reaction with each type of pun" (255).   The pair think-aloud process was more than two people thinking, it was two people constructing knowledge together. For this reason, the present study proceeded from a sociocultural theoretical framework. Sociocultural theory applied to second language learning is further discussed in Chapter Two.

The experience of the previous study (Kaplan & Lucas 2001) and the investigation by the researcher of the current study into the nature of language and of learning led to the definition of the purpose for the present study. The aims are defined in the following section.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the triadic interaction that occurred when two low-advanced and/or advanced ESL learners collaborated in the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns. It investigated the assistance the learners provided each other in their alternating roles of expert and novice and the efficacy of the task in promoting learner attention to phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects of the language. It sought evidence through microgenetic analysis of the dialogic process and through interviews with the learners that participation in the triadic interaction led to a clearer understanding of the ambiguities in the puns, thus presenting indications of language learning. The research questions which guided the investigation are presented next.

Research Questions

The questions motivating the current study were based on the definition of learning as an interpersonal and intrapersonal process, in which attention to form and meaning is a major factor. The questions reflected the theory of language as a dynamic, complex and creative system. Within this theory of language, language play is an important element in second language learning. The research questions were:

1. How do adult learners assist each other in attempting to decipher the ambiguity of puns in the pun related dialogues (PRDs)?
2. What evidence is there of learner-generated attention to aspects of language (phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical) in language focused episodes (LFEs)?
3. What evidence is there that the learners have a clearer understanding of the double meaning of the puns at the end of the triadic interaction than they had at the beginning?

The first question sought to describe the structure of the dialogic process and the patterns of interaction through which the learners assisted each other in their attempt to decipher the

meaning of the puns. The discussion of each pun was denominated a pun related dialogue (PRD). The patterns of interaction reflected the manner in which the participants jointly created, or co-constructed, meaning. The answer to this question also looked at the roles that the learners assumed during the process, including the roles of expert and novice, since these roles determined the nature of the meaning making activity. The second question sought to identify the episodes within the PRDs during which the learners focused on the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language in language focused episodes (LFEs). The third question concerned the internal evidence in the dialogues that indicated that the learners had unraveled the ambiguity inherent in the double meaning of the puns. This evidence consisted of the learners' ability to define ambiguities that were unclear to one or both of the participants at the beginning of the dialogue. In addition, the researcher interviewed the subjects subsequent to their participation in the dialogues to ascertain if they had grasped the double meaning of the puns.

The research questions determined the design of the study. The methodological procedures for the current study are discussed next.

Methodology

The theoretical framework and the research questions of the current study dictated the choice of qualitative methodology. Language is an interactional and creative system and learning is a process of internalization that occurs during social interaction. Observing the process of language learning requires a methodology that is sensitive to the "process that undergoes certain changes before our eyes" (Vygotsky 1997: 71) as it occurs in real time. Naturalistic inquiry allows for the study of "situations as they unfold naturally; (it is) nonmanipulative and noncontrolling; (with) openness to whatever emerges" (Patton 2002: 40). Qualitative methodology provides rich description of processes occurring within specific contexts and recognizes that complex processes "cannot meaningfully be reduced to a few discrete variables and linear, cause-effect relationships" (41). Following these principles, the methodology for the current study consisted primarily of the observation and analysis of the pun related dialogues (PRDs). Interviews with the participants complemented the PRD analysis.

Data for the PRD analysis were drawn from the interactions of adult ESL students enrolled in an intensive English program. The participants engaged in the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns that appeared in several comic strips, and that owed their ambiguity to phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical elements of language. The conversations were digital video recorded, so gestures could be included in the analysis.

The data were analyzed through microgenetic analysis, an approach developed in sociocultural theory to study the "cognitive development that occurs moment by moment in social interaction" (Ohta 2000: 54). The microgenetic analysis allowed the researcher to observe the interaction through which the participants jointly constructed meaning in the pun related dialogues, in response to Research Question # 1 (How do adult learners assist each other in attempting to decipher the ambiguity of puns in the pun related dialogues (PRDs)?). In addition, the analysis permitted the identification of the language focused episodes, in response to Research Question # 2 (What evidence is there of learner-generated attention to aspects of language in language focused episodes (LFEs)?). Research Question # 3 (What evidence is

there that the learners have a clearer understanding of the double meaning of the puns at the end of the triadic interaction than they had at the beginning?) was partially answered in the microgenetic analysis that documented internal evidence of learning in the dialogues. The third research question was also answered through interviews conducted by the researcher with the subjects subsequent to the pun related dialogues. The interviews comprised the second aspect of the research design. The researcher interviewed the participants individually regarding their understanding of the puns and asked them to explain the ambiguities. The components of the research design are discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

The methodology employed derives from the research questions that were formulated on the basis of the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study and the theoretical foundation and the purpose of the present study. The Kaplan/Lucas study indicated that the interaction of the participants promoted increased understanding of the double meaning of the puns, while the theoretical framework supports the notion that language play is an important element in language and in learning. The significance of the present study for the field of second language learning is considered next.

Significance

The present study looked at an area of second language learning that has been infrequently considered. While examples of language play have often been employed in the classroom for their motivational value (Davis 1997; Kral 1994; Lopez-Corria 1999; Wagner 1999; Woolard 1996; Zaki Matta 1999), only recently have researchers (Tarone 2001; Cook 2000; Crystal 1998; Lantolf 1997) begun to look at LP as an integral part of second language learning.   In children's L1 and L2 learning, language play serves as a way for children to focus on aspects of language that contribute to their learning to understand and use the language. The link between language play and learning is clear.   The present study found that the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns provided a means for adults to notice lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of the language, thus enhancing their understanding of the workings of the target language.   By showing that puns were an effective way of promoting noticing, the current study complied with the suggestion of Leeman, etal (1995) that "the determination of effective means of focus on form is an important research aim" (219). Because the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns proved to be effective, such activities can be incorporated in ESL classrooms.

By conducting the study within the sociocultural framework, the researcher was able to describe how "meaning emerges throughout the dialogic encounter" (Platt & Brooks 2002: 370). This analysis of learner dialogue contributes important insights into the kind of interaction that occurs within the classroom, thus providing teachers with information to guide them in planning activities and preparing materials for classroom dyadic work. This study also contributes to the growing body of in-depth analyses of specific contexts within sociocultural theory, thus advancing the understanding of second language learning processes within the field.

By analyzing peer collaborative dialogue, the study contributes to the growing realization within the field of second language learning (Ohta 1995) that teacher-fronted activities in the classroom are often not the most effective for creating a learning environment.   Learners frequently profit from a student-centered approach in which the teacher relinquishes control,

particularly when the learners are adults with a highly developed first language and mature cognitive abilities. This view recognizes that "what L2 students learn, even in the same classroom and with the same teacher, is as variable as the different backgrounds and goals each brings to the classroom, as well as the different interactive processes in which each participates" (Ohta 2001: 3). The teacher provides opportunities, but the learners control their own learning. As Diane Larsen-Freeman (1997: 162) noted so aptly: "I am constantly reminding students, audiences, and myself that teaching does not cause learning." In other words, the teacher can contribute to learning by providing opportunities, such as the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns, which promote learning. Whether learning occurs depends on the learners and the triadic interaction in which they participate.

The significance of the study is bounded by the assumptions made by the researcher upon embarking on the investigation, and by the limitations which the objectives and methodology placed on the analysis. The assumptions and limitations are presented next.

Assumptions and Limitations

In undertaking the current study, the researcher made three basic assumptions and identified three fundamental limitations. The underlying assumptions regarded the nature of language and of learning. The first assumption is that language is a system through which individuals make meaning as well as exchange information. It can be understood only in terms of its use, and through use, the language system constantly changes. It was posited that if one looks at language-in-use, a significant proportion of real language is comprised by language play. Not only is language play entertaining, but it is also a major factor in creative thought. Thus, language play is an important area to consider in second language learning research. A detailed exploration of language as a complex system is given in Chapter Two.

The second underlying assumption of the present study is that learning occurs through the internalization of knowledge when individuals engage in the process of joint creation of meaning, or co-construction. It is possible to observe the learning process in the discursive practices between individuals (Harré & Stearns 1995), and thus gain psychological insights through microgenetic analysis. The concept of learning adopted for the present study is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

The third assumption was that attention is an essential process in learning. Attention was defined for the purposes of the present study as a focus on the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language, fundamental in second language learning. The role of attention in second language learning is explored in Chapter Two.

Important limitations of the current study are inherent in the methodology selected by the researcher. First, microgenetic analysis is a form of qualitative enquiry, and, as such, seeks to describe specific instances of behavior in limited contexts. The detailed examination of the dialogic processes permits insights into the ways in which learners construct knowledge, and may be transferred to similar situations. However, no claims for generalizability are made.

Second, the analysis here is restricted in time to individual dialogues between the pairs in the effort to establish how the conversation is structured and the processes of learner assistance that are observable across pairs, and therefore does not make claims for long-term gains in competence.

Finally, the participants in the current study reflected a purposive sample, drawn from the students at the intensive English institute where the researcher was employed. The sophisticated nature of the task required that the participants had at least a low advanced level of proficiency in English. The conclusions, therefore, are limited to the specific type of learner chosen for this study.

Definitions

The definitions of relevant terms found in this paper are presented below.

Attention: observation of an event prior to noticing.
Co-construction: the joint creation of meaning through the dialogic process.
Collaborative dialogue: the interaction between peers when they are engaged in a triadic interaction.
ESL: English as a second language.
Internalization: a series of transformations through which external activity is "reconstructed and begins to occur internally" (Vygotsky 1978: 57).
Language focused episode (LFE): sequences within a dialogue during which the participants pay attention to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language.
Language play (LP): the manipulation of language forms at different linguistic levels, including experimentation with discrete elements (phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical) of language, and creative uses of language as in comedy, fiction, poetry, drama, etc.
Metalanguage: "language used to analyze or describe language (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002: 5).
Microgenesis: "cognitive development that occurs moment by moment in social interaction" (Ohta 2000:54).
Noticing: "conscious registration of the occurrence of some event" (Schmidt 1995: 29).
Puns: a type of language play in which phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical elements of language are manipulated to create ambiguity.
Pun related dialogue (PRD): the sequence of dialogue consisting of the turns taken by the participants as they discuss a pun.
Scaffolding: the process through which an expert guides a novice toward greater understandings.
Triadic interaction: the interplay between interlocutors and the focus of their activity in language use and development (Van Lier 2002).
Zone of proximal development: the psychological space in which the learner moves from his/her actual to potential developmental level through scaffolding.

Conclusion

The present chapter has introduced the current study by considering the background and introducing the theoretical framework. The purpose and the research questions have been delineated, as well as the significance, the assumptions and limitations, and pertinent definitions. In addition, the methodology has been introduced. The next chapter explores the theoretical foundations that inform the research questions, methodology, and analysis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current study analyzed the triadic interaction among pairs of low advanced and advanced ESL learners as they performed the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns. The objectives of the research were to ascertain how the participants assisted each other in the realization of the task, to determine if the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns was an efficacious way to promote learner-generated attention to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language that created the ambiguity in the puns, and to seek evidence that the process of the triadic interaction resulted in increased comprehension on the part of the learners. The research questions, the methodology and the analysis were grounded in the researcher's understanding of language and learning.

The present chapter reviews the literature that explicates the notion about language as a system that is at once social and cognitive, with language play as a crucial element in the language system.   The section on language is followed by an overview of sociocultural theory that informed the current study with regard to the nature of learning. The chapter continues with an exploration of how these notions of language and learning have been and may be applied to second language learning, and of the theoretical background for the role of attention in language learning. Finally, the chapter summarizes some of the studies that contributed to the formulation of the research questions and the choice of the methodology for the present study.

<u>Language</u>

<u>The Nature of Language</u>

Crucial for researchers, language teaching professionals and language learners is their perception, conscious or unconscious, of the nature of language. Van Lier (2002) noted the importance of assumptions about language for classroom practices.   For example, the use of information gap tasks within the interactionist framework is based on the notion of language as an information exchange system, while employing sentence practice and the memorization of lists of words follows from a belief that language is an acquired habit (142).   He called for a "reconceptualization of what language is and a close examination of the contexts in which language and learning occur" (157). Through years of both learning and teaching a second

language, the researcher in the current study has been influenced by various theories of language, beginning with a behavioral perspective.

The view of language as an acquired habit has its roots in the description offered many years ago by St. Augustine:

> When they (my elders) called anything by name, and moved the body towards it while they spoke, I saw and gathered that the thing they wished to point out was called by the name they then uttered when they meant to point it out…. So it was that by frequently hearing the words, in duly placed sentences, I gradually gathered what things they were the signs of; and having formed my mouth to the utterance of these signs, I thereby expressed my will.   Thus I exchanged with those about me the signs by which we express our wishes…
> (Pilkington 1943: 11)

This account reveals a view of language in which words have meanings directly related to the object being pointed to, perhaps in the way that Plato thought of 'Forms.'   There is an 'essence' in each object that is eternal and true, and of which the object is a manifestation (Lemay & Pitts 1994: 8). The word is the linguistic symbol for that object.   Heidegger picked up on this conception when he suggested that the words of language are tied to the original object or experience, and therefore are expressions of the essence of all things (92).

The view of language as a static entity was taken up by de Saussere (In Dunn and Lantolf 1998), when he determined that linguistics was the study of signs. De Saussere's intent was to make of language an object that could be studied in itself, so that linguistics would be accepted as a science in the positivist tradition. To this end, he separated the thing itself (*langue*) from the way in which it was used (*parole*). The way people spoke was irrelevant to the 'science' of linguistics. Noam Chomsky was influenced by this mentalism and absolutism when he posited the existence of a Universal Grammar (UG) that applies to all languages (Ellis 1994). *Langue* and *parole* were adopted by Krashen as 'competence' and 'performance', with language acquisition being the development of competence through the innate Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which processes language input (Mitchell & Miles 1998).   The LAD was activated by input, so that acquisition could occur solely through exposure to input, and not as a result of language use.

St. Augustine's account suggests not only a particular view about the nature of language, but also a theory of the way in which children learn language. From his perspective, children learned by listening and repeating as the adults indicated the names of things.   Eventually, children began to apply their knowledge in original constructions.   Behaviorists would much later seize upon a similar explanation by positing that "language learning is the result of imitation, practice, feedback on success, and habit formation" (Lightbown & Spada 1999: 9).

Wittgenstein drew quite a different picture of language in his influential *Philosophical Investigations* (2002).   He recognized that language was a complex phenomenon that could neither be considered solely an acquired habit nor a message-sending and receiving mechanism. "Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from *one* side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about." (69). Wittgenstein admitted that Augustine's "philosophical concept of meaning has its place in a primitive idea of the way language functions", but that "not everything that we call language is this system" (3):

It is as if someone were to say: 'A game consists in moving objects about on a surface according to certain rules…' – and we replied: You seem to be thinking of board games, but there are others. You can make your definition correct by expressly restricting it to those games (3).

Wittgenstein expanded on the game metaphor by describing "language and the actions into which it is woven" as a 'language game', in which the functions of words are as diverse as the functions of tools in a tool-box (4). Humans are constantly involved in playing language games:

…there are countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words', 'sentences'. And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all: but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten…(10).

Wittgenstein used the term 'language game' to "bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a life-form" (10). He used the utterance 'five slabs' as an example. The two simple words could convey convey subtleties of meaning resulting from "the part that these words play in the language game" (8-9). The context, the intonation, and the facial expressions and gestures that accompany the utterance determined if it was seen as a statement, a command, a question, etc. According to Wittgenstein, the multiplicity of language games included examples such as giving orders, reporting an event, speculating about an event, making a joke, guessing riddles, etc. (10). Simply naming an object or concept was "not a move in the language-game – any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess. We may say *nothing* has so far been done, when a thing has been named. It has not even *got* a name except in the language-game" (21).

With his metaphor, Wittgenstein emphasized that language could only be described in terms of its use. Looking for an idealistic description of language can only lead to frustration. "We think it (the ideal) must be in reality; for we think we already see it there….and we become dissatisfied with what are ordinarily called 'propositions', 'words', 'signs'." (39). The only way to look at language is in use, and "the more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement (the ideal)….the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement" (40). Therefore, the concept of language as an ever-changing game may be a "concept with blurred edges" (29), but one that better fits reality than a sharply drawn ideal.

Working at the same time as Wittgenstein, Bahktin (1986) also found fault with the notion of an idealized language system. While he admitted the existence of "neutral dictionary meanings of words (that)…guarantee that all speakers of a given language will understand one another", he suggested that "the use of words in live speech communication is always individual and contextual in nature" (88). He suggested that describing the nature of language as embodied in grammatical terms did not capture the essence of language. He extended Wittgenstein's tool-

box metaphor beyond the word to include other aspects of grammar as its tools – lexicon, morphology and syntax – which the speaker endows with meaning in particular situations (84).

Rommetveit (1979) concurred with the necessity of describing language in terms of its use, and emphasized that "language is a thoroughly and genuinely social phenomenon." For him, "the notion of an utterance deprived of its context of human interaction is as absurd as the notion of a fall deprived of the gravitational field within which it takes place" (93).

Farb (1974) selected another metaphor to describe the nature of language:

> Today a more fitting metaphor might be the 'ecology' of language – the web formed by strands uniting the kind of language spoken, its history, the social conventions of the community in which it is spoken, the influence of neighboring language, and even the physical environment in which the language is spoken. This metaphor emphasizes that the function of language is to relate its speakers to one another and to the world they live in (17).

In extending the metaphor from a game between individuals in a specific context to an "ecology" encompassing the history, social conventions and environment of the language, Farb indicated a broader role for language than that of a system of communication or a social phenomenon. If language is embedded in culture, then the language is intimately connected with the way of thinking of the group that speaks the language. Lakoff (1987) used the same term "ecology" to refer to thought patterns:

> Thought has an *ecological structure*. The efficiency of cognitive processing, as in learning and memory, depends on the overall structure of the conceptual system and on what the concepts mean. Thought is thus more than just the mechanical manipulation of abstract symbols. (xvii)

For Lakoff, the "grammars of languages…mark certain conceptual categories", thus making language "a part of cognition in general – and a major part at that – conceptual categories marked by the grammars of languages are important in understanding the nature of cognitive categories in general" (92). He believed that the way a people views the world is intimately intertwined with the language that people speaks. When children learn a language, they also learn the world view of their society. In addition, language permits human beings to articulate – to themselves and to others – those concepts that are "not directly grounded in experience" through the use of "metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery" (xiv). As Huizinga (1970) pointed out: "Words and ideas are not born of scientific or logical thinking but of creative language, which means of innumerable languages – for this act of 'conception' has taken place over and over again" (47).

When Wittgenstein (2002) posited that language was a "labyrinth of paths", he referred to the many uses of language in the language games that people play in their interactions with others. Bahktin and Rommetveit concurred in the necessity of seeking the essence of language in the context of human interaction. Farb (1974) suggested that notions of language must embrace not only immediate social interaction but the broader context of the history, social

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conventions and physical environment from which the language springs. Lakoff (1987) also opted for an ecological metaphor and extended the model of language to include language as an integral part of the human being's conceptual framework. In the current study, the multifarious nature of language includes the view of language as both a social and cognitive phenomenon, in which thought and language depend on each other. As such, the creative function of language is as important as the social, since it is in the expression and development of thought that people function and interact in uniquely human ways. This creative function often finds expression through imaginative and innovative manipulation of the meanings and forms of language through the various types of language play. The importance of language play is considered next.

<u>Language Play</u>

Already with Wittgenstein (2002) and Lakoff (1987), the importance of metaphor was taking hold. According to Huizinga (1970): "Behind every abstract expression there lies the boldest of metaphors, and every metaphor is a play upon words. Thus in giving expression to life, man creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature" (23). The German nonsense poet, Christian Morgenstern, remarked that "we are imprisoned by language" and "what we need to do…is 'smash language' before we can learn to think properly". The conventions of language must be "*stretched* to reveal wider possibilities for language and thought" (In Ross 1998: 27).

Cook (2000) speculated that the *first* function of language is found in language play in its various forms: lies, fictions, fantasies and games, since it is in these creative uses of language that human social organization and complex knowledge have emerged. In Cook's view, language play frees "the mind from obligation and constraint" and "refreshes, rearranges, and provides the free play of ideas on which innovative thinking depends" (42). He suggested that

> …the ubiquity of language play demands more attention in applied linguistic
> theory. Given that language play is marked by apparent uselessness,
> explanation is needed as to why so much human time, effort and emotion is
> invested in it" (123-4).

Redfern (1984) also found it surprising that language play, being so important socially, personally, educationally, and creatively, had been largely ignored in the definition of language. He considered language play, and especially puns, to be one of the most important dimensions of language: "My premise is that puns illuminate the nature of language in general. They are a latent resource of language, and certain temperaments simply will not resist trying to mine and exploit this rich ore, because (like Everest) it is there" (9). He speculated that the neglect of language play in descriptions of language was due to the view of language as an information exchange system, and the scientific mindset that dismisses language play as being too trivial a topic for serious study. Redfern freed language from the constraints of a positivist description. He dismissed the notion of the linguist L.G. Kelly (1971 In Redfern 1984) that ambiguity in language is undesirable, but is, rather, a source of its richness.

Redfern suggested that puns are intrinsic to language, citing the availability of homophones and the "undeniable ambiguity of all language, which so often proves inadequate, uncontrollable, misusable" (7). He considered that

> …we are programmed to play with language. The speaker receives from his community a 'language system' with 'directions for use', but also with directions for 'mis-use', which allow him at the same time to assert his mastery of the directions for use (6).

The "mis-use" that Redfern described is a spur to creativity, "bifurcating thought and the invention of the new from the old" (14). Redfern suggested that:

> Wordplay suits those unconvinced that rational argument suffices. These would include: advertisers, ironists, religious leaders, politicians, liars, writers of all kinds, madmen – and all of us at some moments of our lives. Puns appeal to those who want to say several things at once, and for whom unambiguous utterance is too linear and restricting (177).

In addition to the creative possibilities of the pun, and of special interest to the current study, is Redfern's reference to the power of the pun to "keep us on the alert" (6). He suggested that responding to puns is an indication that one is alert. "They make us stretch our minds and double our attention" (24). As will be discussed below, attention is an important aspect of learning, including second language learning. The current study reflects Redfern's position that puns are a way of drawing second language learners' attention to linguistic aspects of the target language.

The fundamental nature of the creative function of language as revealed in language play seems to be borne out by the observation of children acquiring their first language. There is more going on than merely the process of repetition as described by Augustine. There is more involved than the triggering of an internal mechanism, as posited by Chomsky. Children seem to be far more active players in the language game. In her classic study of her own 2 ½ year-old child's nighttime monologues, Weir (1962) discovered that her son was a creative innovator in his language practice. He consistently played with the phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical forms of language by inventing new combinations (112). During ten years observing his own and other children, the Russian children's author, Kornei Chukovsky, was astounded at the quantity and quality of language play engaged in by children as young as two years old. In acquiring the meanings and forms of language, Chukovsky (1968) found that children frequently created rhythms and rhymes, and noted children's "skill and sensitivity to the meaning and significance of the elements from which the words are formed" (7). Kuczaj (1983) determined that play is developmentally progressive, "assisting the child in various aspects of the linguistic system" (14). He suggested that children play with language in order to attain mastery, and that once mastery, or at least some degree of mastery, is attained, they play with language for enjoyment.

Language play "is one of the most important dimensions of language" and yet most definitions and descriptions of language consider it a peripheral issue. The reason for this may lie in the positivist conception of language as an abstract system (Dunn & Lantolf 1998). Language play is dismissed "as being too trivial a topic for serious study" (Crystal 1998: 221). However, as noted by Cook (2000), language play "should not be seen as at odds with language work, nor as subordinate to it, a peripheral and somehow less important aspect of the study of language…but as the source of language knowledge, use, and activity"(204).

The current study accepts language play as an important element in the notion of language as an interactional and creative system. Language play is a vehicle for change in language, and also a means of drawing attention to the relation between language form, meaning, and use. The possibility that language play in the form of puns may contribute to adult second language learning motivated the selection of the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns for the current study. The author's belief, supported by the results of the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study, that learning is a social as much as a psychological phenomenon, prompted the adoption of the sociocultural theory (SCT) of learning as the theoretical framework of language learning in the current study. The premises of SCT are considered next.

How Does Learning Occur?

The assumption of the present study was that learning, including language learning, originates in social practices, as reflected in the work of the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky. Sociocultural learning theory posits that learning occurs through the process of internalization in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Children develop the higher mental functions through play, with voluntary attention being considered as one of the higher mental functions. These basic constructs of sociocultural theory are discussed below.

Internalization

According to Vygotsky (1978), internal "maturation per se is a secondary factor in the development of the most complex, unique forms of human behavior. The development of these behaviors is characterized by complicated, qualitative transformations of one form of behavior into another…" (19). These transformations occur through a process he designated as *internalization,* through which "an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally" (56). As he described:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, *between* people (*interpsychological*), and then *inside* the child (*intrapsychological*). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals. The internalization of socially rooted and historically developed activities is the distinguishing feature of human psychology, the basis of the qualitative leap from animal to human psychology (57).

In this paradigm, learning and development occur through the interaction between the children and the adults in their environment. Two types of learning occur. One is that of the elementary functions, and is similar to conditioning in animals. It arises out of "the direct influence of external stimuli upon human beings" (39). A child touches a hot stove and is burned. S/he learns not to touch the stove again. The second type of learning relates to the higher mental functions and occurs only in human development. It presupposes the creation and

use of artificial stimuli (i.e. signs) that induce behavior.   "The use of signs leads humans to a specific structure of behavior that breaks away from biological development and creates new forms of a culturally-based psychological process" (40).   These signs involve some sort of symbolic behavior that transcends the boundaries of immediate experience. Simple examples noted by Vygotsky are notching a stick and tying knots as memory aids. These are culturally and socially developed mechanisms that supplant the immediacy of natural perception, and become part of a "complex mediated process" (32).

It is through the use of signs that children develop the higher mental functions. Since the signs are created by humans, learning becomes both an internal and social process, uniting the impulses of natural development with social interaction. The most complex of the signs is language. It is through the cognitive and communicative functions of language that children develop complex human behavior.

The concept of internalization opened the door to a totally new definition of learning and the nature of the mind. Harré & Stearns (1995) have suggested that there is no inherent central processing mechanism for psychological functions that is context and content independent. It is possible "to discover how the various cognitive skills…are acquired, developed, integrated and employed" (2) by observing the discursive activity between individuals. As noted by Newman (1999), Vygotsky posited that speaking is the completion of thinking, and therefore not a transmission of messages, but a building process. Therefore,

> …when we are participating in a dialogue, discussion or conversation…we are not simply saying what is going on but we are *creating* what is going on. We are not looking simply to passively discover what is inside, we are looking to create what neither is inside nor outside but what is socially available to be created. We are builders, we are creators, we become poets! (128).

The present study adopted the notion of discursive activity as the locus of learning. As the data analysis discussed in Chapter Four indicates, it was possible to observe the learning process as it took place in the interaction between individuals.   The concept developed in sociocultural theory to describe the site of learning is the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*.

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

According to Vygotsky (1978), the discursive activity leading to the internalization of the higher mental functions is effected in the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*, defined as "the difference between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers…." (86). The ZPD consists of interaction in which an individual who possesses knowledge helps another to acquire that knowledge.   The 'adult' or "more capable peer" referred to in Vygotsky's description of the ZPD has come to be known within sociocultural theory as the 'expert' (Donato 1994). The child is the 'novice' while the process through which the expert guides the novice has been denominated 'scaffolding' (Lantolf 2000: 17). According to Wertsch (In Donato 1994: 41), scaffolding is "a dialogically constituted interpsychological mechanism that promotes the

novice's internalization of knowledge co-constructed in shared activity" in the zone of proximal development.

Although the term 'zone' seems to denote a place, it "…is not a place at all; it is an activity" (Newman & Holzman 1993: 65). According to Newman and Holzman (1993), the ZPD is a transformational knowledge-creating activity, in which the learner, the interlocutor and the material are all changed in some way. The ZPD "must not be transformed into a technique for individual or even group or community learning…(it is) a reorganizing of environmental scenes to create new meaning and a learning that leads development" (93). True learning is never the mere transmission of information, nor the attainment of educational objectives. As Kozulin (1998) noted, the concept of the ZPD allows for learning to be seen as a social experience involving collaboration and 'co-authoring', and not solely as an internal mental process.

The ZPD as activity is observed in the discursive practices among individuals (Harré & Stearns 1995). Newman and Holzman (1993) equated this activity with Wittgenstein's language game, which has "no existence of significance independent of its playing" (90). In other words, like the language game, the ZPD always develops in a particular context, and is always new. The particular context for studying the phenomenon of second language learning in the current study was the triadic interaction in which the learners engaged in the discursive practice of collaborative dialogue, with the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns as the third corner of the triadic interaction. Puns are an example of language play. As discussed above, children learning first and second languages engage in a great deal of language play. Play also figures in sociocultural theory as an essential concept in the creative learning process.

Play

The creative aspect of language is manifested in the various forms of language play. A parallel can be drawn with the concept of play in child development in sociocultural learning theory. Just as Cook (2000) and Redfern (1984) insisted on the necessity of including language play in 'serious' studies of language, Vygotsky (1978) considered play among children as a fundamental activity for development, and not simply as a frivolous diversion.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the imagination reflected in play activity is a uniquely human phenomenon. He considered it to be "a new psychological process for the child; it is not present in the consciousness of the very young child, is totally absent in animals, and represents a specifically human form of conscious activity" (93). The child participates in the distinctively human activity of meaning-making through play, so play may be considered a ZPD, through which the child moves forward in his/her development. Through play, the child develops the capacity to think abstractly and creatively, making "the transition from primitive remembering and involuntary attention to the higher mental processes of voluntary attention and logical memory" (Vygotsky 2000: 166).

The transition to voluntary attention and logical memory is intimately related to language development, since "thought development is determined by language, i.e., by the linguistic tools of thought and by the sociocultural experience of the child" (94). This view of the coincidence between the development of thought and language concurs with Lakoff's (1987) concept of the link between cognition and language as discussed above. In the development of the higher mental functions, children develop their creative thought processes by using language to play and by playing with language. As seen above, language play is an essential function of language. Children focus their attention on the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and

lexical aspects of language through language play.   Play is also a fundamental ingredient of learning, as it provides a means through which children learn to direct their attention.   The current study proposed that puns are a way of drawing the attention of adults so that they notice aspects of language.   Attention is a key concept in sociocultural learning theory, and is discussed next.

<u>Attention</u>

Vygotsky (1978) considered *attention* to be a fundamental process in development.   In fact, he believed that the development of voluntary attention and logical memory was "the central issue of development during school age" (Vygotsky 2000: 166).   As children become more aware of their surroundings and of themselves, they begin to control their actions.   The "ability or inability to direct one's attention is an essential determinant of the success or failure of any practical operation" (Vygotsky 1978: 35).   Through the development of voluntary attention, the child's "mechanical memory changes to logical memory guided by meaning, and can now be deliberately used by the child" (Vygotsky 2000: 166).   While a child responds instinctively to bodily processes, such as hunger, or elements in the environment, such as a bright light or noise, it is only when s/he begins to attend deliberately to stimuli that s/he begins to choose courses of action.   In Vygotsky's words:

> The central characteristic of elementary functions is that they are totally and directly determined by stimulation from the environment.   For higher functions, the central feature is self-generated stimulation, that is, the creation and use of artificial stimuli which become the immediate causes of behavior (Vygotsky 1978: 166).

The ability to understand and create artificial stimuli requires that conscious attention be paid to the stimuli.   The prime example that Vygotsky employed was the child's acquisition of language.   He saw it as a conscious process, in which children first attend to the indexing behavior of their caregivers in acquiring the labels for things, and later begin to experiment in the production of the forms and meanings of their L1 (Vygotsky 1978).   The role of attention in second language learning will be taken up in the following section on second language learning.

From the Vygotskian perspective, adopted for this paper, the main concepts that form the elements of learning are:

- Learning moves from the interpsychological (social) to the intrapsychological (individual) space through the process of *internalization.*
- Internalization takes place in the *zone of proximal development* through the process of scaffolding.
- *Play* is a leading activity in the development of the higher mental functions.
- *Voluntary attention* marks the development of the higher mental functions.

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Language learning theorists departing from a sociocultural perspective are "less concerned with describing what learner discourse *is* than with what it *enables* the learner to do and accomplish" (Bain and Yu, 1992 in Brooks, Donato & McGone 1997: 527).   The emphasis on language use concords with the theory of language, outlined above, adopted for the current study.   Hall (1997) indicated that the language learning process "originates in our socially constituted communicative practices" (303).   Learners develop competence in the act of using the resources available to them.   In the second language classroom, these resources include interaction with the instructors and with peers, as well as involvement with the materials and activities provided.

The present study was concerned with the *triadic interaction* that took place among five pairs of ESL learners and the task they performed.   Van Lier (2002) suggested that language is "not transmitted from person to person by way of monologue or dialogue, but arises from indicational processes occurring in triadic interaction" (146).   When Van Lier referred to "dialogue", he meant the traditional definition of dialogue as the "transmission of 'packets' of information from one person to another in monological or dialogical speech events" (160).   In triadic interaction the interlocutors co-construct meaning as they work "side by side, with a joint focus of activity, the object as a third interlocutor" (147-48).   The dialogue that occurs between the interlocutors is not the sending of messages, but the joint construction of meaning regarding the task at hand.   The term generally applied to the interaction between persons within the triad of persons and task is *collaborative dialogue*.   Recent research concerning collaborative dialogue is considered next.

Collaborative Dialogue

As indicated in Chapter One, the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study from which the current research developed showed that when learners worked together, they were able to come to new understandings.   The phenomenon of second language learning through collaborative work has been documented in other studies of peer interaction (Ohta 2001; De Guerrero & Villamil 2000; Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997; Swain & Lapkin 1998; Swain 1997; Platt & Brooks 1994).   From the sociocultural perspective, the notion of the zone of proximal development is expanded to include peer interaction, in which peers are concurrently experts and novices (Swain, Brooks & Tocalli-Beller 2002).   In such interaction, learners jointly construct meaning, which is then internalized in each of the participants.   Jacoby and Ochs (1995) coined the term co-construction to describe this process:

> the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality. The *co-* prefix in *co-construction* is intended to cover a range of interactional processes, including collaboration, cooperation, and coordination (161).

Co-construction occurs through collaborative dialogue, defined by Swain (1997) as: "the joint construction of language – or knowledge about language – by two or more individuals; it's

what allows performance to outstrip competence; it's where language use and language learning can co-occur" (115). According to Ohta (2001), peers are able to assist each other since they come to each learning situation with different strengths and weaknesses, and thus are able to share their knowledge with one another. In addition, the learners assume different roles when they are engaged in different activities, and through these roles they assist one another. There is no "unequivocal expert" (74), but the learners exchange the position of 'expert' and 'novice'.

Since learning is co-constructed through collaborative dialogue, or discursive practices (Harré & Stearn 1995), the process of knowledge construction can be directly observed. Donato & Lantolf (1990) suggested that cognitive processes, since they result from the internalization of interpsychological interaction, may be "observed directly in the linguistic interactions that arise among speakers as they participate in problem-solving tasks" (85). The current study investigated the nature of collaborative dialogue through microgenetic analysis in order to trace the process through which linguistic change occurred in collaborative dialogue in triadic interaction. While "the mechanisms of learner assistance have been little examined" (Ohta 2001: 74), the present study drew on the relatively recent work of various researchers working within the sociocultural framework (Platt & Brooks 2002; Ohta 2001; De Guerrero & Villamil 2000; Markee 2000; Swain & Lapkin 1998; Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997; Ohta 1995; Aljaafreh & Lantolf 1994; Brooks & Donato 1994; Donato 1994). Five of these studies (Donato 1994; De Guerrero & Villamil 2000; Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997; Ohta 1995; Ohta 2001), as they relate to the current study, are discussed below.

The Donato (1994) study is significant for the present research because the researcher assumed a view of language consistent with that presented here, and contrary to the prevalent conduit metaphor that has currency in the field of second language research and teaching. Donato argued that the "study of L2 interaction in the message model of communication masks fundamentally important mechanisms of L2 development and reduces the social setting to an opportunity for 'input crunching'" (34). He suggested that it was insufficient to study features of interaction that represented the "sending and receiving of linguistic tokens" (34), but that L2 researchers should "observe the utterance-building process as it unfolds in real time" (35).

Donato studied the utterance-building process by analyzing the interactions of a group of three third semester students of French during a one-hour session in which the students were planning for an oral activity they would present to the whole class. The students worked on their own without help from the teacher. Evidence of language development was sought through microgenetic analysis of the taped conversations and in the oral activity the students later presented to the class. Donato found that the interaction resulted in learning, even though the relation between the learners had a peer and not a traditional 'expert-novice' relation, such as parent and child, teacher and student, or master and apprentice (52). He suggested that it is important "to consider the learners themselves as a source of knowledge in a social context"(52), and that language teachers should reconsider the types of classroom activities which limit the learners' role to that of novices who must be guided at all times.

Like Donato (1994), De Guerrero & Villamil (2000) recorded and analyzed the dialogic interaction between language learners. Their study looked at two ESL learners as they engaged in a task. The task was the revision of a narrative text written by one of them. As in the present study, the theoretical framework was sociocultural theory and the focus was on the ways in which the learners assisted each other, and on the roles assumed by the learners in the course of the interaction. The methodology employed was microgenetic analysis, through which the researchers analyzed "moment-to-moment changes in the participants' behavior" (51). They

used the scaffolding metaphor to denote the assistance the learners gave each other. Scaffolding was operationally defined as "supportive behaviors by which one partner in a semiotically mediated interactive situation can help another achieve higher levels of competence and regulation" (56). The concept of semiotic mediation referred to the use of language as a tool for the development of language.

DeGuerrero & Villamil expected that the 'reader', the participant who was revising the composition created by the 'writer', would assume the role of 'expert' in the interaction. This turned out to be true in the beginning of the dialogue, but as the dialogue progressed, the roles tended to reverse, with the writer assuming more responsibility and guiding the reader toward additional knowledge.

The unit of analysis in the DeGuerrero & Villamil study was the 'episode', defined as a segment of conversation during which the participants were on task, that is, dealing with a source of trouble in the composition, or talking about task procedures. The researchers looked for assistance 'mechanisms', which were drawn from categories established in previous research. The categories, adapted from a classification devised by Lidz (1991, In DeGuerrero & Villamil 2000), included task regulation, contingent responsibility, affective involvement, and instructing. This study is of interest for the current study because of its consideration of the evolving nature of the 'expert/novice' relation between the learners, and because of its use of microgenetic analysis as its methodology.

Another study grounded in sociocultural theory that analyzed peer interaction was that of Brooks, Donato & McGlone (1997). Like DeGuerrero & Villamil (2000), the researchers sought selected features of student discourse in their analysis of pair dialogue. They looked at three pairs of third-semester (intermediate level) learners of Spanish at the university level engaged in a jigsaw task. The features, identified in earlier research (Brooks & Donato 1994), were metatalk: the students' comments on their own speaking; task regulation: speaking about what they were supposed to do; use of L1 as a mediating tool; and whispering to the self. Analysis consisted of coding the transcripts for instances of the features that had previously been defined, and counting them.

In addition to its being grounded in sociocultural theory and being concerned with peer interaction during a task, the Brooks, Donato & McGlone study is of interest to the current study because the researchers suggested that the "purpose of speaking is...not only for sending messages between people but also as a 'thinking tool' as well" (526). This suggestion incorporates the view, adopted in the present study, that language has cognitive and creative, as well as information exchange, functions. The authors also noted the importance of the task in promoting student interaction. By incorporating Van Lier's (2002) concept of triadic interaction, the current study emphasized the importance of the nature of the task as a means of encouraging learners to interact and to notice the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of the language.

The DeGuerrero & Villamil (2000) and Brooks, Donato & McGlone (1997) studies sought to identify features within the data collected, organizing the data into "episodes" or counting the instances of the features of interest. In the collaborative co-construction of meaning, however, the entire dialogue must be analyzed, as indicated in Ohta's (1995) study of two learners of Japanese.

This study analyzed the teacher-fronted and pair work interaction of the two learners in order to learn more about how second language learning occurs in interactive classroom settings. Of importance to the current study were three findings. First, Ohta observed that the learners

actively used and produced more creative language when they worked together than when they worked with the teacher. Second, she found that, although one of the learners was clearly more proficient in Japanese, the roles of novice and expert "are fluid conceptions that vary with the differing expertise of the participants as each peer contributes his or her own strengths to the collaborative construction of the interaction" (109-10).

Finally, the data revealed that when the learners were working together, they used Japanese for a variety of purposes, some of them unrelated to the task set up by the teacher. Only by looking at sequences of dialogue, rather than at individual features or task-related episodes, was Ohta able to document the instances of meaning-making activity that were not included among previously defined features, or that occurred when the learners were off-task. She found that the learners used and developed their Japanese when they talked about extraneous things happening in the classroom, expressed humor, actively tested hypotheses through language play, and experimented with lexical choice. Ohta's findings support the decision of the researcher of the present study to focus on peer interaction and the alternating roles of novice and expert, and to select the pun related dialogue as the unit of analysis, since the PRD constitutes a unit which permits the entire interaction between the participants to be analyzed, rather than concentrating on isolated fragments of dialogue.

In a subsequent study, Ohta (2001) examined the interactions over an academic year of a group (originally 10 and later 7) of students of Japanese as a foreign language participating in a task-basked language class. Ohta looked at the role of social interaction in facilitating peer assistance and at the mechanisms of that assistance. Again, she found that "peer assistance is often mutual, with learners helping each other, rather than expert helping novice" (76). She also determined that the "power of peer learning is in the maintenance of the learners' joint attention on the interactive task. Joint attention facilitates learning because working memory available for the task is effectively doubled" (81). In other words, when learners work together, they are able to pool their individual resources. Working memory is doubled due to the knowledge that each learner brings to the learning situation, as well as to the dynamics of the interaction. Ohta described the dynamics of the interaction:

> When learners work together on a peer learning task, available cognitive resources are effectively doubled – what one student cannot notice, the interlocutor is often able to notice. While demands of production occupy the speaker, the partner is not similarly encumbered, but is free to map along mentally and to project what might be coming next, and thus to provide assistance as needed (88).

Microgenetic analysis of the data allowed Ohta to identify various 'assistance mechanism' that the learners employed in their interactions. Among them were waiting, when one partner gave the other time to complete an utterance; prompting, when a partner repeated what the other had said, thus helping the other to continue; co-construction, when the participants contributed syllables, words, or phrases to complete another's utterance; and, repair strategies, when one participant indicated an error in another's speech and suggested correction.

The studies reviewed above aided the researcher in her understanding of the nature and processes of collaborative dialogue within the sociocultural framework of language learning theory. They also influenced the adoption of triadic interaction as the object of study for the

current research and the selection of microgenetic analysis as the principle methodological tool. The selection of the particular task for the present research derived from the researcher's own experience, the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study, and the role of attention in sociocultural learning theory and in second language learning theory.

Attention in Second Language Learning

Interest in attention in second language learning was aroused in the 1980s when Swain (1985) noted that French immersion students in Canada were failing to attain targetlike proficiency, even after years of immersion.   In a review of immersion and naturalistic acquisition studies, Doughty & Williams (1998) found that "when classroom second language learning is entirely experiential and meaning-focused, some linguistic features do not ultimately develop to targetlike levels" (2).   On the other hand, the authors found that evidence was mounting that some amount of drawing the learners' attention to language forms seemed to have a positive influence on the development of the learners' language ability.   They suggested that:

> …focus on form may be necessary to push learners beyond communicatively effective language toward targetlike second language ability. A somewhat weaker claim is that, even if such focus on form may not be absolutely necessary, it may be part of a more efficient language learning experience in that it can speed up natural acquisition processes." (2)

That focus on form is necessary for language learning accords with Vygotsky's identification of attention as a fundamental higher mental function. What is not attended to cannot become part of logical memory in the learning process.   Schmidt (1995) outlined three major points of view regarding the role of attention, or consciousness, in foreign language learning. The first stresses the importance of conscious attention to the grammatical forms of language that is evident in rule-based teaching at the expense of communicative practices. The second largely ignores any attention to form, following Krashen's concept that language acquisition is unconscious and therefore the only "necessary condition" for acquisition to occur is 'comprehensible input'. Teaching methods and materials should be meaning- rather than form-oriented. Schmidt recommended a third, intermediate view, in which communicative practice and focus on form are both necessary. Schmidt's remarks reflect both Vygotsky's position that attention is a primary function in all learning, and that competence and performance are one:

> While input and interaction are important to establish a secure level of communicative proficiency, this is not because language learning is unconscious, but because input and interaction, attention, and awareness are all crucial for learning, and when understanding and application are poorly synchronized, there will be problems: fluency but premature stabilization in the case of completely meaning-focused learning, abstract knowledge but limited ability to perform in the case of overly conscious learners or those who have been instructed with an excessive focus on form (3-4).

Schmidt argued that…"all aspects of language learning require some degree of focal attention", although "different aspects may require more or less of it" (14). Attention is a precursor to "noticing, which is the "conscious registration of the occurrence of some event" (29). Schmidt's hypothesis is that "what learners notice in input is what becomes intake for learning" (20).

Schmidt's definition of focus on form here corresponds to that outlined by Long & Robinson (1998), when they eschewed the traditional concept of "focus on formS"(Wilkins 1976: 2 In Long & Robinson 1998) as "parts of the language…taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up…." (15). The authors proposed that focus on form ("FonF") is not so much a matter of the organization of materials and activities by the teacher, as a process of the allocation of "focal attentional resources" that occurs during an otherwise meaning-focused classroom lesson. When there is interference in comprehension or expression because of a problem with a linguistic form in the course of a meaning-focused lesson, then the teacher and/or the student(s) bring attention to the form. Long & Robinson emphasized that the important sense of focus on form is not the "teacher's external behavior or its intended result", but "the learner's internal mental state…" (23).

Much of the literature regarding focus on form, however, relates to the ways in which teachers attempt to achieve a particular result through the manipulation of texts with the objective of drawing the learners' attention to a particular form (Leow 2000; Doughty & Varela 1998; Williams & Evans 1998; White 1998; Van Patten 1990), or through corrective feedback, either by the instructor or by peers (Qi & Lapkin 2001; Samuda 2001; Lightbown & Spada 1990). Very little work has been done in focus on form from the learners' viewpoint. Studies by Leow (2000) and Williams (1999) failed to detect evidence that learners spontaneously attended to form in their interactions with other learners when they were involved in problem-solving tasks. Williams (1999), like Long & Robinson (1998), considered that encouraging learners to take responsibility for their learning is a valuable objective, but "learners do not spontaneously attend to formal aspects of language very frequently or consistently across activities" and suggested that teachers should attempt to "pinpoint activities that are more likely to foster such a focus…" (619).

Vygotsky considered attention to be fundamental to development, while Schmidt suggested that noticing plays an important role in language learning. However, researchers in the field have interpreted these concepts to mean a focus on form as the deliberate indexing of grammatical forms, generating a dualism that separates form and meaning. The current study took the view that form, meaning and use are intricately related, and should be considered as a totality within the language system. The researcher agrees with Long & Robinson (1998), Leow (2000) and Williams (1999) that attention is most effective when it initiates with the learners, and not through teacher manipulation. The role of the teacher may reside more effectively in the provision of tasks that motivate the learners to attend to linguistic aspects that create meaning. Deciphering the ambiguity in puns, which depend on the interface of form and meaning to be understood, may provide a viable task for encouraging learners to attend to language.

In contrast to the studies by Leow (2000) and Williams (1999), Swain & Lapkin (1998) found that eighth grade students in a French immersion class spontaneously attended to aspects of language as they engaged in a jigsaw task. Though the purpose of the study was to find evidence of language use as an enactment of mental processes and to trace the linguistic change as learners participated in collaborative dialogue, the authors noted that the participants turned

their attention to lexical and formal aspects of language in their attempts to resolve linguistic problems as they worked on the task. The researchers denominated these occasions of learner attention to language 'language related episodes' (LREs). An LRE was "any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others" (326). The LREs were classified as being related to lexis or form.

In later work, Swain & Lapkin (2001) turned their attention directly to the search for specific tasks that might promote learner-generated attention to form within a communicative setting, postulating that "the talk which surfaces when students collaborate in solving linguistic problems encountered in communicative task performance represents second language learning in progress" (99). They collected data using two contrasting tasks to see which would motivate more LREs in the student talk. The tasks were a jigsaw task and a dictogloss. Results showed that the "jigsaw task led to a greater range of vocabulary use and language-related episodes, suggesting that perhaps its open-ended nature might inspire greater linguistic creativity" (111). The success of the less-restrictive task accords with Ohta's (1995) observation that learners often profited more when they had more freedom of interaction than when they were engaged in teacher-specified activities.

Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002) also considered the efficacy of learner focus on language in classroom interaction. They conducted a study to identify the actual language that was used in episodes of student focus on form in communicative tasks (information and opinion gap tasks, role play activities, jigsaw tasks and reading comprehension activities) in the classroom setting. Their *focus on form episodes (FFEs)* were defined as "sequences of moves that focused on linguistic items and that occurred in interaction primarily concerned with meaning" (4). They identified FFEs as episodes involving explicit comments on form through the use of metalanguage, which was defined as "language used to analyze or describe language" (5). Metalinguistic terms included technical (e.g. 'tag question', 'noun') and non-technical (e.g. 'word', 'means') terms. To gauge the efficacy of the FFEs the authors investigated uptake, which was considered "as being an attempt by the student to use the form or the information provided about the form in the FFE" (5). The results indicated that students overwhelmingly employed non-technical metalanguage and that "there was a significant relationship between metalanguage and uptake in student-initiated focus on form" (9), but not in teacher-initiated focus on form episodes. This finding underlines the importance of the students taking control of their learning. The authors suggested that further research be conducted "to investigate whether metalanguage occurs in similar ways in different language learning contexts" (11), and if the FFEs help students "notice linguistic forms and incorporate them into their production" (12).

The current study adapts the term "FFE" to "LFE" (language focused episode) to refer to episodes within the dialogues related to each pun (pun related dialogues – PRDs) during which learners attend specifically to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, or lexical element responsible for the ambiguity in the pun. The identification of the LFEs follows the definition used by Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002) as those episodes in the pun related dialogues (PRDs) in which the participants use metalinguistic terms.

The studies cited suggest that learner-generated attention to formal aspects of language is a factor in language development, and that the nature of the task is important in promoting this attention. Tarone (2000) suggested that activities involving language play are effective means of stimulating learners to look at language. The next section looks at the role of language play in second language learning.

Language Play in Second Language Learning

Just as the presence of language play in L1 development indicates the importance of LP for language, so too LP in child L2 learning is an indication of the importance of LP in L2 learning. Hatch (1978), Peck (1980), and Broner & Tarone (2001) have documented language play in child second language learning. Hatch (1978) suggested that language play was a way for children to practice and play with new forms for their own amusement or to amuse those around them, as well as a way for children to learn to argue in English. Peck (1980) found that language play served to motivate, and to provide practice in sound sequences and suprasegmental, lexical, and syntactic variations. Broner & Tarone (2001) ascertained that language play was much more frequent than they had expected and that children played with language forms (sounds, rhythms and structures) and created imaginary situations.

Early on, Monnot & Kite (1974) recognized the value of using puns, mostly from advertising, in the adult ESL classroom. They suggested that puns could be a useful pedagogical tool that could "aid the instructor in enlarging vocabulary and in explaining some of the anomalies of English spelling, syntax and phonology" (71). Analyzing puns could also give the students insights into how the student could manipulate the language, and prepare them to understand the subtleties of English poetry. However, the authors cautioned that "it ought never to be forgotten that puns are 'essentially frivolous' " (71).

Cook (2000) saw nothing frivolous about language play. As noted in the section of this chapter concerning the nature of language, he suggested that the *first* function of language is found in language play in its various forms: lies, fictions, fantasies and games, since it is in these creative uses of language that human social organization and complex knowledge have emerged. He suggested that the fundamental role of language play in first language acquisition may indicate a similar role in adult second language learning. Language play is

> …a widespread, highly valued use of language, of social and cognitive importance…Knowing a language, and being able to function in communities which use that language, entails being able to understand and produce play with it, making this ability a necessary part of advanced proficiency" (151).

The current study suggests that the task of deciphering the ambiguities in puns is a means for low advanced and advanced ESL learners to attend to language form and meaning, since "play permeates language at the three levels of linguistic form, semantic meaning and pragmatic use" (98). Puns are "an extreme case of a use of language in which exact wording is essential…in which language itself seems to dictate meaning, rather than the other way around" (80). In puns, "pragmatic intention and information (meaning and use) don't always drive lexis, grammar and phonology (form). There is a back-and-forth movement" (139).

The use of puns offers a way for language teachers to avoid the dualism between formalism and functionalism, since in puns, "form and function exert a dynamic, reciprocal influence upon each other" (190). As noted by Cook:

….If we accept the role of conscious and deliberate learning rather than only passive acquisition, then the use of the form-focused, strikingly unusual example…can have a strong mnemonic motivation, and be recalled as a model for a structure or contextualized use of an item of vocabulary when needed (199).

Viewed in this manner, "language play is no longer seen as a trivial and optional extra but as the source of language knowledge, use, and activity" (204). The current study seeks to determine if deciphering the ambiguities in puns is an effective means of developing linguistic competence in low advanced and advanced ESL learners.

Conclusion

The considerations thus far discussed have laid the theoretical foundations for the present study. Language is seen as a complex system that embodies cognition and creative thought, as well as social interaction. Language play is a fundamental element of language, and thus important for achieving competence in an L2. Competence in language cannot be separated from performance, since the nature of language is found in its use.

According to sociocultural theory, L2 learning moves from the interpsychological (social) to the intrapsychological (individual) space in the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which, in adult second language learning, is often the space created during peer interaction through collaborative dialogue. As adults work together in the ZPD, they bring their individual strengths and weaknesses, thus creating a situation in which they are alternately novice and expert. Through the collaborative dialogue in which they engage as they complete a task, they construct meaning together. The task constitutes the third element in the triadic interaction, and is the focus of attention for the participants in the dialogue.

Attention, which leads to noticing, is an important higher mental function, and is necessary for learning a second language. The present study suggests that the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns is a means of drawing ESL learners' attention to the interplay between form, meaning, and use in the L2, as well as a way of exposing learners to the creative function of language.

Based on the considerations of the nature of language and learning presented in this chapter, the researcher selected the methodology and created the research design for the present study. This paper continues in Chapter Three with a description of the methodological issues.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The research questions of the current study involved the determination of the manner in which pairs of adult ESL learners assisted each other in the task of deciphering the double meanings of a series of puns, and whether the collaborative dialogue in which the participants engaged resulted in increased understanding of the ambiguities in the puns. At the same time, the study sought evidence that the task prompted learners to notice the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language that created the double meanings in the puns. Chapter Two of this paper explored the theoretical framework with regard to the nature of language and of learning that informed the formulation of the research questions and the choice of the methodology. The present chapter elucidates the methodology and the research design.

The selection of the methodology employed in an investigation follows from the ontological and epistemological premises in which the researcher is grounded (Guba 1990). Ontology answers the question: *'What do we know about the nature of reality?'*. Epistemology answers the question: *'How do we know what we know?'*. Methodology answers the question: *'How should we study the world?'* (Patton 2002: 134). Together the answers to these questions form the research paradigm, or interpretive framework, the net including the epistemological, ontological and methodological premises of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln 1998).

What do we know about the nature of reality? In the present study, reality is seen as socially constructed. This assumption is in contradiction to positivist notions of reality as being rooted in unchanging, universal truths. Rather, "realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature" (Guba & Lincoln 1998: 206). The assumptions regarding the nature of language and the nature of learning underlying the current study (Chapter Two) coincide with this social constructivist paradigm. Language is a social and creative system that is constructed in the use given it in particular circumstances, while learning is regarded as a social phenomenon, occurring first in the interpsychological space among individuals and then in the intrapsychological space of the mind. The nature of the second language learning process is seen as the interaction of the learner with his/her environment. The particular interaction considered in the present study was the collaborative dialogue between peers as they engaged in a task. In conversation, new meanings are created that become part of the cognitive development of each of the individuals. Learning in conversation has been denominated 'microgenesis', which Ohta (2000) defined as "cognitive development that occurs moment by moment in social interaction" (54).

How do we know what we know? Since learning is socially-constructed, it is possible to observe how the various cognitive skills are acquired and developed by observing the discursive activity between individuals (Harré & Stearns 1995). In her research on second language learning, Ohta (2001) echoed Harré & Stearns' comment when she noted that the process of learning a second language is "visible in social interaction" (3). As noted by Ohta and others (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000; Brooks, Donato & McGlone; Swain & Lapkin 1998; Swain, 1997; Platt & Brooks, 1994), this interaction is often between peers as they co-construct knowledge in the process of collaborative dialogue. The analysis of the discursive practices engaged in by the learners allows the researcher to gain insights into the social construction of knowledge. The present study analyzed learner discourse in collaborative dialogue.

How should we study the world? For the world of second language learning, the answer, in large part, is that "we need a camcorder, not a camera to do our research" (Larsen-Freeman 1997: 159). Because language learning is a dynamic process, Larsen-Freeman contended that "we cannot rely on simple pre-test/post-test research designs to measure language gains" (159). As indicated above, collaborative dialogue allows for microgenesis, the moment-by-moment development of language competence. Microgenesis is studied through "microanalysis of learner discourse in its sequential context (which) allows the researcher to examine this process in flight" (Ohta 2000: 54). Microgenetic analysis

> …examines co-construction through a sociologically and linguistically tuned microscope to reveal realms of interactional work that take place even in fractions of a second, involving the coordination of talk, sound, gaze, bodies and built environments (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995: 174).

As noted by Markee (2000), "detailed analyses of how SLA processes are instantiated in the moment-by-moment talk-in-interaction of adult L2 learners are still exceedingly rare" (44). The current study is a contribution to this nascent field.

To provide a clearer understanding of the choice of the methodology and the research design for the present study, a discussion of the previous investigation from which the current study developed is given below.

Previous Study

The present study grew out of a previous investigation conducted by the researcher with a colleague (Kaplan & Lucas 2001) at a private university in Caracas, Venezuela. The participants were native Spanish speakers, who were advanced English as a second language learners enrolled in the Modern Languages Department. The objectives of the study were: 1) to determine the cognitive strategies employed by ESL learners as they engaged in the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns found in English language comic strips; 2) to ascertain if there was a relation between the type of pun (phonological, morphological, syntactical, lexical) and the degree of difficulty in its interpretation; 3) to see if the type of pun influenced the ability to appreciate the humor; and, 4) to find out if the pair think-aloud protocol influenced the ability to comprehend the pun.

The researchers chose the deciphering of puns as the focus of the study because they had formulated the hypothesis that humor and fun might play a significant role in the language learning process. Both had had considerable experience in a variety of language learning situations, as learners and teachers. Kaplan had learned English as a foreign language, while Lucas had learned Spanish as a second language. They had taught in formal and informal settings (schools from pre-school to university, English language institutes, immersion English programs, private classes, summer camps, parenting). In every situation, examples of language in 'play' situations were often the most motivating for the learners, the language that most often provoked learner-generated attention to aspects of the language. However, standard textbooks often only used humorous tidbits as a way to attract attention and heighten motivation, not as a focus of learning. The failure to address humorous texts in learning situations created a gap between classroom learning and the reality of language usage, which is replete with examples of language play in newspapers, fiction, television, movies, and music. A review of the literature revealed very little attention had been given to the strategies learners employed to understand humorous texts.

The result was the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study that assumed a cognitive, interactional framework to determine its objectives and methodology. The methodology was adapted from two previous studies that looked at vocabulary comprehension. Cooper (1999) used the individual think-aloud protocol to analyze the comprehension strategies used by English as a second language adult learners as they attempted to interpret the meaning of idiomatic expressions presented in a written context. Morrison (1996) adopted the pair think-aloud protocol to study the inferencing strategies employed by English-speaking university students of French as a second language at a Canadian university when they tried to decode the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary in a written text. The think-aloud protocol is a qualitative methodology in which the participants are asked to comment on the thoughts that are going through their minds as they engage in a task.

Kaplan & Lucas (2001) adapted the cognitive strategies as defined by Cooper (1999), including repeating or paraphrasing, hypothesizing, use of background knowledge and L1, as their categories of analysis, and Morrison's (1996) pair think-aloud protocol as their methodology. The conversations between the pairs were audio-taped and transcribed. The unit of analysis was the clause. The clauses were coded first for evidence of understanding and appreciation. A second analysis coded for cognitive strategies.

Evidence was found not only of the cognitive strategies defined by Cooper, but also of interactional strategies (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford 1990). The researchers added these strategies to the analysis *post hoc*, but felt that the interaction between the members of the pair was more than two people thinking in a parallel manner. It seemed to be two people working together to come to new understandings. In every case in which there was a lack of understanding on the initial reading of the pun on the part of one or both of the participants, there was evidence of increased comprehension at the end of the discussion of the pun. The researchers concluded that the interaction had had a positive effect on the learners' understanding, and to suggest further investigation into the phenomenon of learning through dialogue. When the researcher of the current study became familiar with the sociocultural learning theory, this theoretical framework seemed to be the one that fit the observations arising from the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study. For this reason, the current research is based on the sociocultural framework, which makes the assumption that interaction is not simply an important factor in learning, but that learning is socially constructed.

When Kaplan & Lucas (2001) researched the phenomenon of punning in preparation for their study, they found that the ambiguity in puns is inherent in different linguistic aspects: lexis, syntax, phonology, and morphology.   In making the selection of the puns to be used in the study, they discovered that 55% of the puns depended on lexical ambiguity, 17% on phonological ambiguity, and 14% each on morphological and syntactical ambiguity.   The predominance of lexical puns in the corpus of puns suggested that these are the easiest type of pun to understand and appreciate. The researchers hypothesized that lexical puns would be the least difficult for the participants to understand and appreciate.   The results of the study supported this hypothesis.   In reviewing the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) research for the current study, the researcher realized that puns provide an excellent vehicle for drawing attention to phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects of language that influence meaning, because their double meanings rest in these various aspects.   The union of meaning and form prompted the emphasis in the current study on the consideration of the deciphering of puns as a task that can be used to promote noticing in the second language.

The previous study (Kaplan/Lucas 2001) was conducted based on a cognitive theoretical framework.   The focus was on the ability of the learners to understand the ambiguities in the puns and to appreciate the humor inherent in them.   To test the possibility of approaching the investigation of the use of puns in second language learning through the sociocultural lens, the researcher designed a pilot study prior to undertaking the research for the present study.   The design and results of the pilot are presented next.

Pilot Study

The pilot for the current study was conducted at an intensive English institute at a large public university in the southeastern United States.   The participants were adult learners, one pair of native Arabic speakers and one pair of native Spanish speakers.   The task was the same as that in the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study, but the objectives and the methodology were different because of the adoption of the sociocultural theoretical framework.   The objectives of the study were: 1) to determine the features of the dialogic process as the participant pairs attempted to decipher the double meaning of the puns; 2) to compare the features with those outlined in previous studies; and, 3) to detect evidence that the dialogic process promoted understanding of the double meaning of the puns.

The methodology for analysis was conversation analysis (CA), defined as an ethnomethodological approach that studies "the order/organization/orderliness of social action as evidenced in discourse" (Psathas 1995: 2).   While the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study used the clause as the unit of analysis, CA employs the turn, or a sequence of turns.   The unit chosen for the pilot was the 'extended sequence', as suggested by Psathas (1995).   This unit of analysis consists of various turns as the participants engage in a particular context of interaction, in this case the deciphering of the pun.

The conversations were audio- and videotaped, so that pertinent non-linguistic aspects of the interaction, including facial expressions and gestures (Jacoby & Ochs 1995) could be included in the analysis.   The 15 puns from the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study were used.   Thus, there were 30 extended sequences, 15 for each pair.

The objectives of the pilot centered on the identification of the 'features' of the dialogic process. The description of the features was drawn from the review of the literature and included such categories as modeling, intentionality, and task regulation (De Guerrero & Villamil 2000); generating and assessing alternatives (Swain & Lapkin 1997); and the use of the L1 as a mediating tool and whispering to the self (Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997). Many of these features were present in the conversational interactions. In attempting to apply the predetermined categories to the transcripts, however, the researcher found that some were absent and that many were unclearly defined, or overlapping. The most striking observations from the researcher's engagement with the transcripts related to the structure of the conversations and the patterns of interaction.

Analysis of the transcripts in the pilot study revealed recurring structures and patterns of interaction. The extended sequence was actually a conversation related to each pun. Each pun was presented individually, so the participants read the pun and expressed their ability to understand or not. The expression of comprehension or lack thereof was the opening of the dialogue. The development transpired differently depending on the relative stance of the participants regarding their comprehension. As noted by Ohta (2001) in her study of peer collaboration in language learning, the roles of 'expert' and 'novice' rotated. In some instances there was a definite closing, while in others the end of the dialogue was vague.

Viewing the extended sequence in terms of a complete conversation related to each pun prompted the researcher to adopt the pun related dialogue as the unit of analysis for the current study. The PRD is a unit of analysis that allows the researcher to examine the triadic interaction from the beginning to the end of the dialogue revolving around each of the puns.

The results of the pilot study also prompted the researcher to reformulate the research questions for the current study. The idea of looking for 'features' in the dialogic process seemed to evoke an analysis of discrete points, rather than looking at the broader picture of the structure and patterns of interaction. Thus, the focus of the current study was on the process of the learners' assisting each other in order to see how they focused on the aspects of language that created the ambiguity and how they worked out the double meanings of the puns. The analysis of process rather than discrete features concords with the view of language as a dynamic system, and with the concept that each learning situation is unique.

In the pilot study, each extended sequence had a clear opening and development, but the closing was often obscure or nonexistent. It was difficult to ascertain if the participants had come to an understanding of the ambiguity in the puns. For the current study, there were specific instructions (Appendix B) that the participants should explain clearly their understanding at the end of the conversation. The present study also included a second phase during which the researcher interviewed the participants regarding their comprehension of the puns.

The pilot study concentrated only on the interaction between the participants and did not consider the types of puns that were discovered in the previous study (Kaplan/Lucas 2001). However, in reviewing the literature for the current study, the researcher became convinced of the importance of the classification of the puns for the present research. By their very nature, puns unite form and meaning in their structure, and therefore have the potential to motivate learners to notice the linguistic forms of language as they work out the meanings. This conjecture was borne out in the data from the pilot study. The researcher therefore decided to include the identification of the episodes during which the participants paid attention to phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language in the research objectives. The unit of analysis for these episodes was the language focused episode (LFE). The

purpose of the identification of the LFEs was to establish whether or not the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns was an effective way to promote noticing in learners.

The choice of a qualitative research methodology followed from the theoretical framework of the current study. A review of the previous Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study and the pilot study aided the researcher in the determination of the research design, which is explained next.

<div align="center">Research Design</div>

The answers to the research questions for the current study were sought through a two-fold research design. The major component was the triadic interaction that occurred when two low advanced or advanced ESL learners engaged in the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns. Microgenetic analysis of the triadic interaction permitted the researcher to determine the processes of learner assistance in the pun related dialogues (PRDs) as the participants attempted to work out the ambiguity in the puns (Research Question # 1). The analysis also sought evidence in language focused episodes (LFEs) that the task promoted learner-generated attention to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language that created the ambiguities (Research Question # 2). Finally, microgenetic analysis of the PRDs showed that the learners had attained greater understanding through their participation in the triadic interaction (Research Question # 3).

The second phase of the research design, the realization of individual follow-up interviews, was created to verify the evidence for the third research question, since the indications of understanding in the dialogues analyzed for the pilot study were equivocal. The interviews allowed the participants to show clearly if they had understood the puns or not. The two parts of the research design are described below.

Triadic Interaction

Triadic interaction refers to the interface among two learners and the task being performed. Van Lier (2002) developed this concept to indicate the importance of the role of the task in the meaning making activity when two learners develop language through working together on a task. The task becomes the 'third interlocutor' as the learners work side by side with their focus on completing the task. As indicated by van Lier, this process is very different from the type of task in which learners provide information to each other (information gap tasks), which have been widely used in classrooms, and are based on an interactionist view of language learning. The sociocultural framework posits that learners construct meaning together as they engage in problem-solving. Triadic interaction is a way of representing this process, as seen in

Task
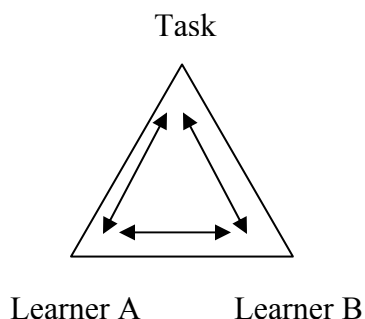
Learner A   Learner B

Figure 1: *Model of Triadic Interaction*

In Figure 1, the participants in the dialogue represent two of the corners of the triad. The learners who took part in the current study are described next.

Participants.   The participants were drawn from the students at a small intensive English center located at a large, public university in the southeastern United States. The students ranged in age from 17 to approximately 48, and came from every area of the world, including Asia, Europe, Latin America and Africa.   Most were learning English in order to pursue undergraduate or graduate studies in the United States, but some were interested in learning English to enhance their employment opportunities or their job performance.

The program consisted of seven-week sessions. Classes ran from 9 a.m. to 3:40 p.m., with an hour for lunch. Hour-long classes of grammar, reading and composition comprised the morning hours, while speaking and listening occupied the afternoon hours. Teachers were doctoral students or individuals holding Masters Degrees in Multilingual/Multicultural Education. The researcher was an instructor at the center. Depending on their initial level of English and personal factors, students remained at the center for anywhere from one to ten sessions, with the average being three to five.

The choice of participants for the current study was based on a purposeful sampling strategy including a combination of convenience and criterion sampling (Patton 2002). The participants were ESL students enrolled in the intensive English center where the researcher was employed as an instructor, and thus represented a convenience sampling. The criterion sampling involved two criteria: 1) The participants had to be adult learners; and, 2) They had to have at least a low advanced level of English proficiency.   The sophisticated nature of the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns required low advanced proficiency on the part of the learners.   All of the students at the English center were adults, and thus fulfilled the first criterion.   Their proficiency levels had been previously assessed through the placement procedures of the center.   These procedures included a two-day evaluation, during which the students completed a pre-TOEFL test, a cloze test, a writing sample and an oral interview. Their proficiency level was then determined in a meeting of the center director and the nine instructors based on the results of the testing procedures. According to their proficiency, the students were placed in one of eight levels: low elementary, elementary, high elementary, low intermediate, intermediate, high intermediate, low advanced, and advanced.   Since the center was small,

numbering 35 students at the time of the study, the students were divided into four groups, so that two levels comprised each group and had classes together in the same classroom. The students chosen for the study were in the low advanced and advanced levels, and were together in the same group.

There were ten students in the low advanced and advanced group at the time of the data collection, constituting five pairs. Qualitative analysis does not depend on large numbers of participants, but on the analysis of the data. The microgenetic analysis employed required the elaboration of finely-grained transcripts and the minute analysis of the conversational exchanges.

The names of the participants were changed for the current study to preserve their anonymity. Four were Spanish-speaking women from Latin America: Angela, a 26-year old doctor from Bolivia; Carolina, a 24-year old Peruvian who was interested in pursuing graduate studies in the United States; Joanna, a 19-year old student from Panama; and Trina, a young woman (age unknown) who was fluent in Portuguese as well as Spanish, from Mexico. Three of the participants were from South Korea: Kyeung, a 19-year old female student; Hyun Ja, a 29-year old man who was seeking admission into a graduate program in hospitality; and Dong Un, a 45-year old man who was interested in immigrating to the United States. There were two French-speaking Africans: Marguerite, from Gabon, who was 47 years old and learning English for her position as an employee in her government; and Bernice, a 20-year old from Mali, who was fluent in Bambara and German, as well as French. She intended to become an interpreter. The final participant was 24-year old Lenora from Bulgaria, who was waiting for admission to the music school at the university where the English center was located.

The researcher asked the teacher of the group to randomly assign the participants to pairs, with the request that members of a pair did not have the same native language. The pairs were: Angela and Bernice; Joanna and Dong Un; Marguerite and Lenora; Hyun Ja and Carolina; and, Trina and Kyeung.

The participants represent two of the corners of the triadic interaction. The task is the third corner. The puns and the task of deciphering the ambiguity are described next.

The task. The task consisted of deciphering the meaning of a series of puns that had been classified according to the linguistic feature that created the ambiguity - phonological, morphological, syntactical, or lexical. The comic strips were drawn from those used first in the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study and then in the pilot study. They were selected from 100 examples taken from *The Daily Journal*, the English-language newspaper published in Venezuela, during the period from January 1999 to March 2000. Of the 100 comic strips, 42 were eliminated because the puns were based on idiomatic expressions, which would have added another element to the study. The remaining 58 comic strips were classified according to the type of pun. There were 32 lexical puns (55%), 10 phonological (17%), 8 morphological (14%) and 8 syntactical (14%). The classification was made by the current researcher and validated by her colleague, according to the taxonomy created by Kaplan and Lucas, based on classifications proposed by Monnot & Kite (1974), Harris (1994), and Ross (1998). Table 1 presents the definition of each type of pun and the puns used in the study with an explanation of the ambiguity in each.

Table 1

Classification of the Puns Used in the Study

Lexical pun: ambiguity due to the double meaning of a word

Pun	Explanation
(Dennis the Menace) In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and his grandfather are sitting in a rocking chair. Dennis says: *Look Mom! We're a rock group.*	'Rock group' generally refers to the music group, but Dennis applies the phrase to the people sitting in the rocking chair.
(Blondie) In the first frame, Dagwood comes in the door and tells Blondie: *The boss asked me to try out a new position at work today.* Blondie replies: *Oh, that's great news, honey!* In the second frame, Dagwood hangs up his coat and Blondie asks: *What's the new position?* In the final frame, Dagwood says to a startled Blondie: *Sitting at my desk with both feet on the floor!*	When Blondie hears the word 'position', she understands that Dagwood has gotten a promotion, when he actually is referring to his manner of sitting at his desk.

Syntactical pun: ambiguity due to grouping of words in phrases, clauses or sentences

Pun	Explanation
(Shoe) In this two-frame cartoon, Cosmo is in the gym with a trainer, who says: *Not bad for the first day. Tomorrow, concentrate on your back.* In the second frame, Cosmo is lying on a sofa at home, reading a newspaper. The thought goes through his head: *One, two, three...One, two, three.*	The double meaning is in the grouping of the words in the phrase 'concentrate on your back'. The trainer uses 'concentrate on' as a phrasal verb, with 'your back' as the object. In Cosmo's interpretation, 'concentrate' is the verb, followed by the prepositional phrase 'on your back'.
(Blondie) In the first frame, Blondie and Dagwood are sitting in chairs; Elmo is lying on the floor, coloring a picture. Blondie asks: *What are you studying these days, Elmo?* In the second frame, Elmo looks up and says: *We're on the state of Florida. Our teacher said they use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags.* In the third frame, Elmo continues: *Boy, talk about using cheap labor.* Blondie and Dagwood share a surprised look.	The ambiguity is in the sentence 'They use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags.' The teacher implies that 'they' is the subject both of the sentence and of the infinitive 'to make', while Elmo interprets that 'alligators' is the subject of the infinitive.

Table 1 – continued

Morphological pun: ambiguity due to exploitation of dependent and independent morphemes

Pun	Explanation
*(Shoe)*In this two-frame cartoon, Shoe leaves his desk and says to Cosmo: *Hey, Cosmo, I need your input.* Cosmo replies: *Certainly.* In the second frame, Shoe stands in front of a coffee machine and tells Cosmo: *Put in another quarter.*	The morphemes 'in' and 'put' are exploited, used as dependent morphemes in 'input' and independent morphemes in 'put in'.
(Shoe) In the first frame, Cosmo is saying goodbye to a woman at the door of her home, and says: *Sure, we have our differences, but opposites attract.* In the next frame, the girlfriend slams the door. In the last frame, Cosmo stands outside the door and says: *Or is it subtract?*	The dependent morphemes 'at' and 'sub' are attached to the dependent morpheme 'tract' to create opposite meanings.

Phonological pun: ambiguity due to deliberate manipulation of phonemes

Pun	Explanation
(Dennis the Menace) In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and Joey are watching a man walk away from a truck that says 'Acme Plumbing: 24 Hour Service.' The man is carrying a tool box and a plunger. Dennis tells Joey: *He says he's a **drain** surgeon.*	The plumber takes advantage of the similarity of the phonemes /dr/ and /br/.

_____

 Two puns from each of the categories were used in the present study, to allow for the same number of puns from each category. The number of comic strips was reduced for the present study because the microgenetic analysis used in the study is a very fine-grained and detailed scrutiny of the PRD, each of which is a microcosm of an entire learning sequence. Including more data was beyond the scope of the present study.

 The task for the participants was to read each of the puns and to indicate whether they understood it or not. If they both understood the ambiguity, they were instructed to explain the double meaning to the researcher. If one of them understood, the one who understood had to try to explain the ambiguity to the other. In the case of neither participant comprehending, they were asked to try to discover the meaning together. A dictionary was made available to the participants, and the researcher was also a resource (See Appendix B).

 To prepare the students for participation in the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns in the comic strips, the researcher designed a task to familiarize the learners with the comic strips they would encounter. The week prior to the investigation, the researcher, along

with the teacher of the class, asked the learners to paraphrase the captions of an example of each of the type of comics that were used in the investigation (*Blondie*, *Dennis the Menace*, and *Shoe*). The results of the paraphrasing activity were not included in the data analysis, since the sole purpose of the activity was to assure that the participants would be familiar with the format of the cartoons, and the characters in them.

Data collection. The participants were pulled out of their speaking class by the previously denominated pairs, one pair at a time. They sat with the researcher in a separate room at the institute, where a video camera had been set up. The researcher read the instructions (Appendix B) with the participants and then handed them the comic strips in random order. The comic strips were pasted on large 5" by 8" index cards so that the participants could view and discuss them one at a time. The conversation regarding each pun was a PRD. The conversations were digital video taped, with an audio tape serving as a back-up.   The time spent by each pair to discuss the eight puns was approximately 20 minutes.

Data analysis. The digital video recordings were transcribed textually. The videotapes were viewed for gestures that accompanied the spoken language, since, as noted by Jacoby & Ochs (1995), the interactional work of co-construction involves the "coordination of talk, sound, gaze, and bodies…" (174).   The process of transcription in microgenetic analysis focuses on uncovering "the systematic properties of the sequential organization of talk and the social practices displayed by and embodied in talk-in-interaction" (Lazaraton 2002: 37).   The researcher transcribed the data herself, to allow for "the close engagement with the data that enables analysts to know their data in intimate detail" (Markee, 2000: 54).   While "most transcription work in applied linguistics and second language acquisition has been concerned with technical features" (Roberts 1997: 169), the objective of the current study was to portray how meaning was "constructed as a socially distributed phenomenon" (Markee 2000: 45).   The microgenetic analysis "allow(s) the patterns to emerge from the data….to (arrive at) the discovery, description, and analysis of methodical occurrences..." (Psathas 1995: 15).

The researcher mapped the transcripts using a system loosely adapted from Green & Wallat (1981), who studied instructional conversations in classroom settings. Their analysis resulted in the creation of "a series of structural maps that symbolizes the sequential evolution… of the instructional conversations as they are constructed by teacher and student…" (162). As noted by the authors, "it is not possible to predict what will occur at any point in the conversation" (164), so the procedure of analysis was one of *post hoc* identification of the conversational units and structures. The analysis in the current study differed from that of Green & Wallat because they were concerned with identifying message units, contexts, and social action rules in the classroom, while the present study sought to trace the meaning-making activity that occurred between two persons concentrating on one specific task. The adaptation of the mapping procedures was a heuristic device for allowing analysis of the structure of the conversation, the moment-by-moment development of the dialogue, and the identification of the language focused episodes.

The unit of analysis for determining the process of learner assistance (Research Question # 1) was the pun related dialogue (PRD), which was an adaptation of the extended sequence used in the pilot study. The PRD is a complete sequence of interaction regarding a specific unit of meaning (the pun). The PRDs were mapped to determine the structure of the conversation and the roles assumed by the participants, the progression of the exchanges through which the

participants created meaning together (Newman & Holzman 1993), and the episodes in which the participants engaged in language focused episodes (LFEs). The PRD maps include the following information:

- The structure of each PRD (opening, development and closing). The opening revealed the roles assumed by the participants at the beginning of each PRD. The relative roles of novice and expert determined the manner in which the dialogic process continued through the development of the conversation.
- The turns taken by the participants, indicated by number.
- The participants, indicated by the first letter of the name assigned them for the current study.
- The transcripted dialogue. Bold-faced script indicates emphasis in the tone of voice. Standard punctuation is used to indicate questions, exclamations, and definite sentence endings. Three periods (…) represent an unfinished phrase or hesitation. Gestures are included (italized and in parentheses), since "gestures are tightly intertwined with spoken language in time, meaning, and function; so closely linked…that we should regard the gesture and the spoken utterance as different sides of a single underlying mental process" (McNeill 1992: 1). Gestures played an important role in the meaning making process, sometimes complementing language, and sometimes substituting language, as is seen in the analysis in Chapter 4.
- The explication of the dialogic process, showing the process of meaning making. Arrows indicate the flow of the ideas as the participants respond to each other. Comments seemingly unrelated to what came before are separated by the symbol '≈≈'.
- The language focused episodes (LFEs): the unit of analysis required to identify the evidence of learner-generated attention to phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language within the PRDs (Research Question # 2). The LFEs were episodes during the dialogue when the learners specifically talked about language. The current study followed the identification procedures of Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002), who considered form focused episodes to be those in which the learners used metalanguage, defined as "language used to analyze or describe language" (5). As noted by Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, metalanguage may be in the form of technical and non-technical terms. The pilot study showed that the learners also focused on the source of the ambiguity, particularly in the morphological and phonological puns, without using metalanguage. These instances were included as LFEs, since the focus was on morphemes and phonemes, indicating learner awareness of the parts of the language, even though they did not specifically state it as such. LFEs are bracketed: ([…]) in the transcripted dialogue.

For greater clarification, the data analysis includes a textual description of the mapping following the presentation of the map. Six PRDs are analyzed in Chapter 4.

In this way, the analysis of the triadic interaction involving the participants and the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns allowed the researcher to ascertain the structure of the dialogic process, as well as map the way in which the learners jointly constructed meaning in the realization of the task. The analysis also looked at the roles which the learners assumed during the process, including the interchanging roles of expert and novice. The analysis of each PRD provided the response to Research Question # 1: How do adult learners assist each other in

attempting to decipher the ambiguity of puns? The PRD analysis also answered Research Question # 2 (What evidence is there of learner-generated attention to aspects of language in language focused episodes?) by indicating the language focused episodes. The mapping procedure revealed evidence of the learners arriving at a clearer understanding of the double meaning of the puns at the end of the triadic interaction, in response to Research Question # 3, as is seen in the analysis in Chapter Four of this paper. The second phase of the research design complemented the analysis of the triadic interaction by offering further evidence regarding Research Question # 3 through follow-up interviews.

Interviews

     Further evidence to answer the third research question was sought in follow-up interviews with the participants the day after the initial data collection of the triadic interaction. While evidence of understanding was present in the PRDs, the researcher wanted to confirm whether each individual participant had come to an understanding of the ambiguity in the puns through the dialogic process. The follow-up interview served to corroborate the evidence from the PRDs.

     Participants. The researcher interviewed each of the participants in the study individually the day after their participation in the triadic interaction. They were again pulled out of their speaking class, arriving for the interview in random order, at the discretion of their teacher. Since there were 10 participants in the five dyads in the triadic interaction phase of the investigation, there were 10 separate individual interviews. The purpose of the follow-up interview was to confirm that each individual had understood the double meaning of the puns by asking each learner to explain the ambiguity in the pun in each of the eight comic strips, per the procedure described below.

     Data collection. The researcher gave the comic strips used in the triadic interaction phase of the data collection to each of the participants individually. Again, the comic strips, pasted on 5" by 8" index cards, were presented to the individual participants in random order. The instructions were to explain the double meaning of the pun, if they were able to. The interview technique was the interview guide approach (Patton 2002), since the "topics and issues…covered (were) specified in advance" (349). The sole purpose of the interview was to determine if the individual participants could explain the double meanings in the puns contained in the comic strips, as verification for answering Research Question # 3, which sought evidence of clearer understanding of the ambiguities after participation in the triadic interaction. The interviews were video digital taped, with audio recordings serving as back-up. On average, the interview with the participants, consisting of the explanation of the double meaning of the puns in the eight comic strips, lasted about 10 minutes.

     Data analysis. The digital video tapes of the interviews were transcribed and subsequently analyzed for evidence that the participants were able to define the double meanings of the puns in the comic strips. Of special interest were the explanations given by the participants who had been identified as novices in the opening of the PRDs during the triadic interaction procedure, since they were the ones who would have had the opportunity to reach clearer understandings through the dialogic process. There was no necessity to map these

transcripts, since the interviews consisted basically of monologues by the participants, with occasional questions and prompts by the researcher.

The research design for the present study consisted of the triadic interaction and the interviews, which are both methods utilized in qualitative inquiry. The technique utilized in the analysis of the data was microgenetic analysis, which is a qualitative procedure. Although the methodology employed was qualitative in nature, there are recognized criteria for establishing the rigor of the analysis. The trustworthiness criteria applied in the present investigation are discussed in the following section.

Establishing Trustworthiness

The considerations noted above regarding the ontology and epistemology of language learning led to the adoption of the qualitative methodology of microgenetic analysis of the triadic interaction and participant interviews in the present study. The traditional methods for establishing the trustworthiness of the findings employed in quantitative research cannot be applied to qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Positivist researchers establish the rigor of their findings in the form of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity. However, qualitative investigators agree that human science cannot be conducted in the same way as the physical sciences, since explanations cannot be *about* a phenomenon in the same way, because "we (the studiers) wind up distorting us (the studied) to such a degree that the object of our investigation is lost. Such is the curious nature of the 'aboutness' paradigm – it cannot be applied to human life-as-lived" (Holzman 1999: 57). If the "research paradigm, "the 'net' including the epistemological, ontological and methodological premises of the researcher" (Denzin & Lincoln 1998: 26) of qualitative research is different from that of quantitative research, then the measures for establishing the trustworthiness of the findings must be different as well.

Patton (2002) suggested that there are three related issues in establishing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis: rigorous techniques and methods for gathering and analyzing qualitative data; the credibility of the researcher; and the clarification of the philosophical beliefs underlying the research, including "objectivity versus subjectivity, truth versus perspective, and generalizations versus extrapolations" (1189). These criteria, as applied to the current study are discussed below.

Techniques for gathering and analyzing the data

The techniques for gathering the data must be both appropriate and adequate (Morse 1998). Appropriateness is related to the theoretical framework and the objectives of the study. The only way to determine the process through which learners assist each other in socially constructing knowledge about language is by looking at the process as it occurs in real time. Thus, the data were gathered from conversations between learners as they engaged in a collaborative dialogue in the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns. The conversations were digital video recorded and transcribed by the researcher to allow close engagement with the transcripts and the possibility of following the moment-by-moment progression of the interaction, including gestures.

In qualitative research, adequacy refers to the amount of data collected, rather than to the number of subjects, as in quantitative research. Adequacy requires that a sufficient amount of data be collected so that the phenomena begin to repeat themselves. There were five pairs of participants, with each pair taking part in eight pun related dialogues (PRDs), so there were 40 PRDs, offering ample samples for the phenomena of learner assistance to repeat themselves. The same puns representing phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical ambiguities were used with each pair of participants so that there were eight PRDs with regard to each type of pun, resulting in numerous instances of language focused episodes (LFEs).

The interview phase of the research design provided additional data toward determining whether the participants had gained understanding during the process of triadic interaction substantiating the findings regarding Research Question # 3, which sought evidence that the participants had gained in understanding through the triadic interaction. The manner in which the data are analyzed is also an important consideration in establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study.

The microgenetic analysis employed in the current study followed that developed by Ohta (2000). It allowed the researcher to observe "cognitive development that occurs moment-by-moment in social interaction" (54), and thus was appropriate for answering the questions posed by the study. The close engagement with the transcripts included multiple reviews of the data, with the researcher first reviewing the transcripts to determine the structure of the dialogues and the roles assumed by the participants in each pun related dialogue (PRD), followed by an analysis of the transcript of each PRD to track the progress of the dialogic process, with further analyses conducted to find the general patterns common in the PRDs. The researcher conducted an additional review of the transcripts to discover the presence of the language focused episodes (LFEs). The adequacy of the analysis was thus ensured through this "close engagement with the data" (Markee 2000: 54).

The trustworthiness of the analysis was cross-checked through the peer debriefing process (Guba & Lincoln 1989). The researcher had frequent conversations with a fellow doctoral candidate who was conducting a microgenetic analysis of classroom interaction for her dissertation. The discussions regarding the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the current study provided insights from the perspective of a qualified peer throughout the research process.

After the researcher had thoroughly analyzed the data, she met with her colleague so that the colleague could cross-check the analysis. In this session, the researcher reviewed the procedures for identifying the structure of the PRDs (characteristics of the opening, development and closing units), the roles assumed by the participants (novice and expert), the processes of development as determined *post hoc*, and the language focused episodes (LFEs). The peer reviewed a 10% sample of the PRDs to check the analysis of the researcher with regard to each of the parts of the analysis.

The discussion following the review by the peer not only confirmed the researcher's analysis, but also served to provide new insights. For example, the research questions centered on the triadic interaction between the two members of each pair of participants and the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns, so the researcher concentrated her analysis on the participants and the task. However, the peer noted that the researcher herself played a part in the interaction, especially in the case of those PRDs that began with neither participant understanding the ambiguity in the pun. Thus, the researcher added this factor to her analysis, as is seen in Chapter Four of this paper. As noted by Denzin & Lincoln (1998), qualitative researchers "seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given

meaning" (8). By discussing the interpretations from her close analysis of the data with a qualified peer, the researcher was able to confirm, revise, and deepen her understanding of the processes and categories that she had discerned in the data.

Thus, the data were gathered and analyzed rigorously, fulfilling the first of Patton's (2002) criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry. However, the analysis is highly interpretive, and therefore depends on the credibility of the researcher. The second of Patton's criteria is considered next.

Credibility of the researcher

According to Patton (2002) "...the trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of the person who collects and analyzes the data – and his or her demonstrated competence...." (570). In the case of the present study, the researcher was an experienced ESL teacher who had been involved in the profession since receiving her Master's Degree in TESOL in the early 1970s. Her experience included teaching overseas in private English institutes, a public teachers' college, and public and private universities. She conducted a bilingual summer camp and an immersion English program overseas. She had also taught at two private intensive English institutes in the United States. In addition, she was the mother of three bilingual children, and the learner of Spanish as a second language and of German as a foreign language. This experience in a variety of language learning situations provided the researcher with experiential insights into the learning process, which found their theoretical bedfellow in the theories of language and learning expressed in Chapter Two of the present paper.

This accumulated experience and theoretical foundation prepared the researcher to perform a credible analysis of the data. The adoption of the theory of transcription that requires that the researcher engage intimately with the data ensured that she "return(ed) to the data over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations (made) sense" (Patton 2002: 570). The variety of teaching and learning situations in which the researcher had been involved helped to provide "the intangibles that go beyond the routine application of scientific procedures" (570), including creativity and insight.

Closely allied to the credibility of the researcher is the third of Patton's (2002) criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry, the clarification of philosophical beliefs, which is discussed next.

Clarification of the philosophical beliefs

Qualitative researchers do not seek to establish objective truths that are universally generalizable. The qualitative study recognizes the importance of describing the context of the research adequately, so that readers may decide if the findings apply to their own situations (Patton 2002; Denzin & Lincoln 1998). Rather than looking for generalizable 'truths' through isolation of variables, the methodology for the current study aimed to discover "the meaning in the emerging activity, not the preconceived imagining followed by its realization, which is transformative, revolutionary and *essentially* human" (Newman & Holzman 1993: 49). This scientific practice has as its premise human beings, "not in any fantastic isolation and rigidity, but in their actual, empirically perceptible process of development under definite conditions" (Marx & Engels 1973: 47 in Newman & Holzman 1993: 33).

The human activity analyzed in the present study was the interaction between specific adult ESL learners engaged in a task in an educational setting. The research was limited to the process of peer assistance in the classroom, and did not include teacher/student interaction, nor did it consider learning situations involving the participants other than the particular task engagement of the study. The educational setting was an intensive English institute located on a university campus in the United States.

The participants were drawn from a group of learners at the low advanced and advanced level of proficiency in English, because the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns was a sophisticated one. The learners were enrolled in an intensive English program, so they were engaged in academic tasks five hours a day, and had a certain facility in their ability to carry out the task asked of them. The emphasis in the institute was on the use of the language, so they were also accustomed to participating in group work. The dialogic process was familiar to them. They had a prior relationship with the researcher as a teacher at the institute where they were studying, and, therefore, were able to approach the task with a certain level of ease and lack of trepidation.

As the locus of meaning making, the dialogic process was the context of learning. The analysis of this process provided insights into the ways in which the learners constructed knowledge about English as a second language. The research design followed closely the philosophical assumptions as outlined in the theoretical framework (Chapter Two) and the methodology (the present chapter).

Conclusion

The qualitative methodology used in the current study was consistent with the ontological and epistemological premises assumed by the researcher. These premises follow from the theoretical framework underlying the research. This framework includes the conception of language as an interactional and creative system and the sociocultural definition of learning as a socially constructed phenomenon. Careful analysis of the transcribed data revealed the processes of learner assistance as they participated in the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns. It also revealed the persistent engagement of the participants in language focused episodes. Evidence that the participants were able to deal successfully with the ambiguity in the puns was drawn from the data in the PRDs when the learners explicitly indicated that they understood the double meanings. Further evidence of clearer understandings following the triadic interaction was found in the interviews with the participants.

The rigor of the findings was assured by establishing the appropriateness and adequacy of the data collection and analysis, the credibility of the researcher, and the consistency of the philosophical beliefs with the methods and claims made for the scope of the findings. The findings are presented in the next chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the triadic interaction that occurred between five pairs of low advanced and advanced ESL learners when they collaborated on the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns that appeared in English-language comic strips. The participants were adult students at an intensive English institute located on a university campus in the southeastern United States. The research questions focused on the assistance the learners provided each other in the collaborative dialogue they engaged in concerning each pun (pun related dialogues – PRDs), identification of episodes in which the learners attended to phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects of the language (language focused episodes – LFEs), and the indications that the learners achieved greater understanding of the ambiguities of the puns through their participation in the process. The answers to the questions were sought through microgenetic analysis of the pun related dialogues and of the follow-up interviews conducted with each participant to check on the comprehension achieved through the dialogic process.

As is shown in the presentation of the results in the present chapter, the participants mutually facilitated the learning process through their cooperation in the collaborative dialogues. The task promoted learner-generated attention to the lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of language. There were also clear indications that the participants were better able to understand the ambiguities in the puns after they had taken part in the triadic interaction. The analysis of the data regarding each research question follows.

Research Question # 1

To answer the first research question: How do adult learners assist each other in attempting to decipher the ambiguity of puns in the pun related dialogues (PRDs)?, the researcher looked at three aspects of the PRDs. These included: 1) the structure of the dialogic process; 2) the roles the learners assumed at the beginning of each dialogue; and, 3) the patterns of interaction through which the learners assisted each other in their attempt to decipher the meaning of the puns.

As indicated in Chapter Three of this paper, the pilot for the current study revealed the importance of the structure of the dialogic process. For this reason, the analysis of the PRDs began with mapping their organization, including the opening, development, and closing,

following loosely the mapping procedures of Green & Wallat (1981). In the opening of the dialogue, the participants expressed their understanding, or lack thereof, of the ambiguity of the pun, thus establishing their roles as expert and novice. Three scenarios resulted: 1) Both participants understood the ambiguity of the pun; 2) One participant understood the ambiguity and the other did not; and, 3) Neither participant understood the ambiguity.

The terminology employed to designate the participants according to their level of understanding on the first reading of the comic strip was derived from Donato (1994), who applied Wood, Bruner & Ross's (1976) concept of scaffolding to sociocultural theory. When the two members of the dyad understood the ambiguity in the pun, they were both considered to be 'experts' at the opening of the dialogue, so the first scenario is referred to as Expert/Expert, or E/E. The second scenario constitutes one participant who understood (Expert) and one who did not understand (Novice), so the designation is Expert/Novice (E/N). In the final scenario, neither participant understood the ambiguity at the opening of the dialogue; hence, the designation of Novice/Novice, or N/N.

The development phase of the dialogue depended on the initial distribution of comprehension. When both participants understood the pun on the first reading, they embarked on a joint explanation of the double meaning in the pun. In the scenario in which one of the participants understood the ambiguity in the pun and the other did not, the resulting development took the form of an explanation by the participant who understood the ambiguity, with the other participant providing prompting expressions. When neither participant understood the ambiguity, they worked together to come to an understanding of the double meaning. Examples of each of these types of development are given below.

Analysis of the data in the pilot study showed that at times there was a definite closing to the PRD. Sometimes the participants who had not understood the ambiguity at the beginning of a PRD were able to state the two meanings in the closing. Valuable evidence related to the third research question regarding greater comprehension was available in the closing of the PRD. Identification of the closing as part of the structure of the PRD was thus an important element for the present study. In an attempt to ensure that the participants gave clear indications of their understanding in the closing, the researcher explicitly stated in the instructions (Appendix B) that the participants should clearly explain the double meanings at the end of the conversation. The researcher also intervened during the PRD with the specific request for the participants to explain the two meanings.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the puns according to the three scenarios described above. In total, there were 40 PRDs, since there were five dyads, with each pair discussing eight puns. There were two puns in each of the four categories of pun: lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological. Thus, there were 10 PRDs related to each type of pun. (The puns are described in Table 1 (p. 38) and are listed in Appendix A.) At the beginning of the PRDs, there were 7 instances of the E/E scenario; 9 instances of the E/N scenario; and 24 instances of the N/N scenario.

Table 2

Comprehension at the Opening of Each PRD

Type of Pun	Pun	E/E	E/N	N/N
Lexical	1 Rock group	2	2	1
	2 Position	3	0	2
	Total Lexical	5	2	3
Syntactical	3 Concentrate	0	2	3
	4 Alligators	0	1	4
	Total Syntactical	0	3	7
Morphological	5 Input/put in	0	1	4
	6 Attract/Subtract	0	1	4
	Total Morphological	0	2	8
Phonological	7 Clarence/clearance	1	1	3
	8 Drain/brain	1	1	3
	Total Phonological	2	2	6
Total		7	9	24

Table 2 shows that the type of pun that was most frequently understood by both participants on the first reading of the comic strip was the lexical pun, which presented the Expert/Expert scenario in five of the ten PRDs related to lexical puns. In only three cases did neither participant understand the ambiguity of the lexical pun, while in two instances, one understood and the other did not. The phonological pun was comprehended by both participants on the first reading in two cases, by one and not the other in two instances, and by neither on six occasions. Very few participants understood the morphological and syntactical puns on the first reading. There was slightly greater comprehension of the syntactical puns, with one of the participants understanding on the first reading in three cases, while one participant understood in two instances of the morphological pun. Neither participant understood in seven instances of the syntactical pun, and in eight of the morphological puns.

As noted above, the opening of the PRD revealed the scenario. The way that the PRD developed depended on the type of scenario. The kind of scenario also resulted in different lengths of engagement in dialogue, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Number of Turns by Scenario Type

Scenario	Average Number of Turns	Range of Turns
Expert/Expert	15.3	10 – 24
Expert/Novice	25.5	12 – 39
Novice/Novice	30.3	9 – 63

When both participants understood the pun on the first reading, they only needed to provide an explanation of the double meaning for the researcher, resulting in the least number of average turns (15.3).   On the other hand, when one learner was unable to understand the ambiguity at first, the other had to attempt to make the meanings clear, thus affording a greater number of average turns (25.5).   The scenario in which neither participant understood the ambiguity at the beginning of the PRD occasioned the most turns on average (30.3), since the participants had to construct meaning together.

By looking at the opening phase in the structure of the PRDs, the researcher was able to ascertain the roles assumed by the participants, as shown in Table 2 (p. 49).   The relative expertise demonstrated by each member of the dyad determined the pattern of interaction in the development segment of the PRD.   The results of the analysis of the development of the PRDs are shown below through examples of the maps developed for each of the scenarios.   The maps follow the procedures outlined in Chapter Three of this dissertation (p. 41), and summarized here.

The first column indicates the structure of the PRD (opening, development and closing), with the opening revealing the roles assumed by the participants at the beginning of the PRD. The dialogue develops according to the scenario established in the opening, while the closing generally indicates the understanding or lack thereof at the end of the PRD.   The unit of meaning employed is the turn, indicated in the second column. The third column refers to the participant, while the fourth column presents the transcripted dialogue, with gestures italized and in parentheses.   Bold-faced script designates emphasis in the tone of voice.   Standard punctuation is used to indicate questions, exclamations, and definite sentence endings.   Three periods (…) represent an unfinished phrase or hesitation.

The fifth column explicates the dialogic process.   The arrows indicate the flow of the ideas as the participants responded to each other.   When each of the participants seemed to continue with a thought of his/her own and did not relate to what the other participant said, the comments are separated by the symbol '≈≈', rather than being connected with arrows.   The sixth column represents the language focused episodes, which will be considered in the section of this chapter that deals with Research Question # 2.

Expert/Expert Scenario

       There were seven instances when both members of the dyad indicated understanding in the opening of the PRD. The E/E scenario occurred in five lexical PRDs and in 2 phonological PRDs. After establishing mutual expertise, the participants embarked on a joint explanation of the ambiguity in the pun. Even though they both understood the pun and therefore did not have to work out the meaning, they still constructed language together. This was a language creating activity.

       The dialogue generally began with the participants laughing. Sometimes one of them asked the other if s/he understood.   In the joint explanation, the participants constructed units of meaning together, completing each others' ideas. One participant began an idea, and the other picked up on and completed it by supplying a word that his/her partner had trouble finding. They also provided a lot of affirmations for each other, thus encouraging continued participation in the dialogue. Repetition was much in evidence.   There was a notable use of gestures, which either substituted for or complemented a linguistic utterance. The flow of the conversation was back and forth, with the participants responding to each other and building on each other's ideas, as shown in the arrows that point in both directions in the dialogue explication in the examples presented below.

       PRD Map # 1 shows the collaborative dialogue between Angela and Bernice as they discussed the lexical pun contained in the *Blondie* cartoon in which the double meaning is contained in the word 'position'.

PRD Map # 1

Pun # 2: *(Blondie)* In the first frame, Dagwood comes in the door and tells Blondie: *The boss asked me to try out a new position at work today.* Blondie replies: *Oh, that's great news, honey!* In the second frame, Dagwood hangs up his coat and Blondie asks: *What's the new position?* In the final frame, Dagwood says to a startled Blondie: *Sitting at my desk with both feet on the floor!* (In the cartoon there is also a dog that mirrors Blondie's reactions.)

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	A	OK	A & B indicate understanding by laughing and affirming 'OK'. Understanding confirmed in development.	
	2	B	OK. Um…		
	3	A	This one's funny.		
Development	4	B	Yeah, this one's really funny, 'cause, um, he's coming home and saying that the, the boss asked him to try out a new position at work, and his wife is asking him…she's happy…	B begins explanation. B pauses. ↕	

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	5	A	…because she thinks, she thinks he…*(raises hand horizontally)*	A completes B's thought ↕	
	6	B	*(looking at A and raising hand in same manner)*…she thinks he's, um, another…to get higher, um…	B repeats and continues with A's thought. ↕	
	7	A	Yes.	A encourages B.	
	8	B	…in a better position…in his work. So probably be raised.	B continues explanation, pauses.	
	9	A	Yes, maybe.	A encourages B.	
	10	B	…yeah, and she ask him what position, *(A and B laugh)* and he says, he says 'sitting on my desk with both feets on the floor' *(laughs)*, so it's, um…	B continues explanation, reading caption. B pauses.	
	11	A	[Position…it has two meanings.	A begins explanation of ambiguity.	A refers to double meaning.
	12	B	…a new position, which means a position, having a position, and a position…er…	B seeks to explain one meaning. ↕	B refers to meaning.
	13	A	At work.	A completes thought. ↑	
	14	B	At work.	B repeats ↓	
	15	A	Uh, uh…	A looks for word.	
	16	B	To have a…	B seeks word.	
	17	A	I don't know, eh, he's going to work in another…in another level *(raising hands in same manner as before)*…I think…	A gives synonym and indicates meaning with gesture ↕	
	18	B	Yeah.	B affirms.	
	19	A	It's a better position for him.	A gives synonym.	
Closing	20	R	That's one meaning.	R confirms.	
	21	A	That's one meaning.	A repeats.	
	22	A&B	And the other is…*(sitting up in their chairs)*…	A & B indicate second meaning with gesture.	
	23	B	…**the** position, like sitting…and…	B begins verbal explanation of second meaning. ↕	
	24	A	His body position.]	A completes second meaning.	LFE completed with explanation of two meanings.
	25	R	His body position. OK. Good!	R confirms.	

In the opening of the dialogue, both participants laughed and affirmed their understanding, confirmed in the development of the PRD. In Turn 4, Bernice began the explanation, pausing as she tried to find the words to explain. She osbserved that the wife was happy and paused, wherein Angela came in (Turn 5), noting that the wife was thinking of a meaning that would not be borne out in fact. She had trouble finding the necessary vocabulary, but indicated her meaning with the hand gesture. Bernice appropriated the gesture and found the word 'higher' in Turn 6. Angela confirmed the meaning in Turn 7. Bernice found satisfactory descriptions with 'better' and 'be raised' in Turn 8, and made the connection between the two meanings of 'position' in Turn 10, which Angela explicitly confirmed in Turn 11. They worked at explaining the meaning that the wife had originally inferred in Turns 12-17, with Angela completing the idea of 'better' or 'higher' in Turn 17 – 'higher level'. In the closing (Turns 18-25), with a prompt from the researcher, they were able to articulate the two meanings of position as a 'better position' and a 'body position'. The meaning of 'better' was clear from the previous explanation of 'higher level'.

The dyad of Angela and Bernice accounted for four of the seven E/E scenarios, including two of the lexical PRDs and the 2 phonological PRDs. Trina and Kyeung both understood the two lexical puns, so their PRD is offered as a second example of the E/E scenario. The pun is contained in a *Dennis the Menace* cartoon, in which the ambiguity concerns two meanings of the word 'rock'.

PRD Map # 2

Pun # 1: *(Dennis the Menace)* In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and his grandfather are sitting in a rocking chair. Dennis says: *Look Mom! We're a rock group.*

Structure Pun #1	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	T	Ah-ah-ah. *(laughs).*	T & K indicate understanding by laughing .	
	2	K	*(Laughs)*		
	3	T	OK. Do you understand the…?	T queries K about understanding	
Development	4	K	Yeah, I guess the chair....	K confirms understanding.	
	5	T	The chair, yeah. Dennis the Menace…I love to watch his cartoons…ooo…every morning, Saturday morning. *(pause while R fixes tape recorder).*	T begins explanation and then diverges by noting familiarity with cartoon character as R fixes tape recorder (Turns 5-8).	
	6	R	Is it?		
	7	K	Have you seen in the movie…Dennis the Menace		

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PRD Map # 2 – continued

Structure Pun #1	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	8	T	It's funny because it's trying…uh, like they're sitting in a rock chair…and it says 'Look, mom…We're in a rock group', [so it's like double meaning, like, they're sitting in a rock chair *(makes rocking motion with body)* and he's trying to tell his mom that they're in a…rock group, just…uh…	T continues explanation. T indicates one meaning with gesture and seeks to explain second meaning. ↕	T refers to 'double meaning' and proceeds to explain the two meanings.
	9	K	So rock group means the music rock group, so it's kinda, you know…it's not real rock group, but they're sitting on the rock chairs, so they say they're a rock group, yeah…	K continues explanation of second meaning when T gets stuck.	
	10	T	That's the main…I guess.]	↑	
Closing	11	R	OK. So where is the, the…two meanings are…in the, in the…	R asks for source of double meaning.	
	12	T	[One they are sitting in the **rock** chair…*(places hands on chair)*…	T indicates one meaning with words and gesture.	T makes reference to two meanings: 'One…
	13	K	…rock chair…	K repeats. ↕	
	14	T	…and the other is that…Dennis, like thinking…we're in a, like, a rock band…like a…	T gives second meaning.	…'other', and gives both.
	15	R	Uh, uh.		
	16	T	…the rocking chair makes sound…band…]	T offers another connection between two meanings of 'rock'.	
	17	R	OK. So it's in the rock. Good.	R confirms.	

Here again both participants laughed in the opening of the PRD. Trina queried Kyeung about her understanding in Turn 3, and Kyeung gave a rather equivocal response in Turn 4. Her comprehension was confirmed in the development of the PRD. There was a technical problem and while the researcher corrected it, Trina demonstrated her familiarity with Dennis the Menace in Turns 5-8. The PRD continued with Trina beginning the explanation of the ambiguity in Turn 9. She was able to explicitly identify the double meaning of 'rock' as in 'chair' and 'group', but she hesitated, wherein Kyeung, in Turn 10, supplied the exact word needed for the second meaning: 'music'. At the same time, she reiterated the meaning as in 'chair'. Trina repeated the two meanings in the closing in Turns 13-15, adding yet another word to clarify the second

definition: band. Two interesting things happened in Turn 17, when Trina finally used the correct form of 'rocking' for 'rocking chair', and she also related the idea of the rocking chair making a sound, as the music band makes sound. This was a connection that had never occurred to the researcher.

As illustrated in PRD Maps # 1 and # 2, the Expert/Expert scenario produced a development of the dialogue in the form of a joint explanation of the ambiguity of the pun. The participants constructed language together by completing each others' ideas, providing affirmations for the other's comments, repeating parts of the comments of the other, and using gestures, either as substitutes for or complements of a linguistic utterance. The Expert/Novice scenario contained instances of the same features within the development that took the form of an explanation by the 'expert', with prompting by the 'novice'. Examples of the E/N scenario are discussed next.

Expert/Novice Scenario

In the E/N scenario, the expert indicated understanding and often asked the other participant if s/he understood. When the novice replied with doubt, the expert began an explanation, sometimes using gestures as a complement or substitute for his/her utterances. The novice often repeated parts of the expert's explanation, gave listening signals of attention, such as 'mm...mm' or 'yeah', or asked questions for clarification. There was often a 'eureka' moment when the novice reached comprehension through participation in the dialogue.   As seen in Table 2 (p. 49), there were 9 PRDs that fell in this scenario, related to two lexical, three syntactical, two morphological, and two phonological puns.

The first example of the E/N scenario pertains to the *Dennis the Menace* 'rock group' cartoon described above. The participants are Lenora and Marguerite.

PRD Map # 3

Pun # 1: *(Dennis the Menace)* In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and his grandfather are sitting in a rocking chair. Dennis says: *Look Mom! We're a rock group.*

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	L	*(Both read silently 8 seconds)* Rock group. *(5 second silence)*	L identifies source of ambiguity by reading 'rock group'.	
	2	M	Ah. OK. The father…*(points to cartoon)*	M indicates understanding.	
Development	3	L	Grandfather.	L corrects M.	
	4	M	The grandfather and the grandchild…	M makes correction.	
	5	L	…son, yeah.	L clarifies.	
	6	M	…are on rocking chairs *(makes rocking motion with body).*	M demonstrates meaning with gesture.	

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	7	L	Ah, yes.	L gives equivocal indications of	
	8	M	You see?	understanding. M checks for	
	9	L	Mm,mm.	understanding. L is still equivocal.	
	10	M	And they are a rock group.	M hints at music rock group meaning.	
	11	L	Yeah. Because of that they are on rocking chairs *(makes rocking motion with body).*	L shows she understands rocking chair meaning, appropriating M's gesture.	
	12	M	Mm,mm. Is it that?	.M asks for R's confirmation.	
	13	R	Yeah. And what is…?	R confirms, asks for second meaning.	
	14	L	[The second meaning is…rock is uh…something hard.]	L gives a second meaning. ≈≈	L makes reference to double meaning of word, and gives a third meaning.
	15	M	Rock is like, uh…music group.	M explicitly states music group meaning. ≈≈	
	16	L	Something strong.	L insists on 3rd meaning.	
	17	M	The singing group of rock.	M reiterates music group meaning.	
	18	R	Which do you think it is here?	R asks for clarification.	
	19	M	It's the rocking…the way they are sitting on the chairs…*(makes rocking motion with body)*	M gives chair meaning, with gesture.	
	20	R	Mm,mm. Rocking chairs.	R confirms.	
	21	L&M	Uh,uh.	L and M agree with chair meaning.	
	22	R	And?...You said it.	R asks for other meaning.	
	23	M	Mm,mm.	M thinks.	
	24	R	The music group.	R gives response.	
	25	M	The music rock…uh,uh.	M confirms.	
	26	R	But rock is a hard thing, too. Does that have anything to do with this?	R comes back to L's meaning.	
	27	L	Sorry?	L asks for repetition.	
	28	R	Does the meaning of rock as a hard thing...is…does it mean…?	R expresses skepticism about 'hard' meaning.	
Closing	29	L	The hard style, style, of music.	L gives rationale.	
	30	R	Hard style of music. Exactly, exactly. Yeah, yeah. And they're sitting in the rocking chair.	R understands connection.	
	31	L	Yeah. Rocking group.	L modifies caption.	

Marguerite indicated understanding of the ambiguity (Turn 2), while Lenora seemed to have not been aware of the term for the type of chair (Turn 9). Of interest here in the opening is how Lenora, although the novice in understanding the double meaning, repaired the utterances of Marguerite in Turns 2-5. Like Angela and Bernice in PRD Map #1 (p. 51), Marguerite employed a gesture in her explanation (Turn 6), but it was a complementary rather than a substitutional gesture, because she made a rocking motion at the same time she said 'rocking chair'. The combination seemed to be effective, since Lenora repeated both the words and the gesture in Turn 11. Lenora, even though she was the novice, was the one who explicitly referred to the double meaning in Turn 14. Like Trina's reference to the rocking chair making noise in PRD Map # 2 (p. 53), Lenora brought up another meaning connection that the researcher had not considered when she talked about 'rock' as something 'hard'. The researcher was ready to discard this third meaning in Turns 26 and 28, but Lenora brought the 'music' and 'hard' meanings together when she referred to the 'hard style of music' in Turn 29.

The following example of the E/N scenario is the PRD related to a syntactical ambiguity in a *Blondie* cartoon. The ambiguity centers on the construction 'they use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags'. The double meaning results from the grouping of the words. The syntax is ambiguous because either 'alligators' or 'they' might be the subject of the infinitive 'to make'. The participants in the PRD are Angela and Bernice.

PRD Map # 4

Pun # 4: *(Blondie)* In the first frame, Blondie and Dagwood are sitting in chairs; Elmo is lying on the floor, coloring a picture. Blondie asks: *What are you studying these days, Elmo?* In the second frame, Elmo looks up and says: *We're on the state of Florida. Our teacher said they use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags.* In the third frame, Elmo continues: *Boy, talk about using cheap labor.* Blondie and Dagwood share a surprised look.

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening		R	Here is the first one. *(A & B read for 25 seconds)*	A asks B if she understands. A's understanding confirmed in development. ↕ B indicates lack of ↕ comprehension of ambiguity. ↕	
	1	A	You get this one?		
	2	B	No. Well, I understand the story, but, uh, I don't see the funny part.		
Development	3	A	Well, I think it's that, I guess, I mean, here they say that they use alligators for making shoes, belts, and handbags, but, eh, [one meaning is that the shoes, belts, and handbags are made from the alligators skin…	A begins explains one meaning. ↕ B indicates attention by repeating A's last word.	A refers to the two meanings.
	4	B	Skin, yeah.		

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	5	A	*(Reading)* 'Boy, talk about using cheap labor. Eh, she is meaning now that, em, she's trying to say now that they use alligators to **make** the shoes, to **work** on the shoe making.]	A explains second meaning. ↕	
	6	B	Mm, mm.	B indicates attention.	
	7	A	They are making. I don't know…	A looks for way to clarify.	
	8	B	So why talk here cheap labor?	B asks for further clarification. ↕	
	9	A	Because they pay less *(laughs)* to the alligators, I think.	A answers B's question.	
	10	B	Yeah, I mean in the beginning they're talking about what he's studying…he's studying, I suppose he's studying Florida.	B shows attempt to understand. ↕	
	11	A	Yeah.	A encourages B.	
	12	B	But…then they talk about alligators?	B continues to struggle, asks question. ↕	
	13	A	Yeah, in Florida there is alligators, very much…	A affirms B's attempts.	
	14	B	Yeah…	B continues to struggle.	
	15	A	*(unintelligible, laughs)*		
	16	B	I don't get it at all.	B indicates lack of understanding ↕	
	17	A	It's like…originality. The picture says that they usually make shoes and all the things that, uh…he **understood** that they use the alligators, they use the alligators to, as **workers**, as the…	A gives new explanation. ↕ B gives first indication of understanding.	
	18	B	Oh…*(laughs)*		
	19	A	You know?	A encourages B.	
	20	B	**Oh-h-h-h,** yeah. They had to, yeah…So…	B begins to understand.	
	21	A	So…the alligators…are the workers…	A emphasizes explanation. ↕	
	22	B	**Oh**…the alligators, they are **making** the shoes, the belts, and the handbags?	B expresses meaning, asks for confirmation.	
	23	A	Yeah. *(laughs)*	A confirms. ↕	
	24	B	Oh-h-h-h…yeah.	B indicates understanding.	
	25	R	And what's the other meaning?	R asks for 2nd meaning.	

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PRD Map # 4 – continued

Structure Pun #2	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	26	A	Uh, the original…	A begins to explain.	B refers to two meanings.
	27	B	[The original meaning?...That they are using the skin to make the belts and the bags and the shoes…and…	B takes over explanation. Gives 1st meaning.	
	28	R	And then the other one is?	R asks for 2nd meaning.	
	29	B	The other one is that they are using them to **work** and do the shoes, the belts and the handbags.]	B is able to explain 2nd meaning.	
Closing	30	A	Yes, this is workers *(laughs)*.	A confirms.	
	31	R	You see, there are two meanings here.	R checks for double meaning.	
	32	A&B	Yeah.		
	33	R	…and where do the two meanings come from?	R makes misleading question.	
	34	B	Florida?	B misunderstands.	
	35	A	Ay…the kid here understood, misunderstood, the teacher…The teacher told him 'In Florida they use alligators to make shoes', and he felt, he imagined that the alligators making the shoes *(laughs)*.	A explains two meanings.	
	36	R	So you understood in the end?	R asks for confirmation.	
	37	A&B	Yeah.	A & B confirm understanding.	
	38	R	Good. Wonderful!	R gives encouragement.	

Here, Angela asked Bernice if she understood (Turn 1) and Bernice indicated that she did not see the double meaning (Turn 2). Angela then gave the explanation of the two meanings in Turns 3 (using the alligators skin) and 5 (using the alligators as workers), with Bernice interjecting a repetition in Turn 4, indicating the meaning that she had understood was that the shoes, belts, and handbags are made from alligators' skin. Bernice was unconvinced in Turn 6, so Angela continued to insist on the second meaning in Turn 7, but picked up on Bernice's doubts by commenting 'I don't know'. However, she reaffirmed her understanding in replying to Bernice's question about cheap labor (Turn 8) when she said that they pay less to the alligators (Turn 9). After Bernice continued to demonstrate her lack of understanding (Turn 16), Angela explained again (Turn 17). With the explanation, Bernice began to comprehend (Turn 18). Bernice continued to expand her understanding in Turn 20 and was able to express the second meaning in Turn 22. Angela again explicitly identified the ambiguity in the closing (Turn 31).

As seen in these examples of the Expert/Novice scenario, the participants jointly constructed meaning. The roles sometimes shifted, as when Lenora corrected Marguerite regarding the identity of the characters in Turns 2-5 in PRD Map # 3 (p. 55). The 'novice' asked questions for clarification (e.g. PRD Map # 4 (p. 57): Turn 8), repeated parts of the 'expert's' explanation (e.g. PRD Map # 4 (p. 57): Turn 4), and gave listening signals of attention (e.g. PRD Map # 4, (p. 57): Turns 6, 11, 14). The 'novice' also repeated the gestures that the 'expert' used in the explanations (e.g. PRD Map # 3 (p. 55): Turn 11). There was often a 'eureka' moment when the 'novice' reached comprehension through participation in the dialogue (e.g. PRD Map # 4 (p. 57): Turns 18, 20, 24).

The third scenario occurred when neither of the participants was able to understand the double meaning on the first reading. The following section discusses the Novice/Novice scenario.

Novice/Novice Scenario

The final scenario found both participants unable to understand at the opening of the PRD. As shown in Table 2 (p. 49), this scenario occurred 24 times, with PRDs related to three of the lexical, seven of the syntactical, eight of the morphological, and six of the phonological puns falling within the N/N scenario. This scenario resulted in the longest PRDs as the participants grappled to find the double meanings. The PRDs opened with indications by both participants that they were unable to understand the ambiguity. They asked each other and the researcher questions, used the dictionary, tested hypotheses, repeated and paraphrased each other's utterances, completed each other's thoughts, employed listening signals, and made extensive use of gestures to complement or substitute for linguistic expression. Their efforts often resulted in arriving at understandings that they had not had at the beginning of the dialogue. The participants indicated their increased comprehension in the closing of the PRDs. Examples of the Novice/Novice scenario are considered below.

The first example in the N/N scenario is related to a phonological ambiguity in a *Dennis the Menace* cartoon. The ambiguity is due to the deliberate manipulation of the phonemes /dr/ and /br/ to form the phrase 'drain surgeon' to refer to a plumber. The participants are Carolina and Hyun Ja.

PRD Map # 5

Pun # 8: *(Dennis the Menace)* In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and Joey are watching a man walk away from a truck that says 'Acme Plumbing: 24 Hour Service.' The man is carrying a tool box and a plunger. Dennis tells Joey: *He says he's a **drain** surgeon.*

Structure Pun #8	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	C	*(C & H read silently 18 seconds).* Do you understand?	C asks H if he understands. ↕	
	2	H	*(laughs)* I just know one meaning, yeah.	H sees one meaning.	

Structure Pun #8	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	3	C	He's, he's…plumb…	C begins explanation.	
	4	H	Yeah, plumber, yeah.	H provides correct form of the word.	
	5	C	…so he fix the plumbing…	C continues idea.	
	6	6	…pipes, right.	H provides synonym.	
	7	C	Se he's the drain surgeon…like the doctor that…*(makes circular motion with hands)*.	C makes connection with doctor.	
	8	H	Medical doctor.	H elaborates.	
	9	C	It's like the doctor of the plumbing…something like that.	C expands idea.	
	10	R	Uh, uh. That's the doctor. Where's the double meaning there?	R asks for source of double meaning.	
	11	C	That he fix the plumb…and…I don't know…Ah, drain.	C attempts explanation, begins to have idea about 'brain'.	
	12	H	His car is advertising…they can…uh…fix plumbing for 24 hours…like emergency in hospital.	≈≈ H makes meaning connection between '24-hour' and hospital.	
	13	R	Like a hospital is open 24 hours *laughs)*. Does drain remind you of something?	R acknowledges H's comment.	
	14	C	[Brain? Kind of **brain** surgeon.	After R's prompt, C makes connection between 'brain' and 'drain'.	C & H recognize the connection between the phonemes in 'brain' and 'drain'.
Closing	15	H	Ah-h-h…*(nods head)*. Yeah…brain…drain.	H makes connection.	
	16	C	Drain…brain…mm,mm.]	C reiterates.	
	17	17	Drain…brain. I think that's where the connection is. Good.	R affirms.	

The PRD opened as in an E/N scenario, with Carolina asking Hyun Ja if he understood (Turn 1). It became clear in the development, however, that Carolina did not see the source of the ambiguity either. In Turns 3-7, she recognized that the plumber (Hyun Ja supplied the word, Turn 4) fixes the plumbing, like a doctor. She could not find the vocabulary to express what a surgeon does, so she made a motion with her hands. As she talked, Hyun Ja supplied vocabulary. Carolina seemed to be noticing something about the word 'drain' in Turn 11. Hyun Ja ignored this reference and made the connection between '24-hour service' and the emergency room in a hospital (Turn 12). Carolina took the opportunity to think as the researcher replied to

Hyun Ja's observation, and made the 'drain-brain' connection in Turn 14. Hyun Ja had a 'eureka' moment in Turn 15, seeing the phonological ambiguity.

PRD Map # 6 is another instance of the N/N scenario. The dialogue concerned a morphological pun which is in a *Shoe* cartoon. The ambiguity results from the manipulation of the morphemes 'in' and 'put', which are combined in two ways to make 'input' and 'put in'. The participants were Joanna and Dong Un.

PRD Map # 6

Pun # 5: *(Shoe)* In this two-frame cartoon, Shoe leaves his desk and says to Cosmo: *Hey, Cosmo, I need your input.* Cosmo replies: *Certainly.* In the second frame, Shoe stands in front of a coffee machine and tells Cosmo: *Put in another quarter.*

Structure Pun #5	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	J	*(J & D read silently 30 seconds)* Let me see. Let me see. *(Takes hold of cartoon).* Like I need your help. Really? Your input.	J recognizes meaning of 'input'. ↕	
	2	D	Your input.	D repeats.	
	3	J	Your input.	J repeats.	
	4	D	Your input.	D repeats.	
	5	J	[Like input. Like put in. Like, the first one is like, em…*(5 second silence).*]	J notices similarity between 'input' and 'put in'.	J relates morphemes in 'input' and 'put in'.
	6	D	This one…I have no idea *(laughs).*	D expresses confusion. ↕	
	7	J	Input. This is difficult. Input. *(Reads silently)* Can I look here? Do you know what is 'input'?	J sympathizes with D's confusion, asks to look in dictionary.	
Development	8	D	'Input' I know. It is something, uh, he, uh, it's what people go to the coffee machine…*(Draws a square with hands and makes motion of putting coin in slot)*…input, some coin.	D gives inappropriate definition for 'input', using gesture. ↕	
	9	J	In the machine? In the machine where they have like for cokes…and drinks?	J asks D about his definition.	
	10	R	What is that one in there?	R intervenes to get them back on track.	
	11	J	Coffee *(points to cartoon).*	J answers referring to drawing.	

Structure Pun #5	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	12	D	Second is the coffee, uh…vending machine. First is…	D describes drawing.	
	13	R	You can look in the dictionary.	R suggests using dictionary.	
	14	D	[First input is the…trash…trash can. Put in, input. Put in…this is input *(points to cartoon)*. This is put in your coin…Input is…what part of speech is it? Noun?	D recognizes similarity between 'input' and 'put in'.	D sees ambiguity in morphemes, noticing that 'input' is a noun and 'put in' is a verb. Uses technical metalanguage: 'part of speech'; 'noun'.
	15	R	It's a noun there, isn't it? Yeah.	R confirms.	
	16	J	There is no input…*(looking in dictionary)*.	J has trouble finding word in dictionary.	
	17	D	In…i-n	D begins to spell word for J.	
	18	J	In…	J continues to look for word. D continues to help.	
	19	D	I-n, input.		
	20	J	Oh, sorry, input.		
	21	D	I-n. Input…p-u-t.		
	22	J	*(leafs through dictionary)* Here…*(reads definition)* 'Information, money, or energy that is put into a system, organization, or machine so it can operate. The city plans to get input from local community groups.' Another input is…input is…no…Right…like…Ah,ah… Like you say, uh information that is put into a system…money that is put into a system… *(reads caption)* 'Hey, Cosmo, I need your input.' Like I need you to…put money…	J finds meaning. Relates meaning as 'information' and 'money'. J reads caption again.	J reads definition and examples from dictionary.
	23	D	I guess that he…uh…uh, well…first picture is uh…I need your…some…idea.	D comes back to J's first idea (Turn 1).	
	24	J	…help…I mean…	J gives synonym.	
	25	D	…idea, or information…	D gives synonyms.	
	26	R	Uh,uh. Good.	R confirms.	
	27	J	You put in idea?]	J connects 'input' and 'put in'.	
	28	D	Type machine? Typing machine, yes.		
	29	J	This is a table. This is a, like a type machine, typing machine.	D describes picture, looking for clues.	

Structure Pun #5	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	30	D	Type machine? Typing machine, yes.	D repeats.	
	31	J	Ah, the first one is, the first one is…I need like your, like, help, something he is doing…	J repeats original interpretation (Turn 1).	
	32	D	Like me…idea…He says certainly, 'Sure". But next picture…	B concurs.	
	33	J	Next one 'put in another quarter'…like…	J reads caption.	
	34	D	Put in…another quarter…Next picture…I don't need your idea, just put in the coin…*(motions with hand like putting money in a slot)*…just the money *(laughs)*.	D explains double meaning.	
Closing	35	J	*(laughs)* I don't understand it.	J expresses inability to understand.	
	36	R	You don't understand. OK. Well, that's OK, 'cause we've got to move on. But you got it. That's OK. If you don't get it today, we're going to look at them again tomorrow.	R ends interaction because of time constraints.	

Joanna immediately offered the definition of 'input' (Turn 1) when she said "Like I need your help.' She also indicated her realization that the ambiguity must lie in the words 'input' and 'put in' (Turn 5), after both she and Dong Un repeated the word 'input' in Turns 2 – 4. In Turn 6, Dong Un stated his complete lack of understanding, to which Joanna responded sympathetically, noting that it was difficult (Turn 7). She also seemed to retreat from her original notion that 'input' means help. She asked if she could look in the dictionary, and she also asked Dong Un if he knew the meaning of 'input.' Dong Un said he did (Turn 8), and proceeded to give it the meaning that actually is the meaning of 'put in' as related to putting money in the coffee machine in the final frame. Dong Un was not satisfied, however, and continued to consider the word 'input', using metalinguistic terminology in Turn 14 when he asked what part of speech it was, and suggested it was a noun. He seemed to realize that 'put in your coin' described an action and was therefore a verb.

In Turns 16-21, Joanna looked up the word 'input' in the dictionary, with Dong Un helping her by spelling the word. Joanna found and read the definition in Turn 22. She noticed the similarity between words in the definition: 'information that is put into a system…money that is put into a system.' Dong Un made the connection between the first frame of the cartoon and the meaning of information (Turn 23), which Joanna confirms (Turn 24) by restating her original meaning of 'help' (Turn 25). Dong Un gave another synonym, 'idea', in Turn 26. Joanna was

not quite sure about the idea of 'put in an idea' (Turn 27), and they referred again to the cartoon to notice that there was a typewriter, which seemed to be more compatible with 'information' or 'help'. Joanna reiterated this idea (Turn 31), with Dong Un concurring (Turn 32). In Turn 33, Joanna moved on to the final frame, but it was Dong Un who was able to express the two meanings (Turn 34). Joanna said she did not understand (Turn 35), and it was unfortunate that the researcher had to cut off the dialogue because of time constraints. Joanna was very close to being able to express the ambiguity.

As seen in the examples, the participants assisted each other in a variety of ways when neither of them understood the pun at the opening of the dialogue. They asked each other and the researcher questions, used the dictionary, tested hypotheses, repeated and paraphrased each other's utterances, completed each other's thoughts, employed listening signals, and made extensive use of gestures to complement or substitute for linguistic expression. They often achieved greater understanding at the end of the dialogue.

While the objective of the analysis related to the first research question in the current study was to trace the flow of the dialogue from beginning to end as the learners constructed meaning together, it is obvious from the mapping of the PRDs that there were several patterns of interaction that occurred repeatedly across the three scenarios. The researcher decided to identify these patterns because the frequency of their occurrence has implications for understanding the process of meaning making in adult second language learning in instructional settings, as discussed in Chapter Five of this paper. The exposition of the findings related to Research Question # 1 continues with an examination of the three most recurrent patterns of interaction.

General Patterns

In each of the three scenarios, the participants engaged in meaning making activity together. The microgenetic analysis of the PRDs revealed general patterns that were consistent across the scenarios, as shown in Table 4. The patterns are discussed below.

Table 4

Patterns of Interaction

Taking time in the meaning making process	Constructing meaning together	Leading each other astray
Reading the caption several times	Completing each other's thoughts	Getting off and back on track
Describing the illustrations in the cartoons	Giving encouragement and listening signals	Going down the garden path
Being silent and thinking while the other talked	Supplying synonyms	
Repeating what the other said	Using gestures	
Checking the dictionary		

<u>Taking Time in the Meaning Making Process</u>. The evidence in the PRDs indicates that the learners needed to take time in the meaning making process, as noted by Ohta (2001). They engaged in various practices to give themselves this time, including: a) reading the captions several times; b) describing the pictures in the cartoons; c) being silent and thinking while the other talked; d) repeating what the other said; and, e) checking the dictionary.

In PRD Map # 3 (p. 55) about the *Dennis the Menace* "rock group" cartoon, Marguerite and Lenora described the cartoon together in Turns 2-6 as Marguerite struggled to explain the two meanings of rock and Lenora learned what a rocking chair was.   Joanna and Dong Un engaged in describing the cartoon in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62: Turns 5-12 and 28-34), as they discussed the *Shoe* 'input/put in' comic strip. Joanna went back to reading the caption in Turn 22.

Excerpt 1, taken from Carolina and Hyun Ja's PRD about the *Blondie* 'position' cartoon, is another example of the participants' reading the captions several times. This PRD is an instance of the Novice/Novice scenario. Neither Carolina nor Hyun Ja understood the ambiguity of the pun on the first reading (Turns 1-5). Carolina and Hyun Ja read the captions in Turns 1-2, and then Carolina read the captions again in Turn 12.

Excerpt 1 also illustrates the case of the quiet partner thinking while the other talked on. Hyun Ja had tried to interject an idea in Turn 11, but Carolina interrupted by reading the caption again (Turn 12), and then talking about the way in which Dagwood was sitting. Hyun Ja tried to speak again in Turn 16, but was interrupted by Carolina in Turn 17. With the researcher's intervention (Turn 18), Hyun Ja finally was able to express his interpretation in Turn 19 (aided by a gesture), at which point Carolina was able to see the second meaning (Turn 20). The participation of the researcher in Turns 15 and 18 was a common phenomenon in the PRDs regarding the Novice/Novice scenario, and will be discussed below.

Excerpt 1

Turn	Part.	Transcript
1	H	*Reading in a low voice* 'My boss asked me…
2	C	*Reading in a low voice* '…to try out a new position at work today. Oh, that's great…' *10 second silence.* Are they trying to say that she…he don't fit… sit properly, or…I don't…? *Looks at Hyun Ja…*Do you understand?
3	H	Mm?
4	C	Do you understand?
5	H	I don't understand. Position has…how many meanings?
6	C	To put your feets on the floor…*picks up feet and puts them on the floor*….So what's the way that she was sitting? Like this…*crosses feet*…at the desk.
7	H	He
8	C	She
9	R	He
10	C	Wait…oh, yes, he.
11	H	But, uh, his wife refer to…he got new position…means…

Excerpt 1 – continued

Turn	Part.	Transcript
12	C	*(reads)* 'The boss asked me to try out a new position at work today…Oh, that's great news, honey. What's the new position?...Sitting at my desk with both feet on the floor.'
13	H	Mm,mm.
14	C	So…how was he sitting?...He was sitting…like, he was not sitting like this *(sits up straight, picks up and puts feet down on the floor)*…He was sitting all the time with the feets like here *(puts foot on desk)*…or maybe…I don't know…
15	R	OK. So that's the second position. What about the first one?
16	H	Maybe his wife thought he…
17	C	The new position with feet on the floor.
18	R	Let him finish.
19	H	He got promotion…he got new *(makes upward movement with hand)*…uh, position…more higher in his company.
20	C	**Oh-h-h-h.** Yes. You're right.

Repetition was another way that the participants gave themselves time to develop their ideas. After Joanna and Dong Un repeated 'input' four times in Turns 1-4 in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62), Joanna made the connection between 'input' and 'put in' in Turn 5. As Angela explained the *Blondie* 'alligator' cartoon to Bernice in PRD # 4 (p. 57), Bernice indicated her attention by repeating 'skin' in Turn 4.

Excerpt 2 is taken from Trina and Kyeung's PRD regarding the *Blondie* 'alligator' cartoon. This PRD represented a Novice/Novice scenario, as neither participant understood the pun on the first reading. Kyeung sounded almost like a chorus, repeating Trina's reading of the captions in Turns 6-11. Later Kyeung expressed the second meaning when she said in Turn 19: "Cheap labor…he think…I…is he think…is he thinking that alligators make the…make the shoes and belts…*laughs*....

Excerpt 2

Turn	Part.	Transcript
1	T	His face…he's like…*(makes face with surprised eyes)*…what? *(20 second silence)*
2	K	Uhn, uhn.
3	T	Here…*(points and reads)*… 'We're on the state of Florida.
4	K	Yeah.
5	T	*(reads)* 'What are you studying these days, Elmo? Our teacher said they use…they use alligators…
6	K	Alligators.
7	T	…to make shoes, belts, and handbags.'

Excerpt 2 – continued

Turn	Part.	Transcript
8	K	'Shoes, belts, and handbags.'
9	T	'Boy, talk about using cheap labor.'…like…
10	K	'Using cheap labor.'

The participants also bought time and found meanings in the dictionary in several instances, as in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62: Turns 16-22) above, when Joanna looked up 'input' in the dictionary, aided by Dong Un's spelling of the word.

Learning language is a process, which requires that the learners take time to think. As seen in the examples, some of the ways the participants in the current study bought themselves time was by reading the captions and describing the cartoons, thinking while the other talked, repeating what the other said, and consulting the dictionary. The learners also used various tactics to assist each other in constructing meanings. These are discussed next.

Constructing Meaning Together.   The description of the thought construction process in the PRD Maps shows the flow of the dialogue in the patterns indicated for each of the scenarios: 1) joint explanation; 2) explanation by the expert with prompting expressions by the novice; and 3) working together to come to an understanding.   The major ways in which the mutual thought construction occurred were through: a) completing thoughts; b) giving encouragement and listening signals; c) supplying synonyms; and, b) using gestures.

The thought completion process is clear throughout the Expert/Expert PRD Map # 1 (p. 51) as Angela and Bernice jointly explained the ambiguity in the *Blondie* 'position' cartoon. When one of the participants paused, the other picked up the thought, as in Turns 4-8:

Excerpt 3

Turn	Part.	Transcript
4	B	...and his wife is asking him…she's happy…and…
5	A	…because she thinks, she thinks that he *(positions hand parallel to the floor and raises it incrementally.*
6	B	*(looks at A and makes same hand gesture as A)*…she thinks he's, um, another…to get higher, um…
7	A	Yes.
8	B	…in a better position…in his work. So probably be raised.

Excerpt 3 also illustrates how a participant encouraged the other by affirming what the other had said (Turn 7), and how they used synonyms, with Bernice coming up with 'higher' (Turn 6), 'better' and 'raised' (Turn 8). It is interesting to note that Bernice produced the synonyms based not on something that Angela said, but on Angela's gesture in Turn 5, which Bernice appropriated and then found the synonyms for. The use of gesture as a substitute for language, as well as for complementing language, was prominent throughout the PRDs. This short excerpt exhibits the four major ways in which the participants constructed meaning together: completing thoughts, encouraging, giving synonyms, and gesturing. Further examples of each of these meaning construction techniques are given below.

While thought completion was most evident in the E/E scenario, it also occurred in the other scenarios, as seen in Excerpt 4, which comes from the Novice/Novice PRD of Trina and Kyeung as they discussed the *Shoe* 'input/put in' cartoon.

Excerpt 4

Turn	Part.	Transcript
19	T	He thought he was asking…
20	K	...asking some information about the…yeah…
21	T	…something….something important…and he was like, certainly, you know…eh, even the word…
22	K	I need a quarter. *(laughs)*
23	T	Put in another quarter.

As Trina struggled to express the meaning of 'input' when Shoe asked Cosmo for his input, Kyeung was able to complete her thought by supplying the word 'information', and then Trina continued to expand on the idea by adding that the meaning of 'input' as information was 'something important', as opposed to the insignificant meaning of a quarter. Angela and Bernice worked out the meaning of the *Shoe* 'concentrate' syntactical pun in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5

Turn	Part	Transcript
1	A	I don't…I'm not sure about this…
2	B	Me, too…but…
3	A	Here the man is at the gym, and it's supposed to be that he, he made some exercise…

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Excerpt 5 – continued

Turn	Part	Transcript
4	B	Yeah, and he tired. The next frame I don't know if it's the next day, or if it's the same day, because, uh…in the first one he says "concentrate on your **back**", so he's…
5	A	…on your back, the two meanings…
6	B	…so he's lying down on his back, and he's thinking one, two, three, one, two, three…
7	A	He's concentrating *(laughs)*…
8	B	…on his back, so I don't know if it's concentrate on his back, like lying down…
9	A	Yes, I thinks it's…
10	B	…on his back, or concentrate on…on **working** his back.

In Turns 1 and 2, Angela and Bernice agreed that they did not understand the double meaning, and began to describe the cartoon (Turns 3-5) to see if they could decipher the meaning. Even in the description of the cartoon, they engaged in thought completion as Angela says '…he made some exercise' (Turn 3), Bernice filled in 'Yeah, and he tired…so he's…' (Turn 4), and Angela came back to complete Bernice's thought in Turn 5, "…on your back, the two meanings'. In Turn 7, Angela interpreted Bernice's reference to the counting (Turn 6) as 'concentrating', and Bernice completed the idea in Turn 8, with '…on his back'. Angela also offered an affirmation for Bernice's interpretation in Turn 9, 'Yes…'

Angela often encouraged Bernice by expressing agreement with Bernice's comments. This was evident among all the pairs. The agreement sometimes indicated that the expert had been successful in explaining a meaning to the novice, as in PRD Map # 3 (p. 55). In Turns 4 – 11, Marguerite was successful in giving Lenora the meaning of 'rocking chair' by complementing her naming of the chair with a gesture (Excerpt 6)

Excerpt 6

Turn	Part	Transcript
4	M	The grandfather and the… grandchild…
5	L	…son, yeah.
6	M	…are on rocking chairs *(makes rocking motion)*
7	L	Ah, yes.
8	M	You see.
9	L	Mm, mm.
10	M	And they are a rock group.
11	L	Yeah. Because of that they are on rocking chairs *(makes rocking motion with body)*.

Lenora indicated that she was listening in Turn 5, offered an affirmation of understanding in Turn 7, indicated listening and understanding in Turn 9, and again affirmed understanding in Turn 11 with 'Yeah', and showed she understood the 'chair' meaning of 'rock group'. As in Excerpt # 3 (p. 68), the use of gesture was critical in this exchange, since Marguerite was able to transmit the meaning through the gesture. Lenora indicated her understanding not only with words, but also by appropriating Marguerite's gesture.

Along with thought completion, expressions of encouragement, and gestures, the participants constructed meaning together by offering synonyms, as seen in Excerpt # 3. Examples of synonym use are seen as well in PRD Map # 5 (p. 60: Hyun Ja and Carolina discussing *Dennis the Menace* 'brain/drain' cartoon), in which Hyun Ja gave synonyms in Turns 5-8, as reproduced in Excerpt 7.

Excerpt 7

Turn	Part	Transcript
3	C	He's, he's… plumb…
4	H	Yeah, plumber, yeah
5	C	…so he fix the plumbing…
6	H	…pipes…right
7	C	So he's the drain surgeon…like the doctor that…*makes circular motion with hands.*
8	H	Medical doctor

Hyun Ja first helped Carolina to complete the word 'plumber' in Turn 4, and then offered 'pipes' as a synonym for 'plumbing' in Turn 6. He gave 'medical doctor' as a synonym for 'brain surgeon' in Turn 8. Excerpt 8 highlights the use of synonyms in Joanna and Dong Un's PRD # 6 (p. 62) about the *Shoe* 'input/put in' cartoon.

Excerpt 8

Turn	Part	Transcript
23	D	I guess that he…uh…uh…well…first picture is uh…I need your …some…idea.
24	J	…help…I mean…
25	D	…idea, or information.

In Turns 23-24, Dong Un and Joanna constructed the meaning of 'input' by giving three synonyms: 'idea', 'help', and 'information'.

While the participants worked together to construct meanings by completing each other's thoughts, offering encouragement through listening signals and affirmations, supplying synonyms, and using gestures, there were also times when they led each other astray. This phenomenon is discussed next.

Leading Each Other Astray. Working together has pitfalls as well as benefits. PRD Map # 4 (p. 57), which shows the explanation by Angela to Bernice about the *Blondie* 'alligator' comic strip, illustrates how Bernice got off track, but Angela was able to guide her toward the appropriate meanings. It is interesting how Angela gave credence to Bernice's erroneous ideas, but led her to the correct interpretation, in Turns 8-17. Bernice finally accepted Angela's explanation (Turns 18, 20, 24), and was able to explain the ambiguity (Turns 26 and 28).

There were also instances when one participant threw the other off track less felicitously, as in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62). Joanna immediately gave the correct meaning of 'input' in Turn 1, but Dong Un went in another direction in Turn 8. There was a resultant confusion about the meaning of 'input' through Turns 8-22, until Dong Un finally came back to Joanna's original interpretation in Turn 23. Thus, the collaborative dialogue was not always beneficial.

In PRD Map # 4 (p. 57), Angela was able to bring Bernice back to the correct interpretation because Angela was the expert in this particular PRD. Joanna was not able to guide Dong Un back to the correct understanding in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62), because Joanna, being a novice, was not sure of her own comprehension. Thus, the two novices went down the garden path during a large part of the dialogue until they finally checked the dictionary definition and compared it with the context of the cartoon in Turn 22, and were able to come back to Joanna's meaning, already expressed in Turn 1. A noteworthy phenomenon often occurred in the Novice/Novice scenario, and is worthy of mention here, although it is only obliquely related to the research question. When the participants were having trouble developing their comprehension, the researcher stepped in as the expert to guide the conversation. The role of the researcher is briefly considered next, since it played a role in the eventual comprehension reached by the participants, and is therefore related to the findings regarding the efficacy of the task in promoting attention to aspects of language (Research Question # 2) and in the evidence related to participant understanding (Research Question # 3).

Role of the Researcher

The design of the current study limited the role of the researcher to observer and resource. However, the researcher's strong pedagogical background resulted in a more active participation than originally intended, with researcher comments appearing in 38 of the 40 PRDs. The participation was minimal in the Expert/Expert scenario PRDs, while it was more frequent in the Expert/Novice and Novice/Novice scenario PRDs. Table 3 indicates the average number of total and researcher turns in the PRDs involving each scenario.

Table 5

Number of Total and Researcher Turns per PRD

Scenario	Average Number of Turns	Range of Total Turns	Average Number of Researcher Turns	Range of Researcher Turns
Expert/Expert	15.3	10 – 24	2	1 – 4
Expert/Novice	25.5	12 – 39	5.4	1 – 13
Novice/Novice	30.3	9 – 63	5.8	0 – 1

The interventions of the researcher were few and limited in the PRDs related to the Expert/Expert scenario, as seen in PRD Maps # 1 (p. 51) and # 2 (p. 53). There were two types of comment: 1) asking for the double meaning (e.g. PRD Map # 2, (p. 53): Turn 12: 'OK. So where is the, the…the two meanings are in the, in the…'); and, 2) expressing approval (e.g. PRD Map # 1 (p. 51), Turn 25: 'His body position. OK. Good!').

In the PRDs in the Expert/Novice scenario, the researcher sometimes became more directive in her comments. There were instances when she simply asked for the double meaning, as in PRD Map # 4 (p. 62), in Turns 25, 28, 31, 33, but there were also times when she directed the discussion because she thought it was getting off track, as in PRD Map # 3 (p.55), when Lenora talked about 'rock' being 'something hard' (Turn 14) or 'something strong' (Turn 16). In Turns 18, 22, and 24 the researcher brought the participants back to the 'music' meaning of 'rock'. She tried to dissuade Lenora's attempts to connect the rock with the 'hard' meaning in Turn 26. It is interesting to note that Lenora connected the three meanings in a way previously not seen by the researcher.

The Novice/Novice scenario resulted in the most interventions by the researcher, and these interventions were more substantive and occurred earlier on in the PRDs. As seen in the PRD Maps above, the researcher first got involved at Turn 10 in both the N/N scenarios (PRD Maps # 5 (p. 60) and # 6 (p. 62)), while the interventions in the Expert/Expert scenario PRDs (# 1 (p. 51) and # 2 (p. 53)) were first at Turns 20 and 12, respectively; and in the Expert/Novice PRDs (# 3 (p. 55) and # 4 (p. 57)), at Turns 13 and 25 respectively.

However, there were two PRDs in the Novice/Novice scenario in which the researcher did not intervene, and these PRDs resulted in the least number of total turns on the part of the participants, as seen in the range of turns in Table 5. The participants only took nine turns, and their dialogue in these cases resulted neither in comprehension nor in engagement in language focused episodes. This phenomenon is discussed in the section of this paper related to Research Question # 2.

At times, the researcher actually regulated or led the interaction in the Novice/Novice scenario, as in PRD Map # 5 (p. 60). She first asked where the double meaning was (Turn 10). Carolina seemed to be focusing on the source of the double meaning in Turn 11, but Hyun Ja led the conversation in another direction in Turn 12. Instead of allowing the participants to work out

the meaning on their own, the researcher brought the conversation back to Carolina's mention of the word 'drain' in Turn 13.

As noted in Excerpt # 1 (p. 66), the researcher intervened in Carolina and Hyun Ja's dialogue about the *Blondie* 'position' cartoon. In Turn 15, she affirmed one meaning of 'position' and asked for the other meaning, and in Turn 18, she regulated the conversation by telling Carolina to let Hyun Ja finish what he was saying.

Although the research questions focused on the triadic interaction between the participants and the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns, the researcher also played a role in many of the PRDs. Generally the role was limited to asking for the source of the double meaning and to affirming the participants' efforts. However, there were instances in which the researcher directed the conversation, especially in the Novice/Novice scenario. This certainly had an impact on keeping the participants' focus on the task and on their eventual understanding of the double meaning of the puns. The implications of researcher intervention are discussed in Chapter Five.

Conclusion of Research Question # 1

In the foregoing discussion of the results of the analysis of the data with regard to Research Question # 1, which sought to uncover the manner in which adult learners assisted each other in attempting to decipher the ambiguity of a series of puns through triadic interaction, the researcher analyzed the process of collaborative dialogue in the pun related dialogues (PRDs). The dialogue explications allowed the researcher to trace the interaction from the beginning to the end of each PRD in the three scenarios of Expert/Expert, Expert/Novice, and Novice/Novice. The maps show that the length of the PRDs increased with lessening expertise. They also indicate that the development of the interaction proceeded differently according to the type of scenario, as suggested in the pilot study. In the E/E scenario, the participants offered joint explanations, in the E/N scenario, the expert explained the pun to the novice, and in the N/N scenario, the participants had to work out the meaning together. All of the scenarios offered opportunities for the learners to construct meaning together, but the N/N scenario resulted in the longest dialogues and in the greatest variety of manners of assistance.

The different manners of assistance were further elucidated by gleaning the general patterns that occurred most frequently across the PRDs. These general patterns were discussed, illustrated with examples from the PRD maps and with excerpts from other PRDs not included in this paper. The first general pattern was taking time to work out meaning, which comprised: a) reading the captions several times; b) describing the pictures in the cartoons; c) being silent and thinking while the other talked; d) repeating what the other said; and, e) checking the dictionary. The second general pattern was constructing meaning together, which consisted of various techniques: a) completing thoughts; b) giving encouragement and listening signals; c) supplying synonyms; and, b) using gestures.

The third general pattern that appeared in the E/N and N/N PRDs sometimes resulted in assistance and sometimes was less helpful. At times the participants led each other astray. When a novice led an expert off the track, the expert generally was able to guide the novice back to the appropriate meanings. However, if both participants were novices, then they could find themselves going down a garden path. When this occurred, the researcher often played a role in regulating or directing the conversation, as discussed in the final part of this section related to Research Question # 1.

The next section explores the results of the data analysis that corresponded to the second research question. This question concerned the efficacy of the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns for promoting learner-generated attention to lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of the language.

<u>Research Question # 2</u>

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this paper, it has been shown (Schmidt 1995; Swain & Lapkikn 2001) that second language learning is more efficient if the learners notice specific aspects of the target language. Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002) found that learner uptake significantly improved when the learners initiated form focused episodes. The Kaplan/Lucas (2001) study indicated that the task of deciphering the ambiguity in puns served as a means for prompting learner-generated attention to aspects of form/meaning. The second research question of the current study sought evidence of learner-generated attention to aspects of language (phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical) in language focused episodes (LFEs) as the participants engaged in the pun related dialogues.

The microgenetic analysis of the data revealed ample evidence that the participants in the current study often discussed the linguistic aspects that created the ambiguity in the puns. LFEs were episodes during the dialogue when the learners specifically talked about language. The current study followed the identification procedures of Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002), who considered form focused episodes to be those in which the learners used metalanguage, defined as "language used to analyze or describe language" (5). As noted by Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, metalanguage could be in the form of technical and non-technical terms. In the current study, almost all of the metalanguage was non-technical, with the most common term being "means" or "meaning". The nature of the task also created the situation in which the learners focused on the source of the ambiguity in the phonological and morphological puns without using metalanguage, but by isolating the phonemes or the morphemes that created the double meaning. These instances were considered to be language focused episodes. Table 6 gives an overview of the instances of PRDs that contained language focused episodes (LFEs). Sometimes there were several LFEs in the same PRD, but the table reflects the number of PRDs that contained at least one LFE.

Table 6
Instances of Language Focused Episodes (LFEs) in the PRDs

Scenario	PRDs	PRDs with LFEs
E/E	7	7
E/N	9	9
N/N	24	19
Total	40	35

As Table 6 shows, there were language focused episodes in all of the PRDs in the Expert/Expert and Expert/Novice scenarios, and in 19 of the 24 PRDs in the Novice/Novice scenario. Thus, the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns prompted the learners to focus on the specific aspect of language that created the ambiguity in 87.5% of the total number of PRDs, oftentimes with prompting by the researcher, as discussed above. In order to see the way in which the learners focused on lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of language, examples of LFEs related to each of the puns are presented next.

Types of LFEs

For ease of analysis, the researcher included the language focused episodes in the PRD maps, exemplified in the previous section of this chapter related to Research Question # 1. Following are excerpts from the PRDs that illustrate lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological LFEs.

Lexical LFEs. As seen in Table 2 (p. 49), the lexical puns were the ones most easily understood by the participants, and also the ones that generated the most instances of spontaneous learner generated attention to the aspect of language that was the source of the ambiguity. Perhaps the most obvious place to look for a double meaning is in a word. A lexical LFE is seen in PRD Map # 2 (p. 53), in the conversation between Trina and Kyeung about the *Dennis the Menace* 'rock' cartoon. Trina specifically identified the source of the ambiguity when she noted in Turn 9 that "…it's like a double meaning". She proceeded to explain and when she got stuck, Kyeung continued the explanation in Turn 10.

Excerpt 9

Turn	Part	Transcript
9	T	It's funny because it's trying….uh, like they're sitting in a rock chair...and it says… 'Look, mom. We're in a rock group', so it's like double meaning, like, they're sitting in a rock chair *(makes rocking motion with body)* and he's trying to tell his mom that they're in a…rock group, just…uh…
10	K	So rock group means the music rock group, so it's kinda, you know…it's not real rock group, but they're sitting on the rock chairs, so they say they're a rock group, yeah…
11	T	That's the main…I guess.

Excerpt 9 shows an instance in which the participants spontaneously indicated that the word had a double meaning. There were other occasions when the learners needed a simple prompting by the researcher to explicitly state the source of the ambiguity, even though they

recognized it. Lenora and Marguerite both understood the *Blondie* 'position' cartoon (Turns 6-11), and were able to specify the two meanings (Turns 13, 15-17) when prompted by the researcher (Turns 12 and 14), as shown in Excerpt # 10.

Excerpt 10

Turn   Part   Transcript

6   L   Because he's joke…he always stays with both feet on the desk…and…
7   M   Is he beginning to work today?
8   L   Yeah. Maybe.
9   M   Even the lady is surprised.
10   R   Uh, uh.
11   M   The lady is surprised.
12   R   Because it's…There are two meanings.
13   L   Yeah, of position.
14   R   Ok. What are the two meanings?
15   L   Position is like, uh…*raises hand up*…like a…your professional position in your
              job…and the second position is in your…
16   M   …normal, normal being…*setting feet on the floor*…
17   L   …in your body… position. Yeah.

Excerpt 11 is from Hyun Ja and Carolina's Novice/Novice scenario PRD concerning the *Dennis the Menace* 'rock' cartoon. Hyun Ja identified 'position' as the source of the double meaning in Turn 5, but the pair needed some direction from the researcher (Turns 15 and 18) to stipulate the two meanings.

Excerpt 11

Turn   Part   Transcript

5   H   I don't understand. Position has…how many meanings?
6   C   To put your feets on the floor…*picks up feet and puts them on the floor*….So what's
              the way that she was sitting? Like this…*crosses feet*…at the desk.
7   H   He
8   C   She
9   R   He
10   C   Wait….oh, yes. He
11   H   But, uh, his wife refer to…he got new position…means…

Excerpt 11 – continued

Turn	Part	Transcript
12	C	*Reads* 'The boss asked me to try out a new position at work today…Oh, that's great news, honey. What's the new position?...Sitting at my desk with both feet on the floor.
13	H	Mm,mm.
14	C	So…how was he sitting?...He was sitting…like, he was not sitting like this…*sits up straight and picks up and puts feet on floor*…He was sitting all the time with the feets like here…*puts foot on desk*…or maybe…I don't know…
15	R	OK. So that's the second position. What about the first one?
16	H	Maybe his wife thought he…
17	C	The new position with feet on the floor.
18	R	Let him finish.
19	H	He got promotion…he got new…*hand makes upward movement*…uh, position…more higher in his company.
20	C	OH-H-H. Yes. You're right.

Here Hyun Ja seemed to be mulling over the possibilities of a double meaning for the word 'position' in Turn 11, but then Carolina, the stronger personality and more proficient speaker took over the conversation, explaining the physical body meaning of 'position' in Turn 14, and insisting on this meaning in Turn 17. The researcher validated that meaning in Turn 15, and elicited the second meaning, which Hyun Ja was able to explicitly state in Turn 19, after the researcher again intervened in Turn 18. At that point, Carolina recognized the ambiguity (Turn 20).

As seen in these excerpts, the lexical puns elicited both spontaneous and researcher prompted LFEs. All of the PRDs related to lexical puns contained language focused episodes. This was also the case with the phonological puns. Examples of the LFEs related to the phonological puns are considered next.

Phonological LFEs.   The phonological was the only type of pun other than the lexical to be understood by both participants at the opening of the triadic interaction (E/E scenario). Angela and Bernice were able to comprehend both phonological puns. In their discussion of the puns, they spontaneously attended to the source of the ambiguity. In fact, they initiated LFEs in every one of their PRDs.   Excerpt 12 is an illustration of this attention to the aspect of language that creates the ambiguity.

Excerpt 12

Turn	Part	Transcript
4	B	It's the clearance, uh. *(reading)* " His Mom named him after the sale. Because clearance is also when things are on sale and they clear everything, and clearance is a name also?
5	A	Clarence
6	B	Clarence, and…so here there's a game of words
7	A	Yes
8	R	What are they specifically playing with there?
9	A	Um…here he says "That's Clearance. I think his Mom named him after a sale." Maybe…well, he's relating Clarence with clearance …

Bernice guessed that the ambiguity lay in the word 'clearance' in Turn 4. Angela corrected her pronunciation in Turn 5, whereupon Bernice stated explicitly that the similarity between 'clearance' and 'Clarence' resulted in a 'game of words' (Turn 6). The researcher asked for an unequivocal explanation (Turn 8), which Angela was able to provide in Turn 9.

Not all of the participants were able to identify the phoneme manipulation on their own. Often the researcher intervened to signal the source of the ambiguity, as in Excerpt 17 from PRD Map # 5 (p. 60) related to the *Dennis the Menace* 'brain/drain' cartoon.   The researcher first intervened in Turn 10 to direct Carolina and Hyun Ja to look for the double meaning, and then explicitly pointed to the word 'drain' in Turn 13, whereupon Carolina made the connection between the sounds in 'drain' and 'brain' (Turn 14). Both Hyun Ja and Carolina repeated the contrasting words in Turns 15 and 16.

Excerpt 13

Turn	Part	Transcript
10	R	Uh, uh. That's the doctor. Where's the double meaning there?
11	C	That he fix the plumb and…I don't know….Ah, drain.
12	H	His car is advertising…they can…uh… fix plumbing for 24 hours…like emergency in hospital.
13	R	Like a hospital is open 24 hours. *laughs.* Does drain remind you of something?
14	C	Brain? Kind of **brain** surgeon.
15	H	Ah-h-h…*nods head.* Yeah…drain…brain.
16	C	Drain…brain…mm,mm.

The lexical puns prompted LFEs in each of the 10 related PRDs. The 10 PRDs regarding the phonological puns also contained LFEs. The morphological puns elicited LFEs in 9 cases. Examples of the language focused episodes evoked by morphological ambiguity are considered next.

Morphological LFEs. Generally the morphological LFEs involved the isolation of the morphemes that created the ambiguity, sometimes in conjunction with the use of metalanguage. In fact, the only technical metalanguage found in the PRDs occurred in the discussion of the morphological *Shoe* 'input/put in' cartoon, illustrated in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62). The LFEs from this dialogue are reproduced in Excerpt 14.

Joanna first identified the relation between 'input' and 'put in' in Turn 5, after both Dong Un and Joanna had repeated 'input' several times (1-4). Dong Un again juxtaposed the two words in Turn 14, and noticed that 'input' is a noun. After spending some time looking for the meaning of 'input' in the dictionary, the participants came back to the meanings created by the inversion of the morphemes in Turn 31, when Joanna specified "the first one" (meaning of 'input'). Dong Un completed the explanation with the meaning of 'put in' in Turn 34, correctly using the parts of speech: "I don't need your idea ('input'), just put in the coin".

Excerpt 14

Turn Part   Transcript

 1   J   Let me see. Let me see. *Takes hold of cartoon.*
             Like I need your help. Really? Your input.
 2   D   Your input.
 3   J   Your input.
 4   D   Your input.
 5   J   Like input. Like put in. Like, the first one is like, em…*5 second silence*
             ………………………………………………………………………………..
14   D   First input is the…trash…trash can. put in, input. put in…this is the input *pointing*
             This is put in your coin…. Input is…what part of speech is it? Noun?
15   R   It's a noun there, isn't it? Yeah.
             …………………………………………………………………………………
31   J   Ah, the first one is, the first one is… I need like your, like, help, something he is
             doing…
32   D   Like me…idea…. He says certainly, 'Sure'. But next picture…
33   J   Next one 'put in another quarter'…like…
34   D   Put in…another quarter….Next picture… picture…I don't need your idea, just put
             in the coin…*motions with hand like putting money in a slot*…just the money
             (laughs).

Dong Un was able to explain the two meanings involving the morpheme manipulation in 'input-put in', as shown in Excerpt 14. He was less successful in the discussion of the Shoe 'attract/subtract' cartoon, although he and Joanna focused quite a bit on the morphemes, and even could be said to be 'playing' with them, as evidence of possible productive language play.

Excerpt 15

Turn	Part	Transcript
4	J	So he says that 'Sure, we have our differences, like, there are difference, but opposites… poles,…*hands come together*… attracts together…or is substract, like…
5	D	Subtract.
6	J	Sub…
7	D	Sub is under… *lowering motion with hand*…under tract…or it is subtract?
8	J	In the first one I think 'Sure, we have our differences, but opposites, opposites, attract.'… *looks carefully at cartoon*…or is subtract, like subtract is one left, so I think he said he's…the first one he's saying, like, ah, opposites attract…we are different, but opposites attract…and then, or it's substract…so she don't want anything with him…I don't know.
9	D	I guess the first, uh, subtract is, uh, shake hand …*handshaking motion*…they are different…
10	J	Ah, substract.
11	D	We, uh…uh
12	J	When he substract, the substraction…and this is subtract…what is subtract? *Hands the cartoon to Dong Un.*
13	D	Subtract is…
14	J	Sub… *Downward motion with hand*…
15	D	uh, sub, sub…*Downward motion with hand*…Another guy…uh…
16	J	It's a girl.
17	D	…closed the…girl? *Looks carefully at cartoon.* I don't know *inintelligible.*
18	R	It's a girl.
19	D	He…he closed the door…*closing door motion with hands*…because the subtract means…uh…um
20	J	Can I…*motioning to the dictionary.*
21	R	Yeah.
22	J	*Opens dictionary*…Subtract.
23	D	Tract, tract, tract…He says tract, tract is uh…the, the…*circular motion with hands*…outside the ground…the tract?
24	R	No, that's different. Track.
25	D	Oh

Joanna linked the words 'attract' and 'subtract' in Turn 4, and separated the morpheme 'sub' in Turn 6, whereupon Dong Un began an analysis of the word by bringing in the common meaning of 'sub' as 'under'. Joanna paraphrased the caption in Turn 8 ("We are different, but

opposites attract") and then went on to correctly interpret the ambiguity when she noted: "…or it's substract…she don't want anything to do with him". However, she was unsure of herself, questioning her interpretation of 'substract' (sic) (Turn 12), and continuing with the morphemic analysis in Turn 14. While she looked up the word in the dictionary, Dong Un continued to play with the morphemes, confusing 'tract' with 'track' in Turn 23. In the end, they came close to specifying the ambiguity, but never clearly explained the association.

An interesting observation with regard to Joanna is that she often early on indicated her ability to zero in on the ambiguity and to explain it (Excerpt 14: Turns 1 and 5; Excerpt 15: Turn 8). However, her lack of confidence in her language proficiency caused her to doubt herself and to be distracted from her conclusions by the less proficient Dong Un. It is beyond the scope of the present study to delve more deeply into the phenomena of confidence and proficiency, but both the level of confidence of each learner and their relative proficiency are areas to be considered during group work in the classroom.

All of the PRDs related to the lexical and phonological puns contained language focused episodes. Nine of the ten morphological puns resulted in learner attention to the morphemes involved in the ambiguity. The syntactical puns prompted LFEs in six of the ten related PRDs. The syntactical LFEs are discussed next.

Syntactical LFEs. PRD Map # 4 (p. 57) shows how Angela, the expert, explained the ambiguity in the syntactical *Blondie* 'alligator' cartoon to Bernice, the novice. Excerpt 16 reproduces the language focused episodes from PRD Map # 4. Angela spontaneously focused on the syntactical ambiguity in Turns 3 and 5.   Bernice did not capture the double meaning immediately (Turns 4 and 6). However, as explained in the dialogue explication in the map, she was eventually able to comprehend with Angela's help.

Excerpt 16

Turn	Part	Transcript
3	A	Well, I think it's that, I guess, I mean, here they say that they use alligators for making shoes, belts and handbags, but, eh, one meaning is that the shoes, belts and handbags are made from the alligators' skin…
4	B	Skin, yeah…
5	A	*(Reading)* "Boy, talk about using cheap labor. Eh, she is meaning now that, em, she's trying to say now that they use alligators to <u>make</u> the shoes, to <u>work</u> on the shoe making.
6	B	Mm, mm.

Kyeung and Trina were both novices in their discussion about the *Shoe* syntactical 'concentrate' cartoon. They began their PRD by reading the captions and describing the illustrations in the comic strip until the researcher intervened and prompted them to focus on the two meanings (Turn 11). Kyeung and Trina then embarked on a language focused episode that

led them to the explanation of the ambiguity. In Turn 14, Trina referred to the source of the double meaning when she noted that "He's concentrating on his back, but not…" Kyeung picked up on the source of the ambiguity in Turn 15. Trina noted that "he's concentrating on his back, but not the way…Bill wants him" (Turns 16-18), making clear that she realized there were two meanings for the phrase 'concentrate on your back'.

Excerpt 17

Turn	Part	Transcript
11	R	What's the two meanings there?
12		*Look carefully at cartoon.*
13	K	Oh. He was just not hard working his back…he means…
14	T	Like, I don't know…I'm not sure. Like maybe he…he is trying to tell him that he should keep working out…you know…and…like…on his back…like, I don't know…like, some exercises for his back…*points to back and pulls back*…and he…he's not doing that. He's concentrating on his back, but not… just laying, you know…like…*sits back in attitude of rest*…I don't know.
15	K	Ah. He means that he have to work, work with the back, but he thinks concentrate on his back, like rest his back…*points to back*…rest with his back…just, uh…
16	T	Yeah, he's concentrating on his back, but not the way…
17	K	…not the way…
18	T	…that Bill wants him.

The task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns motivated the learners to focus on the aspect of language that created the ambiguity in 35 of the 40 PRDs, and thus was overwhelmingly successful in promoting learner generated attention to language, whether spontaneously or prompted by the researcher. However, there were five PRDs that did not contain LFEs. These negative cases are considered in the next section.

<u>Negative Cases</u>

As seen in Table 6 (p. 75), LFEs were present in all cases of PRDs in which at least one of the participants understood the pun at the opening of the dialogue. The absence of LFEs occurred only when neither participant understood at the opening (Novice/Novice scenario). Five of the 24 N/N scenario PRDs did not contain LFEs. Of these, four were related to the syntactical puns and one to a morphological pun.

It is not surprising that syntactical puns resulted in the absence of language focused episodes, since the ambiguity caused by the grouping of words is the most subtle. There is not an obvious word that has a double meaning, as in lexical puns, nor similar morphemes or phonemes to compare, as in morphological and phonological puns. The reader or listener has to stretch the conventions of language, as noted by Morgenstern (In Ross 1998), in order to comprehend the possibilities arising from the juxtaposition of the words.

Not only did the same type of pun provoke the absence of LFEs, but the same two pairs of participants accounted for the syntactical PRDs that did not contain LFEs. The dyads of Joanna and Dong Un and of Marguerite and Lenora failed to focus on syntax as the source of the ambiguity in both syntactical puns. As noted above, Joanna was unsure of herself and Dong Un was among the least proficient in the group. Marguerite had been in the United States for only a short time at the time of the study, and Lenora tended to defer to her as the older member of the pair.

Another factor that may have played a role in the absence of LFEs is the lack of, or the quality of, the intervention on the part of the researcher. As seen above, the researcher often asked the participants to look for the double meaning, and sometimes specifically pointed out exactly where they should look. The nature of the syntactical pun made it more difficult for the researcher to give clear indications about the source of the ambiguity.

Joanna and Dong Un's PRD regarding the *Blondie* 'concentrate' cartoon exemplifies the case of the lack of researcher intervention. The PRD consisted of only 9 turns, in which the participants simply described the cartoon. It is difficult to ascertain a structure in the dialogue, since the PRD consisted merely of a description of the comic strip. The researcher did not intervene until the final turn, when she made a meaningless affirmation, perhaps because of fatigue or time constraints. Although this discussion was only the fourth in the sequence of eight PRDs for Joanna and Dong Un, the previous three PRDs had run to 35, 63 and 36 turns.

PRD Map # 7

Pun # 3: *(Shoe)* In this two-frame cartoon, Cosmo is in the gym with a trainer, who says: *Not bad for the first day. Tomorrow, concentrate on your back.* In the second frame, Cosmo is lying on a sofa at home, reading a newspaper. The thought goes through his head: *One, two, three...One, two, three.*

Structure Pun #3	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	J	*(reads silently 18 seconds)* I think this one, the first one is, like, he want to exercise…and, and…the trainer said that it's…it's not bad for, for…the first day…and tomorrow you have to concentrate on your back, like, he made too much exercise on other parts, and the next day he's sleeping, like concentrating…and resting…I think *(leans back and puts hand to back)*.	J describes illustration, paraphrasing captions. J uses gesture in trying to understand. ↕	
Development	2	D	I…I agree.	D agrees.	
	3	J	Because one, two, three, one, two, three…like one, two, three…like, resting…	J continues to read caption. ↕	

PRD Map # 7   -- continued

Structure Pun #3	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
	4	D	People…OK…people go to the gym first day…and first day is very hard, so another…	D interprets illustration.	
Development	5	J	...and the second one…	J refers to second frame.	
	6	D	…teacher…today's OK…going …teacher…today's OK…going home, your back, everything…but he's thinking *(points to head)*…his back *(pats back).*	D continues with allusion to difficulty of exercising the first day, and the need to rest. Complements words with gestures. ↕	
Closing	7	J	He has to rest.	J interprets D's meaning.	
	8	D	He went home *(pats back)*…one, two, three…exercise back *(laughs).*	D uses gesture again to complement words.	
	9	R	Good, good.	Meaningless affirmation.	

Joanna opened the dialogue with a description of the comic strip and the interpretation of the more obvious meaning of exercising the back muscles when she indicated that 'he made too much exercise on the other parts'. She went on to try to see how 'concentrate' applied to the second frame, equating 'concentrate' to 'sleeping' or 'resting', and accompanied her explanation with a gesture (Turn 1). Dong Un agreed (Turn 2). Joanna repeated the caption in Turn 3. Dong Un expanded on Joanna's explanation in Turn 4. Joanna's reference to 'the second one' (Turn 5) seemed to relate more to the second frame of the cartoon than to a second meaning.

Dong Un's next turn (6) was somewhat incoherent, with the use of phrases rather than complete ideas. His difficulty in expressing himself was underscored by the use of complementary gestures for 'thinking' and 'back'. Joanna's comment in Turn 7 was a description of the second frame with her interpretation of needing rest after the first day's workout. Dong Un again spoke in phrases in Turn 8, with no indication of having understood the double meaning, though he laughed. Perhaps the researcher said 'good, good' because the cartoon had provoked laughter. The participants circled around the double meaning here, but did not focus on the syntactical source of the ambiguity, nor did they clearly explain that Cosmo was concentrating as he lay on his back in the second frame.

PRD Map # 8 shows the development of the conversation between Marguerite and Lenora regarding the syntactical pun contained in the *Blondie* 'alligator' cartoon. Here the discussion was longer, with more interventions by the researcher, but the participants neither focused on the source of the ambiguity, nor came to an understanding of the double meaning.

PRD Map # 8

Pun # 4: *(Blondie)* In the first frame, Blondie and Dagwood are sitting in chairs; Elmo is lying on the floor, coloring a picture. Blondie asks: *What are you studying these days, Elmo?* In the second frame, Elmo looks up and says: *We're on the state of Florida. Our teacher said they use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags.* In the third frame, Elmo continues: *Boy, talk about using cheap labor.* Blondie and Dagwood share a surprised look.

Structure Pun #4	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Opening	1	R	*(L & M read silently 30 seconds)* No idea?	R opens dialogue after lengthy silence.	
Development	2	L	Maybe *(10 second silence)* Cheap labor.	L continues to think, focuses on 'cheap labor'.	
	3	M	This is a family scene…a family scene…like, uh, at home.	M begins to describe illustrations.	
	4	L	They talk at home.	L continues explanation.	
	5	M	Mm, mm…and boy is, uh…	M continues.	
	6	L	…studying.	L supplies word.	
	7	M	…is studying.	M repeats.	
	8	L	And he mentions that…in Florida there are many alligators…from which they make…people make shoes, belts, and alligators…but where is the…cheap, cheap labor…maybe…	L paraphrases caption.	
	9	M	Cheap labor…is the way they build…cheap at working, or…?	M continues focus on 'cheap labor'.	
	10	L	Cheap…	L repeats.	
	11	M	And this *(points to cartoon)* is not true…is that true?	M asks for clarification.	
Development	12	L	It's true, yeah.	L indicates agreement.	
	13	R	What does that mean there? What do you think it means?	R asks for explanation.	
	14	M	Ah, just that they use alligators to make shoes and…	M begins explanation.	
	15	L	…belts, and, and because alligators are not expensive…not expensive…it's something natural…and when you use them to sell…so expensive things like, um…no, they're not so expensive *(makes dismissive wave of hand)*…	L continues explanation, getting confused and ending with dismissive wave of hand.	

PRD Map # 8 – continued

Structure Pun #4	Turn	Part.	Transcript	Dialogue Explication	Language Focused Episodes
Development	16	M	I know that…uh, uhm…we can have shoes with alligator skin *(rubs thigh)*…and, uh, belts also…even handbags…but I know from, uh…some countries in Africa…but I really don't know the link with what is here *(points to cartoon)*…and, uh, do they make…do they use…uhm…alligator skin for that…uh, here?	M refers to prior knowledge about using alligator skin to make things. Clarifies that previous question referred to use of alligator skin for making things in U.S. ↕	
	17	L	Yes. Mm, mm.	L indicates they use skin in U.S.	
	18	M	But it will be forbidden. It's like, uh, keeping the *(unintelligible)*.	↕	
	19	L	It's not forbidden. It's not forbidden, and that's why the…this kind of skin is so expensive, I think. And because this kind of skin is so expensive, it's cheap labor because *(smiles)*…	L contradicts previous statement (Turn 15).	
	20	M	I don't…I don't see the humoristic part.	M indicates inability to understand.	
	21	R	OK. You don't see it?	R intervenes in general way.	
	22	M	No…no. Maybe…		
	23	R	Talk about using cheap labor. What do you think?	R points out source of ambiguity.	
	24	L	Cheap labor…	L repeats. ↕	
	25	M	We can also use, uh…	M goes off track.	
	26	L	Because it…	L tries to help.	
	27	M	…wool *(plucks sleeve)*…the cheap…	M focuses on materials used to make thinks.	
	28	R	Cheap material…	R supplies word.	
	28	R	Cheap material…	R supplies word.	
	29	M	Yeah. Cheap labor. Many, many *(unintelligible)*…are working, or…	M struggles.	
	30	R	Who's working in the cartoon? Who could be working? Where it says about cheap labor?	R again tries to point out source of ambiguity.	
	31	M	Who's working? People in Florida…no?...Mm, mm.	M fails to see double meaning.	
Closing	32	R	That's a hard one.	R empathizes.	

Marguerite and Lenora took such a long time reading the cartoon that the researcher finally opened the dialogue (Turn 1). After a further pause, Marguerite began to describe the cartoon (Turn 2), with help from Lenora, who expanded on Marguerite's ideas (Turns 4 and 6). Then Lenora continued the description (Turn 8), but was unable to understand the reference to 'cheap labor' in the final frame of the comic strip. Marguerite tried to help out (Turn 9), but then moved the conversation in another direction when she went back to the previous frame in which Elmo had said that his teacher told them that they use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags. The researcher tried to point to the source of the ambiguity (Turn 13), but then Marguerite wondered if it was permitted in the U.S. to use alligator skin and the conversation continued in that vein (Turns 11-19). Marguerite noted that she didn't see the humor (Turn 20). The researcher again tried to direct attention to the location of the double meaning (Turns 23 and 30), but Marguerite did not understand (Turns 27, 29, 31).

These examples show that the failure to focus on the source of the ambiguity inhibited the possibility of interpreting the double meanings. The learners tended to spend their time describing the illustrations and paraphrasing the captions. They also were apt to consider unrelated issues, such as Marguerite's long diversion into the legality of using alligator skins in PRD Map # 8.   The difficulty of isolating the source of the ambiguity in the case of the syntactical puns made it harder for the learners to locate the double meaning, as well as more difficult for the researcher to point it out.   That the same pairs of learners represented nearly all the cases of the absence of language focused episodes suggests that individual learner characteristics also played a role.

Conclusion of Research Question # 2

Participation in the task of deciphering the double meaning of the series of lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological puns resulted in the learners' focusing on the aspects of language that created the ambiguity in the puns in a vast majority of the cases. The few cases in which LFEs were absent indicate that both the nature of the pun and individual learner characteristics were involved. The third research question sought evidence that the learners arrived at greater understanding through the task and the triadic interaction. The following section looks at the results related to the final question.

Research Question # 3

The third research question of the current study sought to find indications in the data that the participants achieved greater comprehension of the ambiguity of the puns through their participation in the triadic interaction. This section of the paper looks at the indications of comprehension in the PRDs and in the follow-up interview that was conducted the day after the participation in the PRDs.

Evidence of Comprehension in the PRDs

As indicated in Table 2 (p. 49), of the 40 PRDs, both participants in a pair understood the pun at the beginning of the dialogue in 7 instances (Expert/Expert scenario). In 9 PRDs, one of

the participants understood and the other did not (Expert/Novice scenario); and in 24 PRDs, neither of the participants understood the pun on the first reading (Novice/Novice scenario). As already seen in the discussion of the dialogue explication in the PRD maps in the section of this paper related to Research Question # 1, the participants often helped each other to achieve greater comprehension through the dialogic process. The numerical results presented below indicate that the participants generally benefited from their participation in the PRDs.

Table 7 shows the level of comprehension attained in the 33 instances in which one or both of the participants were unable to understand the double meaning of the pun at the opening of the PRD. There were 9 cases of the Expert/Novice scenario, and 24 cases of the Novice/Novice scenario. After participating in the triadic interaction, there were only 11 cases in which one or both did not understand.

Table 7

Increased Comprehension of the Puns in the Closing of the PRDs

Scenario	Opening	Closing
2 Expert/Novice	9	4
3 Novice/Novice	24	7
Total	33	11

The interaction between the participants was thus effective in leading to greater comprehension. The efficacy of the task in promoting learner-generated attention to the aspect of language that created the ambiguity was also established through the data analysis, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Effectiveness of LFEs within the PRDs in the N/N Scenario

PRD	Opening	Closing E/E	E/N	N/N
With LFE	19	14	1	4
Without LFE	5	1	0	4

As seen in Table 8 of the 19 PRDs that contained language focused episodes in the Novice/Novice scenario, the participants were both able to understand the ambiguity of the puns by the closing of the PRD in 14 instances, or 74% of the cases. When the learners did not focus on the aspect of language that created the ambiguity, they were able to arrive at comprehension of the double meaning in only one instance, or at a rate of 20%. This disparity suggests that engagement in language focused episodes was beneficial for the learners' ability to understand the puns.

Table 9 illustrates the scenarios for each individual pun at the opening and closing of the PRD. The comparison of the comprehension of each type of pun at the opening and closing of the PRDs points out the level of difficulty of the various kinds of puns as classified according to the linguistic aspect that creates the ambiguity.

The only types of pun that were immediately understood by both participants in a pair were the lexical and phonological puns. Both participants understood the lexical pun in five instances, while both understood the phonological pun in two cases. By the closing of the PRD, the participants had all achieved understanding of the lexical puns. Six more pairs, in addition to the original two, reached the E/E scenario by the end of the triadic interaction involving the phonological puns, while two PRDs involving the phonological puns evidenced the E/N scenario at the end of the dialogue.

The syntactical and morphological puns proved to be the most difficult to comprehend. There were no instances of both participants in the pairs understanding at the beginning of the dialogue regarding either of these types of puns. In three of the PRDs about syntactical puns and in two PRDs about morphological puns, one participant understood while the other did not. In seven of the syntactical and eight of the morphological, neither participant understood. At the closing of the PRDs, there were six instances of both participants in the pair reaching understanding of the ambiguity in the syntactical puns. There were no cases in which one participant understood at the end of the PRD, and there were four instances when comprehension was not achieved by either of the participants. With the morphological puns, in four cases both participants reached understanding at the closing of the PRD, while in three cases one participant understood and the other did not, and in three cases neither participant comprehended at the end of the dialogue.

Table 9

Comprehension by Pun at the Opening and Closing of the PRDs

Type of pun	Pun	Opening			Closing		
		E/E	E/N	N/N	E/E	E/N	N/N
Lexical	1 Rock group	2	2	1	5	0	0
	2 Position	3	0	2	5	0	0
	Total Phonological	5	2	3	10	0	0
Syntactical	3 Concentrate	0	2	3	3	0	2

Table 9 – continued

Type of pun	Pun	Opening			Closing		
		E/E	E/N	N/N	E/E	E/N	N/N
	4 Alligators	0	1	4	3	0	2
	Total Syntactical	0	3	7	6	0	4
Morphological	5 Input/put in	0	1	4	3	1	1
	6 Attract/Subtract	0	1	4	1	2	2
	Total Morphological	0	2	8	4	3	3
Phonological	7 Clarence/clearance	1	1	3	5	0	0
	8 Drain/brain	1	1	3	4	1	0
	Total Phonological	2	2	6	9	1	0
	Total	7	9	24	29	4	7

As already seen in the PRD Maps, evidence took the form of expressions of understanding (e.g. 'Ohhh, yeah; Ah-h-h; OK…OK), followed by an explanation of the double meaning of the pun by one or both of the participants. Excerpt 18 is from PRD Map # 4, in which Angela and Bernice discussed the *Blondie* cartoon about the alligators. Angela, who understood the double meaning at the opening of the dialogue, was the expert. Bernice did not understand and was therefore the novice. Angela was successful in explaining the ambiguity, as evidenced in Bernice's exclamations of understanding and her ability to express the two meanings.

Excerpt 18

Turn	Part	Transcript	Evidence of Comprehension
18	B	Oh *(laughs)*	B was the novice. Here she begins to indicated comprehension by saying 'Oh' and laughing.
19	A	Your know?	
20	B	**Oh-h-h-h**, yeah. They had to, yeah…so...	She uses a strong expression to indicate comprehension.
21	A	So…the alligators…are the workers…	A, the expert, prompts B.
22	B	Oh, the alligators, they are **making** the shoes, belts and the handbags?	B indicates she has now understood the 2nd meaning of 'using alligators to make shoes…'
23	A	Yeah *(laughs).*	
24	B	**O-h-h-h-h**…yeah.	B continues to indicate understanding.

Excerpt 18 – continued

Turn	Part	Transcript	Evidence of Comprehension
25	R	And what's the other meaning?	
26	A	Uh, the original…	
27	B	The original meaning? That they are using the skin to make the belts and the bags and the shoes…	B is able to give the other meaning of the syntactical ambiguity.

The next excerpt is taken from the PRD Map # 6 (p. 62) when Joanna and Dong Un talked about the *Shoe* cartoon in which Shoe asks Cosmo for his 'input'. Neither Joanna nor Dong Un understood the ambiguity on the first reading, but Dong Un was able to express the double meaning at the end of the PRD.

Excerpt 19

Turn	Part	Transcript	Evidence of Comprehension
34	D	Put in…another quarter….Next picture… picture…I don't need your idea, just put in the coin…*motions with hand like putting money in a slot*…just the money *(laughs)*.	Dong Un is able to express (with words and gestures) the meaning of 'input' as an 'idea' and of 'put in' as putting money in the machine.

The excerpts indicate the ways in which the participants were able to express the increased understanding they gained through their participation in the collaborative dialogues. The comprehension was also indicated in the follow-up interviews the next day.

Evidence of Comprehension in the Follow-up Interviews

The individual follow-up interviews produced further evidence that the participants had increased their understanding of the ambiguity in the puns. In most instances, the learners reiterated the understanding they had expressed in the PRDs.   Bernice expressed her comprehension in the PRD Map # 4 (p. 57), as shown in Excerpt 9 (p. 76) regarding the *Blondie* alligator cartoon. She was again able to explain the two meanings in the follow-up interview.
Excerpt 20

Excerpt 20

Um. *Reads* 'What are you studying these days, Elmo?' OK. Um. We have the boy and his mother is asking him what are you studying now in school and...he's uhm… they've talked about Florida and the teacher said, uhm, the alligators made shoes, belts, and handbags….and then he says 'Boy, talk about using cheap labor', because the boy imagined that the alligators were the ones who were making the shoes, the belts, and the handbags, but they were used as to work…and it's not really to work, but they're using alligators' skins to make the shoes, the belts and the handbags.

In his follow-up interview, Dong Un was able to explicitly state the source of the ambiguity in the morphemes, as well as give the two meanings referred to in 'input' and 'put in' in the *Shoe* cartoon referred to in PRD Map # 6 (p. 62) and Excerpt 10 (p. 77): "This is input and put in. This means the input…is, uh…The man need…I need more your information, or your idea…uh…he said certainly…he agreed. Next picture…he said…put in…I need your money….*laughs*."

An interesting phenomenon occurred in the follow-up interviews. As shown in Tables 8 (p. 89) and 9 (p. 90), comprehension increased during the PRDs. At the opening of the PRDs, there were 9 PRDs that presented the E/N scenario and 24 that presented the N/N scenario. At the closing of the PRDs, there were 4 E/N scenarios and 7 N/N scenarios. Thus, the incidence of E/E scenarios increased from 7 at the outset to 29 at the closing of the dialogues. However, during the follow-up interviews, the individual participants demonstrated even greater understanding.

Table 10 compares the results at the closing of the PRD with the results in the follow-up interviews. When the individual participants came back the next day to go through the puns with the researcher, there were only three instances when one of the members of a pair was unable to explain a pun in the interview, and two instances when both members of a pair continued to be unable to explain.

Table 10

Expertise by Pun at PRD Closing and in the Follow-up Interview

Type of pun	Pun	Closing			Follow-up		
		E/E	E/N	N/N	E/E	E/N	N/N
Lexical	1 Rock group	5	0	0	5	0	0
	2 Position	5	0	0	5	0	0
	Total Lexical	10	0	0	10	0	0
Syntactical	3 Concentrate	3	0	2	5	0	0
	4 Alligators	3	0	2	4	0	1
	Total Syntactical	6	0	4	9	0	1

Table 10 – continued

Type of pun	Pun	Closing			Follow-up		
		E/E	E/N	N/N	E/E	E/N	N/N
Morphological	5 Input/put in	3	1	1	4	1	0
	6 Attract/Subtract	1	2	2	3	1	1
	Total Morphological	4	3	3	7	2	1
Phonological	7 Clarence/clearance	5	0	0	5	0	0
	8 Drain/brain	4	1	0	4	1	0
	Total Phonological	9	1	0	9	1	0
Total		29	4	7	35	3	2

Table 11 shows the results by individual participant. There were 10 participants attempting to understand 8 puns, so there were 80 possibilities of individual comprehension. At the beginning of the PRDs, there were 7 cases when both participants understood (14 instances of individual comprehension), and 9 instances when one understood and the other did not (9 individual instances of comprehension. Thus, there were 23 individual instances of comprehension, or a rate comprehension of 28.75% at the opening of the PRDs. At the closing of the PRDs, there were 29 instances of the E/E scenario (58 instances of individual comprehension), and 4 instances of the E/N scenario (4 instances of individual comprehension). Thus, there were 62 instances of individual comprehension, or a rate of comprehension of 77.5%. At the follow-up, the comprehension rate was 91.25%

Table 11

Comprehension by Individual Participant

Participant understanding	Opening		Closing		Follow-up	
Understand	23	28.75%	62	77.5%	73	91.25%
Don't understand	57	71.25%	18	22.5%	7	8.75%
Total	80	100%	80	100%	80	100%

Of special interest are the cases in which the participant did not understand the double meaning in the closing of the PRD, but was able to state the ambiguity in the follow-up. In the closing of PRD Map # 6 (p. 62), which is Dong Un and Joanna's discussion of the *Shoe* 'input/put in' cartoon, Dong Un explains the ambiguity in Turn 34. Joanna says that she does not understand in Turn 35. In Turn 36, the researcher confirms Dong Un's explanation.

Excerpt # 21

Turn	Part	Transcript
34	D	Put in…another quarter…Next picture….picture…I don't need your idea, just put in the coin…*(motions with hand like putting money in a slot)*…just the money *(laughs)*.
35	J	*(laughs)* I don't get it.
36	R	You don't understand. OK. Well, that's OK, cause we've got to move on. But you got it. That's OK. If you don't get it today, we're going to look at them again tomorrow.

In the follow-up interview, Joanna showed that she had internalized Dong Un's explanation. It is likely that the researcher's affirmation of Dong Un's explanation confirmed the meaning for Joanna, as shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 22

(reads) 'Hey Cosmo, I need your input.' Uh, I think this one is I need your, like your help…to…like to help hearing, like for an idea, but I think he wasn't so intelligent, so he preferred him to, like, put in another quarter, like make another thing, like in order to stop doing what he asked for first, like the help he needed.

A similar situation occurred with Lenora, when she participated as the novice in the PRD about the *Dennis the Menace* 'drain/brain' cartoon. Marguerite was the expert, as she recognized the allusion to 'brain' in the phrase 'drain surgeon'. Lenora, however, never arrived at this realization, probably because she didn't know the meaning of 'drain' and her attention was devoted throughout the PRD to trying to understand what a drain is. However, in the follow-up interview, she had no difficulty in pointing out the relation between the two words, and thus the

source of the ambiguity: "Um. This is, um…the close meaning between the sound of the words brain and drain." This may be due to the fact that in the final turn of the PRD, the researcher affirmed Marguerite's interpretation when she said: "But that's right. It's the brain and the drain. Good."

As seen in the tables and in the excerpts presented here, the triadic interaction resulted in the participants increasing their understanding in nearly all of the cases. They moved from an initial comprehension rate of 28.75% to a final comprehension rate in the follow-up interview of 91.25%.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The microgenetic analysis of the transcripts of the pun related dialogues and the follow-up interviews provided the answers to the research questions posed in the present study. With regard to Research Question # 1, which sought to identify the process through which the participants in the study assisted each other in deciphering the ambiguity of the puns in the pun related dialogues, the analysis indicated that the adult learners made use of a variety of strategies to make meaning together. They completed each others' thoughts, provided affirmations for each others' comments, repeated parts of the comments of the other, asked questions, gave listening signals of attention, paraphrased and provided synonyms, and used gestures, either as substitutes for or as complements of a linguistic utterance.

The analysis of the data in relation to the second Research Question, which posed the possibility that the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns would prompt learner-generated attention to lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of language, indicated that the task prompted the participants to focus on the aspect of language that created the ambiguity in the pun. Language focused episodes were present in 79% of the pun related dialogues.

Finally, the analysis found evidence that the learners had achieved greater understanding of the ambiguity in the puns, in response to Research Question # 3, which sought indications of increased comprehension in the PRDs and in the follow-up interviews. While the rate of comprehension was 28.75% at the opening of the PRDs, it was 91.25% during the follow-up interviews. A discussion of the results, along with implications and recommendations, follows in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the triadic interaction that occurred when pairs of low advanced and advanced adult ESL learners engaged in the task of deciphering the ambiguity in a series of puns found in everyday comic strips. The purpose of the study was to ascertain if the learners were able to assist each other in coming to an understanding of the double meaning of the puns, and if the task motivated the learners to notice lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological aspects of the language. The data analysis recorded in Chapter Four of this paper reported the results of the inquiry into the research questions. The present chapter discusses the findings of each of the research questions as they relate to the literature review (Chapter Two). At the same time, this chapter explores the implications of the present study for the field of second language learning and ESL instruction. The present chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Adult Learner Assistance in Deciphering Ambiguity

The first research question for the present study asked how adult ESL learners assisted each other in attempting to decipher the ambiguity of puns in pun related dialogues (PRDs). The rationale for looking at learner assistance was rooted in the sociocultural theory (SCT) of Lev Vygotsky (2000, 1997, 1978), who proposed that learning occurs among individuals, rather than as a purely internal cognitive process. The results of the present study support Vygotsky's theory and the findings of previous research in the field of second language learning, as reviewed in Chapter Two of this document. The areas of discussion related to the first research question include: 1) shared expertise; 2) role of the researcher; 3) learning through the dialogic process; 4) using gestures; 5) supportive environment; and, 6) taking time.

Shared Expertise

The analysis of the data in Chapter Four of this paper indicated that the learners in the present study interchanged the roles of expert and novice, and assisted each other in a variety of ways during their participation in the triadic interaction. As noted by Ohta (2001), and seen also in the studies of Donato (1994) and De Guerrero & Villamil (2000), "peer assistance is often mutual, with learners helping each other, rather than expert helping novice" (Ohta 2001: 76).

Throughout the PRDs, the evidence of peer collaboration was clear, as shown in the dialogue explication in the PRD maps. In the Expert/Novice scenario, the expert led the novice to greater understanding. In PRD Map # 4 (p. 106), for example, Angela gently guided Bernice toward comprehension of the double meaning in the *Blondie* 'alligator' cartoon. When her initial explanation failed (Turns 3-5), she answered Bernice's questions (Turns 8-13), and then explained the ambiguity again, until Bernice began to see the double meaning (Turn 18). Bernice's exclamations in Turns 20-24 seemed to indicate that she was beginning to understand, and she was able to express the two meanings in Turns 26-28.

PRD Map # 5 (p. 110) shows the movement in the ZPD when two novices worked together to understand the ambiguity. Together Carolina and Hyun Ja made the connection between the plumber and the medical doctor in the *Dennis the Menace* 'brain/drain' cartoon. Carolina began to see the relation between 'drain' and 'brain' in Turn 11. With the researcher's prompt in Turn 13, Carolina saw the connection in Turn 14, and Hyun Ja recognized the 'drain/brain' relation in Turn 15.

Learner expertise was also clear from various instances in the data when the learners made meaning connections that were valid, but had not occurred to the researcher. Several of these novel associations are seen in the PRD maps included in the discussion of the results in Chapter Four. In PRD Map # 2 (p. 100), for example, Kyeung and Trina were both experts and they explained the *Dennis the Menace* 'rock group' cartoon. They had already succeeded in elucidating the ambiguity of the pun as being related to the 'rocking chair' and to the music 'rock group' when Trina came up with another connection between the two meanings, noting in Turn 17 that "…the rocking chair makes sound…band…" This was a very creative association that the researcher had not previously contemplated. The results of the analysis in the current study strongly support Donato's (1994) conclusion that it is important "to consider the learners themselves as a source of knowledge in a social context" (52).

The implications of these findings for instruction are clear. Learners are highly capable and active participants in their own and their peers' learning. They are able to construct knowledge together and to give encouragement to each other, increasing their motivation and efforts to further learning. It is advisable to center activities on the learners, with the teacher serving as a guide and source of knowledge, and not as the sole 'expert' in the classroom.

Respect for the learners' expertise goes even further than stepping back and 'allowing' the learners to work out meanings on their own. The teacher should recognize that s/he is not the sole 'expert' in the classroom, and that learners bring knowledge beyond that of the teacher. Strict control of the learning situation on the part of the instructor tends to inhibit learner creativity. In the second language learning situation, it is particularly critical for teachers to encourage creativity on the part of the students, given the importance of the creative function of language (Wittgenstein 2002; Farb 1974; Lakoff 1987; Redfern 1984; Huizinga 1970; and Cook 2000). It is important for learners to develop this function if they are to become truly proficient in the second language. The meanings given by the learners, such as that in the example above, were indications of their ability to use language creatively, in ways unforeseen by the researcher. This is not to say, however, that the instructor does not have a vital function in the classroom (the researcher is not advocating the end of the teaching profession!). In fact, the results of the current study point out the efficacy of teacher intervention, even though the objectives of the study related to learner-learner interaction. The discussion and implications of the findings related to the role of the researcher are considered next.

<u>Role of the Researcher (Teacher)</u>

Although the purpose of the present study was to examine the triadic interaction among the participants and the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns, the results indicate that the researcher's role was an important factor. The researcher intervened during the PRDs to regulate the conversation and to give encouragement. The regulation most frequently took the form of asking for the double meaning. This was a way both of ascertaining that the participants actually understood the ambiguity and obliging them to produce the language to express their understanding. This intervention occurred across all the scenarios, e.g., in the Expert/Expert scenario PRD # 2 (p. 100), when the researcher asked Trina and Kyeung to specifically identify the source of the ambiguity, which prompted Trina to explicitly state the meanings. Sometimes the regulation directed the conversation when the researcher felt that the participants were getting off track, as in PRD Map # 5 (p. 110: Turn 13), after Hyun Ja had led the conversation away from the source of the ambiguity (Turn 12).

In giving encouragement, the researcher prompted the participants to continue their efforts, and/or affirmed that they had given an appropriate interpretation. For example, in PRD # 6 (p. 112), Joanna and Dong Un had discussed for quite some time the meaning of 'input', and they looked it up in the dictionary (Turns 7-25). Finally, they came up with the appropriate definition (Turns 23-25), and the researcher confirmed that they were correct (Turn 26). The affirmation permitted the participants to continue their discussion. In the closing of the PRD, Dong Un explained the two meanings (Turn 34). The researcher validated the meanings (Turn 36). While Joanna professed not to have understood the ambiguity in the closing of the PRD (Turn 35), she was able to explain the double meaning in the follow-up interview (Excerpt # 13, p. 145). The affirmation by the researcher most likely contributed to Joanna's confidence in asserting the source of the ambiguity.

The absence of researcher intervention may have contributed to the participants' inability both to focus on the aspect of language creating the ambiguity in the syntactical puns that did not contain language focused episodes, and to comprehend the double meaning, as discussed in the section on Negative Cases in Chapter Four of this paper. Since the researcher's involvement, or lack thereof, played a role in the participants' ability to focus on the task and to comprehend the puns, a model of quadratic, rather than triadic, interaction (Figure 4) may be more appropriate in the interpretation of the findings.

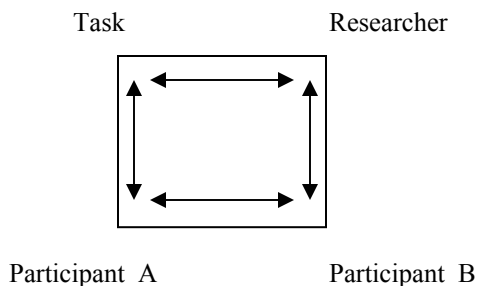Task   Researcher

Participant A   Participant B

Figure 2: *Model of Quadratic Interaction*

Among the implications of the dynamics of quadratic interaction for the second language classroom is that the instructor must be vigilant when students are engaged in group work. Intervention is important to keep the learners on task. Another inference drawn from the data is that encouragement by the teacher both motivates the learners to continue and affirms their contributions, thus building confidence. Teachers do not cause learning to occur, but they have a crucial role in guiding and motivating their students. They also have the important responsibility of developing the curriculum and activities that are most likely to create a propitious learning situation. The implications of the current study for choosing activities for the second language classroom are considered in the section of this chapter related to the second research question. The discussion of the results related to Research Question # 1 continues with a look at what the findings imply with regard to the dialogic process in second language learning.

Learning through the Dialogic Process

The data support the notion of Harré & Stearn (1995) that the process of knowledge construction can be directly observed. Through the microgenetic analysis outlined in the PRD maps in Chapter Four, the meaning making process was clear, as the learners guided each other toward increased comprehension of the double meanings of the puns. The implication for the field of second language learning is that researchers continue to analyze the process of microgenesis in the dialogic process among language learners. As noted by Ohta (2001) "the mechanisms of learner assistance have been little examined" (74). Only through continued study of learner collaboration in different contexts can the processes of second language learning be more clearly understood.

The present study supports the work of Swain (1985), Swain & Lapkin (1998), Swain, Brooks & Tocalli-Beller (2002), Ohta (2001), Donato (1994), De Guerrero & Villamil (2000), Brooks, Donato & McGlone (1997), and others, the language learning process involves both input and output. Active use of the language plays an important role in first language learning, as shown in the studies of Weir (1962), Chukovsky (1968), and Kuczaj (1983). Hatch (1978), Peck (1980), and Broner & Tarone (2001) noticed that children learning a second language engage in playful production that helps them to practice the meanings and forms of the new language. The implication for the field of second language learning is that both input and output are necessary for effective second language learning to occur.

For instruction, the implications include the provision of ample opportunities for learners to engage in creative output, as well as being exposed to input of various kinds, including language containing ambiguity. In responding to the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns, each pair of learners created unique responses, even though the task was the same. While there were common patterns in the PRDs, these patterns played out in different ways, as shown in the PRD maps. The dialogues belie the notion that language is an information exchange system, as noted by Van Lier (2002). Throughout the dialogues, the participants not only exchanged information, but engaged in the 'act of conception' (Huizinga 1970: 47). The learners constructed language and ideas together through the assistance they gave each other in completing thoughts, supplying synonyms, and encouraging each other. At the same time, the PRDs gave evidence of language as a "social phenomenon" (Rommetveit 1979: 93). The learners were able to create language through their interaction, whether they were developing joint explanations in the Expert/Expert scenarios, or one participant was explaining the

ambiguity to the other in the Expert/Novice scenarios, or the two participants were working out the meaning together in the Novice/Novice scenarios.

In looking for the double meanings, the learners used language creatively as they collaborated in the task. The implication for the classroom is that learners be given opportunities to engage in creative language activity in social interaction. Grammar drills and staged dialogues may serve to make certain structures and fixed phrases more automatic, but language learning requires the ability to produce creative language, especially at the more advanced levels. Class projects and writing poetry are examples of ways to activate the students' interest and capacity for language creativity.

The microgenetic analysis of the data from the current study indicated that creative and active use of the language included not only utterances, but also gestures. The relevance of gestures in the language learning process is considered next.

Using Gestures

As they constructed meaning in the PRDs, the participants in the present study relied not only on spoken language, but also on gestures. As Wittgenstein (2002) suggested in his discussion of language games, meaning depends on context, intonation, facial expressions and gestures, as well as on the words used (8-9). In the PRDs, there is evidence of gestures being used both to complement and to substitute for words. In PRD Map # 1 (p. 97), Angela used a gesture to indicate the idea of a better position at work. Bernice was able to interpret the gesture, and provide the word 'higher'. Marguerite helped Lenora understand that the chair in the *Dennis the Menace* 'rock group' cartoon was a 'rocking chair' by complementing the use of the term with the gesture of rocking (PRD Map # 3, p. 103). In both cases, the 'listeners' appropriated the gesture in their response to the 'speakers'. As noted by McNeill (1992), gestures and speech are "different sides of a single underlying mental process" (1).

That gestures played a prominent role in the meaning making in the triadic interaction suggests the efficacy of face-to-face interaction in the language learning process. Personal contact between learners and among learners and instructor allows for the language to be used in all its dimensions, including gestures and facial expressions. Another implication for instruction is to include discussion and illustration of common gestures in the language being taught so that learners can communicate better with native speakers. In addition, learners could demonstrate and discuss common gestures from their own languages and cultures to compare the use of gestures across cultures.

Teachers may also want to consider how they use gesture in the classroom to promote learning. As seen in the data from the current study, the use of gesture was highly effective when a participant complemented an explanation with a gesture. At other times, learners were able to transmit a meaning through the use of substitutional gestures. Gestures offer a visual representation that allows the learner to understand language through another dimension. By consciously incorporating gestures in the classroom, teachers can promote understanding and enhance meaning making, at the same time they satisfy their own and their students' frustrated aspirations to appear on the stage or in movies!

When teachers and students feel free to express themselves through the use of gestures, it often indicates that a supportive environment has been created in the classroom. The data from the current study suggest that an accepting atmosphere is conducive to the learning process.

Supportive Environment

One of the major characteristics observed in the analysis of the PRDs was the encouragement that the participants gave each other, whether they were developing a joint explanation together (Scenario # 1), one learner was explaining the pun to the other (Scenario # 2), or the two members of the dyad struggled to comprehend the ambiguity (Scenario # 3). The success of the triadic interaction rested in part on the rapport between the participants (and the researcher), as well as on the high motivation of these particular ESL learners. They approached the task with enthusiasm, and felt no intimidation in their relation to each other and to the researcher. As pointed out in Chapter Three of this document, the participants were accustomed to taking part in pair and group activities, and were well-known to one another because of being together in the intensive English program for five hours a day during several weeks at the time of the study.

The results bear out the notion in the field of second language learning (Krashen 1982) that the affective factor is of great importance for efficient learning to take place. The implication for the classroom is that teachers consider not only the material to be covered, but also the sensibilities of the learners. The formation of a non-threatening, respectful, participative environment in the classroom promotes learning, even if what is learned is not always what the teacher had intended. As Larsen-Freeman (1997), cited in Chapter One of this paper, put it: "I am constantly reminding students, audiences, and myself that teaching does not cause learning" (162). Rather, the role of the teacher is to create an environment in which the learners feel comfortable and motivated to enhance their own learning process.

The comfort level in the classroom results in part from the instructor's willingness to allow the students to move at their own pace. The final factor to be considered in the discussion of the results and implications of the first research question is time.

Taking Time

An important feature in the learner assistance that was observed by Ohta in her 2001 study was time. There was ample evidence in the current study that learners needed time to work out the double meanings of the puns, as noted in the analysis in Chapter Four. Taking time, by repeating the utterances of their peers, reading the captions several times, describing the illustrations, being silent as the other talked, and consulting the dictionary, may be evidence that, during the collaborative dialogue, the learners not only construct meaning together, but also use language as a "thinking tool" (Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997: 38).

The results of the current study support the notion of allowing the learners time to work out meanings for themselves without precipitating the interaction. Sometimes it is good for the teacher to step back and let the learners control their own learning at their own pace. At the same time, the teacher needs to be sensitive to the moments when intervention is necessary to assist the learners when they become confused or when they get too far off task.

The results of Research Question # 1 generated discussion and implications regarding ways in which the participants in the current study assisted each other in making meaning through the dialogic process. It included considerations related to the shared expertise between the members of the dyads, the role of the researcher in the development of the PRDs, the observation of learning in the dialogic process, the use of gestures in meaning making, the role of

the supportive environment in which the study took place, and the propensity of the participants to take their time during the activity.

The second research question investigated the efficacy of the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns for promoting learner-generated attention to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language. The implications of the findings of the present study regarding Research Question # 2 are presented in the following section.

Learner-generated Attention to Aspects of Language

The second research question of the present study considered the evidence related to learner-generated attention to phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language in language focused episodes. Prior research (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis 2002; Swain & Lapkin 2001; Doughty & Williams 1998; Schmidt 1995) has shown that attention to form enhances language learning. The results of the present study suggest that the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns is a novel and efficacious way to promote learner-generated attention to the forms of language in a way that highlights the form/meaning relation. As shown in Table 6 (p. 133), the learners attended to the aspect of language that created the ambiguity of the pun in 35 of the 40 PRDs.

The efficacy of the task conforms to the intricate relation among the three elements of language: form, meaning, and use, as conceived by Cook (2000). These elements "exert a dynamic reciprocal influence upon each other" (190), resulting in a back and forth movement among linguistic form, semantic meaning and pragmatic use. Since the double meaning of the puns depends directly on the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language, the learners were compelled to consider the formal properties of language along with the meaning and use.

Table 7 (p. 134) indicates the importance of attending to the linguistic aspect that produced the double meaning. The 5 PRDs that did not contain language focused episodes (LFEs) were in the Novice/Novice scenario. Of these, there was only one case (20%) in which the participants arrived at an understanding of the ambiguity at the end of the PRD. In contrast, of the 19 PRDs in the N/N scenario that contained LFEs, both participants achieved understanding in 14 cases, or 74% of the cases.

While this study represents a small number of learners in a specific situation, the results support the work of Swain & Lapkin (2001), Schmidt (1995), Long & Robinson (1998), Leow (2000), and Williams (1999). Focus on the linguistic aspects of language promotes learning. Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis (2002) observed that when students initiated focus on form episodes, there was significant uptake, while the same was not true with teacher-initiated episodes. In the current study, the learners attended to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language in a very large majority of the cases. Because the ambiguity in the puns demands that learners attend to the aspect of language that creates the double meaning, the use of puns in the classroom is an excellent way to promote learner-generated attention to the form/meaning/use relation that forms the essence of language.

Most of the research and practice related to focus on form (Leow 2000; Doughty & Varela 1998; Williams & Evans 1998; White 1998; Van Patten 1990) has concerned the use of texts manipulated by teachers to draw learners' attention to specific grammatical forms.

However, the three elements of language, as noted by Cook (2000), cannot be separated. Language learning is most efficient when learners are able to seamlessly draw the connection. Puns are a way of allowing them to see the relation, since understanding puns requires the learners to see form, meaning, and use all at once. Puns are, at the same time, an example of language play and the creative function of language. Engagement in the dialogic process to decipher the ambiguity in the puns embodies the social interaction function of language, which, in turn, involves the cognitive function, since through internalization, learning proceeds from the interpsychological to the intrapsychological space. Thus, the task of deciphering the double meaning of puns is a microcosm of language proficiency, since true proficiency in a language requires the ability to link form, meaning, and use, as well as the ability to manipulate language in all of its functions: social, cognitive and creative. The implication for language teaching professionals is that they include in curricula and lesson plans tasks that involve learners in working together to detect the ambiguities in puns.

The task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns was difficult, even for the low advanced and advanced learners who participated in the present study. That the Expert/Expert scenario presented itself in only 7 of the 40 PRDs is evidence of the level of complexity of the task. Because they had to work hard to decipher the ambiguity, the participants engaged in productive language output, particularly in the 33 PRDs in which one or both of the learners did not comprehend the double meaning of the puns on the first reading of the comic strips. The relative length of the PRDs attests to this fact. Whereas the Expert/Expert scenarios resulted in an average of 15.3 turns, the Expert/Novice scenario averaged 25.3 turns and the Novice/Novice scenario in 30.3 turns. The implication is that teachers plan activities that are cognitively demanding so that learners have to stretch their capabilities to produce language that may be above their current level of proficiency. In this way, they help each other to move from their actual to their potential developmental level, in concordance with Vygotsky's conception of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978).

The current study also indicates that the level of difficulty depends on the particular aspect of language that creates the ambiguity in the pun. This finding concords with that of the previous Kaplan/Lucas (2001) investigation that found that the easiest type of pun to understand was the lexical pun, followed by the phonological, syntactical, and morphological, as shown in Table 12. The rate of comprehension after the conversations between the students in the previous study was measured on a 3-point scale.

Table 12

Comprehension of the Puns in the Kaplan/Lucas Study (2001)

Type of Pun	Final Comprehension
Lexical	2.24
Phonological	2.12
Syntactical	2.05
Morphological	2.00

The results of the current study presented a similar pattern. There were seven cases in which a participant was unable to explain the ambiguity in a pun after the follow-up interview (Table 11, p. 144). All of the participants were able to explain the ambiguity in both of the lexical puns, one participant failed to decipher a phonological pun, two participants were unable to explain the ambiguity in a syntactical pun, and four participants failed to comprehend the ambiguity in a morphological pun (Table 8, p. 138). Thus, the hierarchy of difficulty in the present study was consistent with that of the previous study (Kaplan/Lucas 2001).

Implications for classroom practice that may be drawn from the previous and current studies conducted by the researcher are to consider including more work on the morphological and syntactical aspects of language, especially when these aspects are essential to the comprehension of a text, or to the expression of an idea.

The results of the current study with regard to the second research question found evidence of learner-generated attention to phonological, morphological, syntactical and lexical aspects of language in language focused episodes during the pun related dialogues. The task of deciphering the ambiguity in the puns was effective in drawing attention to the various aspects of language. The collaborative dialogue in which the participants engaged provided the opportunity for knowledge construction about the double meaning in the puns. The next section of this paper examines the findings of the present study that refer to the third research question, which considered whether the triadic interaction facilitated greater comprehension on the part of the participants.

Reaching Clearer Understandings

The final research question of the current study sought evidence that the learners had a clearer understanding of the double meaning of the puns at the end of the triadic interaction than they had at the beginning. As seen in Tables 9, (p. 139), 10 (p 143), and 11 (p. 144), there were strong indications that comprehension had increased. At the opening of the PRDs, there were only 7 instances of the Expert/Expert scenario, and 24 instances of the Novice/Novice scenario. After the discussion of the ambiguity, these numbers changed significantly, with 29 instances of the Expert/Expert scenario and only 7 of the Novice/Novice scenario (Table 9, p. 139) at the closing of the PRD. The results were even more dramatic the next day in the follow-up interview, when the number of Expert/Expert scenarios increased to 35 (Table 10, p. 143). The rate of comprehension increased from 28.75% in the opening of the PRDs to 77.5% at the closing of the PRDs to 91.25% (Table 11, p. 144) in the follow-up interviews.

Participation in the triadic interaction, consisting of the collaborative dialogue between the learners and the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns, facilitated comprehension. A further observation is seen in the increase in comprehension from the closing of the PRDs to the follow-up interviews. Although no further contact was made with the participants between the end of the dialogues until the interview the next day, there was a further 13.75% increase in comprehension. Just as the learners needed time during the collaborative dialogues to process information, so, too, did time play a factor in eventual comprehension. Perhaps they talked about the puns on their own after the initial dialogues with the researcher, or perhaps they processed internally the information they gleaned from the dialogic process, in some instances aided by the confirmation of the double meaning by the researcher. For example,

in PRD Map # 6 (p. 112), the researcher confirmed Dong Un's explanation of the *Shoe* 'input/output' cartoon in the final turn of the PRD (Turn 36). Joanna, who had stated that she did not understand the ambiguity in Turn 35 of the PRD, was able to explain the double meaning in the follow-up interview (Excerpt # 13, p. 145).

It is possible that Joanna's ability to explain the ambiguity in the follow-up interview illustrates the process of internalization, defined by Vygotsky (1978) as a transformation through which "an external activity is reconstructed and begins to occur internally" (56). The dialogue explications in the PRD maps show how the dialogic process between two learners often resulted in one or both of the participants achieving increased understanding. For example, PRD Map # 4 (p. 106) begins with Angela indicating that she understood the ambiguity, while Bernice remarked that she did not see it (Turns 1-3). As Angela explained the double meaning, Bernice gave very clear signals that she was internalizing the information (Turns 18, 20, 24), and in Turns 26 and 28 was able to describe the ambiguity herself.

The success of the learners in arriving at the understanding of the double meaning of the puns after participating in the triadic interaction supports the evidence from previous studies (Ohta 2001; De Guerrero & Villamil 2000; Brooks, Donato & McGlone 1997; Swain & Lapkin 1998; Platt & Brooks 1994), that second language learning occurs in the dialogic practices of learners. The previous study conducted by the researcher (Kaplan & Lucas 2001) reached the same conclusion. Although the Kaplan/Lucas study was based on a cognitive theoretical framework, the evidence from the data analysis obliged the researchers to conclude that the interaction between the participants was an important factor in their eventual comprehension of the ambiguity in the puns. The evidence corresponds to the sociocultural view that learning moves from the interpsychological (social) to the intrapsychological (individual) space through the process of internalization. The current study adds to the growing body of evidence supporting the application of SCT to the field of second language learning.

The internalization process requires time for the learners to incorporate the new knowledge into their mental schema. The current study accords with the observations of Ohta (2001) and of Brooks, Donato & McGlone (1997) that learners take time as they internalize knowledge about language. The intervals during and after the dialogic process in which the learners were quiet or repeated utterances indicated that cognitive processes were at work. The implications for classroom practice include allowing students intervals of time to respond to questions, providing opportunities for students to think before they have to produce language, and allowing time for cognitive processes to operate by recycling material over a period of several days.

As seen in the findings of the current study with regard to the third research question, the task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns facilitated the learners' language development, especially when the learners attended to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of the language. Language development occurred through the triadic interaction that included collaborative dialogue and a task that motivated the learners to notice and attend to the aspect of language that created the ambiguity in the pun. An implication for classroom practice is that more activities based on ambiguity should be employed, especially at the advanced levels, since the consideration of ambiguous texts promotes learner-generated attention to form/meaning connections in language.

While a consideration of the reactions of the learners was beyond the scope of the present study, several participants offered unsolicited remarks regarding their participation at the end of the follow-up interview. Angela made an allusion to the process of internalization when she

noted: "It's like you exercise your brain as you are learning….Words with different meanings, double meanings." Trina hinted to the efficacy of the task, when she remarked: "It's better with cartoons, because you laugh, you learn, you get the point quicker. Have they tried to teach with cartoons?"

As seen in the preceding discussion, the results of the current study support the findings of previous research in the field of second language learning reviewed in Chapter Two of this paper. The data indicate that the learners were able to achieve greater understanding of the ambiguity in the puns as they engaged in the dialogic process, thus corroborating the evidence from previous studies conducted within the sociocultural framework that language learning occurs through collaborative dialogue. The concept of language as a social, cognitive, and creative system was also borne out in the data that revealed that the participants engaged in unique and creative exchanges through which language was created in use. The task of deciphering the double meaning of the puns motivated the learners to notice the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language. When the learners attended to the language in language focused episodes, they achieved greater understanding than in those cases in which LFEs were absent. The findings are encouraging, and suggest further research within the theoretical framework adopted for the current study. Recommendations for future investigation are presented next.

Recommendations for Future Research

The avenues for future research following this study are broad and many. Qualitative methodology requires the in-depth investigation of small numbers in varied contexts. The approach to second language learning advocated by Swain (1985), Donato (1994), Brooks, Donato & McGlone (1997), and Ohta (2001), based on Vygotsky's (2000, 1997, 1978) sociocultural theory, suggests that language learning processes occur through collaborative dialogue. By its very nature, the qualitative study is limited in the number of participants and the context in which it takes place. Thus, there is a need for many more context-based studies that explore the ways in which learners assist each other through dialogue. Since the present study examined language learning in an instructional setting, the recommendations are limited to instructed second language learning.

The current study analyzed the triadic interaction of five pairs of adult ESL students in an intensive English program on a U.S. university campus. The task was performed as a 'pull-out' activity, with the pairs drawn from a listening/speaking class during the hours of instruction at the institute. The participants were of low-advanced and advanced fluency. They were also highly motivated to learn English because they planned to study in the United States or they needed the language for career advancement. Further research could include different populations in different contexts, including classroom-based investigations with children, adolescents, and adults. It would be interesting to investigate whether less-motivated groups engage as readily in the triadic interaction. Researchers could look at the dynamics between larger groups, as well as pairs, to see how three or four learners assist each other, as in the research by the qualified peer who reviewed the data of the current study. She analyzed the interaction among the learners in groups of three in the classroom setting.

Studies might also include learners at different levels of proficiency in order to see if the same types of assistance prevail. The results regarding the amount of intervention by the researcher suggest that the role of the instructor in the classroom at the different levels of proficiency be further examined. At the same time, the ability of the learners to decipher the ambiguity of the puns through the triadic interaction, and their creativity in doing so when they were left to their own devices, suggests that researchers investigate the ways in which teachers can foster autonomy among learners.

The rotating roles of expert and novice in the dialogic process show how the learners bring different strengths and weaknesses to the learning process. Each dialogue was unique, not only because of the knowledge that each participant brought to it, but also because of the personality characteristics, learning styles, cultural background, and L1 of each of the participants. While these factors were beyond the scope of the present study, there is a rich mine for future research in the classroom in seeking the way in which personality characteristics, learning styles, cultural background and L1 influence language learning, and in the way that different groupings of learners affect the interaction that facilitates learning.

The observations regarding the amount of time the learners spent in reading the captions, describing the illustrations, and repeating the comments of the other indicate that learners in the classroom may need adequate time to process information. Brooks, Donato & McGlone (1997) suggested that when learners take their time in this way, they are using language as a 'thinking tool'. The idea of language as a thinking tool accords with the conception of language as a cognitive and creative, as well as an interactional, system. Looking at the ways in which language serves a cognitive function is another avenue for further research.

A striking observation made possible by the use of videotapes in the current study was the prominent use of gestures to convey meaning. The participants employed gesture both as a supplement to linguistic utterances and as a substitute for language. When one member of a pair used a gesture, it was often appropriated by the other, in the same way that the learners repeated each other's words. Given the central role that gestures played in the meaning making process in the current study, further research is called for. An area that was beyond the scope of the present study is the role of different types of gestures in meaning making. The researcher of the current study limited the classification of the gestures employed by the participants to complementary and substitutional gestures. It would be interesting to revisit the data to categorize the gestures according to the taxonomy suggested by Krauss, Chen & Gottesman (2000), based on the work of McNeill (1992, 2000). The authors identified lexical, symbolic, deictic, and motor gestures, each of which has a function in communication, tension reduction, and lexical retrieval (264). In addition to reviewing the data from the current study, further studies in different contexts could also incorporate a consideration of the various types of gestures.

The role of attention in language learning has been amply investigated (Doughty & Varela 1998; White 1998; Van Patten 1990; Qi & Lapkin 2001; Samuda 2001; Lightbown & Spada 1990). However, the studies have defined 'attention' as the noticing of specific grammatical forms pointed out by the teacher. One of the objectives of the current study was to identify a task that would promote learner-generated attention to linguistic forms. However, the idea of grammatical forms as opposed to meaning was discarded, because language is an amalgam of meaning, form, and use. The results of the present study suggest that future research investigate the way in which the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language unite form, meaning, and use to produce the social, creative, and cognitive functions of

language, and how second language learners can become proficient in language in all of its functions.

The findings of the current study that support the results of the Kaplan/Lucas (2001) investigation with regard to the level of difficulty of the different types of puns suggest another area for future research. How do learners come to grips with the various linguistic aspects they encounter in a second language? What is the relation between the difficulty level and the characteristics of their first language? How can teachers present the intertwining aspects of language in the most efficient way?

Language play has been cited as an important element in child first and second language learning. Adults also engage in language play. The results of the current study suggest that when students engage in the analysis of one type of language play – the pun – they attend to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of language, and that, through collaborative dialogue, arrive at an increased understanding of the puns. Further research into the role of language play in second language learning is of interest. On one hand, studies could center on tasks involving different types of language play, such as riddles, fantasies, fictions, and games, to see how learners at different levels of proficiency deal with these examples of creative language use. On the other hand, classroom studies of children and adults learning a second language could provide indications of whether learners themselves engage in spontaneous language play in their use of the language in the classroom, as suggested by Ohta (2001).

The current study was based on a previous investigation by the researcher and a colleague (Kaplan & Lucas 2001), which was inspired by the authors' interest in the role of humor in the classroom. The present study viewed the puns in the task as examples of language play, and did not explore the issue of humor. However, as noted in Chapter One of this paper, humor is an important element in language learning, given that it is an integral part of all cultures and languages. As they deciphered the ambiguity in the puns, the participants in the current study were also often able to see the humor that the puns created in the comic strips. Further research could revisit the ways in which second language learners come to an understanding and appreciation of humor in the target language, and how that appreciation influences their language abilities and cultural integration.

As noted above, some of the participants also commented spontaneously on their reaction to their participation in the triadic interaction. It would be beneficial if future studies as outlined in this section incorporated a consideration of the learners' perspectives regarding the dialogic process and the task selected for the investigation. The participants' comments would provide an important perspective in the analysis of the data and the understanding of the implications for the field of second language learning and for classroom practices.

Recommendations for future research include the selection of microgenetic analysis as an excellent methodology for tracking the moment-by-moment development of language competence. The close engagement with the data required for microgenetic analysis allows the researcher to discover the many factors involved in the language learning process. Through careful examination of a variety of learning situations by many different researchers, the field of second language learning will be greatly enriched, with potentially important consequences for learners and teachers alike.

Conclusion

The current study analyzed the triadic interaction between pairs of low-advanced and advanced ESL learners as they engaged in the task of deciphering the double meaning of a series of puns found in everyday comic strips. The purpose of the study was to discover the ways in which the learners assisted each other in coming to greater comprehension and to see if the task motivated the learners to attend to the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical aspects of the language. There were clear indications that the triadic interaction resulted in increased understanding and in learner-focus on the aspects of the language that created the ambiguity in the puns. As they did so, they constructed meaning together by completing each other's thoughts, providing affirmations, repeating, asking questions, giving signals of attention, providing synonyms, and using gestures. Further studies of learners in different contexts are needed to confirm or contradict these manners of assistance, and to suggest others that the researcher of the present study may not have found.

The task promoted learner-generated attention to the different aspects of language. The researcher encourages further research into other tasks that may have the same characteristic of uniting form, meaning, and use, so that learners have the opportunity to learn a language in all of its functions. Finally, the role of language play in both first and second language acquisition is a largely untapped avenue of investigation that can serve to test to Cook's (2000) notion that language play may be the first function of language.

PUNS

Lexical

(Dennis the Menace) In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and his grandfather are sitting in a rocking chair. Dennis says: *Look Mom! We're a rock group.*

(Blondie) In the first frame, Dagwood comes in the door and tells Blondie: *The boss asked me to try out a new position at work today.* Blondie replies: *Oh, that's great news, honey!* In the second frame, Dagwood hangs up his coat and Blondie asks: *What's the new position?* In the final frame, Dagwood says to a startled Blondie: *Sitting at my desk with both feet on the floor!*

Syntactical

(Shoe)   In this two-frame cartoon, Cosmo is in the gym with a trainer, who says: *Not bad for the first day. Tomorrow, concentrate on your back.* In the second frame, Cosmo is lying on a sofa at home, reading a newspaper. The thought goes through his head: *One, two, three...One, two, three.*

(Blondie) In the first frame, Blondie and Dagwood are sitting in chairs; Elmo is lying on the floor, coloring a picture. Blondie asks: *What are you studying these days, Elmo?* In the second frame, Elmo looks up and says: *We're on the state of Florida. Our teacher said they use alligators to make shoes, belts, and handbags.* In the third frame, Elmo continues: *Boy, talk about using cheap labor.* Blondie and Dagwood share a surprised look.

Morphological

(Shoe) In this two-frame cartoon, Shoe leaves his desk and says to Cosmo: *Hey, Cosmo, I need your input.* Cosmo replies: *Certainly.* In the second frame, Shoe stands in front of a coffee machine and tells Cosmo: *Put in another quarter.*

(Shoe) In the first frame, Cosmo is saying goodbye to a woman at the door of her home, and says: *Sure, we have our differences, but opposites attract.* In the next frame, the girlfriend slams the door. In the last frame, Cosmo stands outside the door and says: *Or is it subtract?*

Phonological

(Dennis the Menace) In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and Joey see a mother and child walking down the street. Dennis says to Joey: *That's Clarence. I think his Mom named him after a sale.*

(Dennis the Menace) In the single frame cartoon, Dennis and Joey are watching a man walk away from a truck that says 'Acme Plumbing: 24 Hour Service.' The man is carrying a tool box and a plunger. Dennis tells Joey: *He says he's a **drain** surgeon.*

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

You will work with a partner to try to understand some comic strips. The humor in comics in English often comes from expressions that have more than one meaning. Please read each comic strip. Tell your partner if you understand it and think it's funny. If you both think the comic strip is funny, explain it to me and tell me why it's funny.

If neither of you understand the comic strip, try to discover together the double meaning that might create the humorous situation. You can use the dictionary provided for you. If you find the double meaning, explain it to me. If you cannot understand, tell me that you don't understand.

If one of you understands the double meaning and the other doesn't, the one who understands the joke should help the other to discover the double meaning that creates the humorous situation.

If the person who didn't understand in the beginning comes to an understanding, please explain what you understand.

Use the context of the comic strip to help you find the humor.

At the end of your conversation, explain the double meaning of the puns to me. Be very specific about the two meanings of the expressions.

There are 8 comic strips. You have as much time as you need to discuss the puns.

APPENDIX C

FSU HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE APPROVAL LETTER

Florida State
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President
For Research
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2763
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM
Human Subjects Committee

Date: 10/20/2003

Teresa Lucas
Mc 4170

Dept.: **Middle and Secondary Education**

From: David Quadagno, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
        Adult ESL Learner Assistance and Focus on Form in Deciphering the Meaning on Puns

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal
referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human
Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be exempt per 45 CFR § 46.101(b) 2 and has been
approved by an accelerated review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to
weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk
and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be
required.

If the project has not been completed by **10/19/2004** you must request renewed approval for continuation
of the project.

You are advised that any change in protocol in this project must be approved by resubmission of the project
to the Committee for approval. Also, the principal investigator must promptly report, in writing, any
unexpected problems causing risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded
that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the
department, and should review protocols of such investigations as often as needed to insure that the project
is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Protection from Research Risks. The Assurance
Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Dr Frank Brooks
HSC No. 2003.537

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF CONSENT

Dear CIES student:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr. Frank Books in the Department of Middle and Secondary Education of the College of Education at Florida State University. I am doing a research study about learner assistance in the ESL classroom and I would like you to take part in this study.

The study will be done in your classroom. I will place a video camera and tape recorder in the classroom. You are invited to participate in the activity for 20 minutes one day after classes have ended.

You will participate only if you want to. Your participation will not in any way affect your evaluation at the end of the session. The results of this study may be published, but your name will not be used. A pseudonym will be used in place of your name in any discussions or papers regarding this research.

There are no risks that I can foresee or anything that will make you uncomfortable if you agree to participate in this study. The benefits of participating in the study will be that you will have practice in trying to understand the double meaning of the puns and that you will have the opportunity to view the videotapes with the researcher and observe yourself as you are speaking in English. You will be able to identify effective strategies for learning and for helping your classmates to learn. In addition, you will be giving researchers and educators valuable information on how ESL teachers can improve vocabulary instruction in the ESL classroom.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please call me at 644-4797 or e-mail me at tlucas26@yahoo.com.   You may reach Dr. Frank Brooks at 644-3240 or by e-mail (fbrooks@garnet.acns.fsu.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a subject in this research, you may contact the FSU Human Subjects Committee at the Office of Research at 644-8673 or by e-mail (phaire@mailer.fsu.edu).

Sincerely,

Teresa Lucas

I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will be tape recorded and videotaped by the researcher. These tapes will be kept by the researcher in a locked filing cabinet at CIES.   I understand that only the researcher will have access to these tapes and that they will be destroyed by November 30, 2013.

_____ (signature) _____ (date)

Name: _____

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Teresa Lucas was born in St. Louis, Missouri on July 26, 1947. She graduated Summa cum Laude from Mother McAuley High School in Chicago Illinois, and then attended St. Xavier College and the University of Illinois, graduating Magna cum Laude in German Language and Literature from the latter in 1970. She received her Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Illinois in 1973. She lived in Caracas, Venezuela for 30 years, where she taught at several private and public universities, and was active in professional organizations. She returned to the United States in 2000 to pursue doctoral studies at Florida State University. This dissertation culminates her program.