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**Title:** The Negotiation of Meaning by Advanced ESL Learners: The Effects of Individual Learner Factors and Task Type

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# THE NEGOTIATION OF MEANING BY ADVANCED ESL LEARNERS:

# THE EFFECTS OF INDIVIDUAL LEARNER FACTORS AND TASK TYPE

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
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# ABSTRACT

During the last two decades, SLA researchers have given much attention to investigating the role that negotiated interaction plays in second language learning. Empirical research has demonstrated that the negotiation of meaning that occurs when communication difficulties arise may provide learners with opportunities to receive comprehensible input, provide feedback on form and meaning, and assist them in their production of modified output. While the short-term and long-term effects of negotiation on SLA are currently being examined, there is considerable evidence to suggest that the negotiation of meaning can facilitate the language learning process.

From a pedagogical perspective, numerous studies have shown the effect that individual learner, task and context variables can have on promoting opportunities for negotiation. While some attention has been given to the effects of individual learner variables like ethnicity, gender and pairing, and to task and contextual variables on L2 negotiation, their effect on advanced learners has been little researched.

This study examined the effect of three individual learner variables (ethnicity, gender and pairing) and certain communication tasks (free conversation and decision-making) on the way in which advanced ESL learners (Japanese and Korean males and females in monoethnic and interethnic dyads) repair communication problems and use the process of negotiation in their language learning.

The study revealed that task was the only variable to affect the amount of negotiated repair: free conversation produced more negotiation than the decision-

making tasks. While monoethnic dyads provided more target language feedback than interethnic dyads, monoethnic and male dyads modified fewer trigger utterances than interethnic and female dyads. Korean subjects, particularly Korean males, modified more of their utterances when responding to feedback than the other subject groupings.

Factors that may have accounted for the limited effect of the three individual learner variables include the insufficiently differentiated sociocultural and sociolinguistic background of the subjects and their perception of appropriate behaviour in L2 interactions. On the other hand, motivational and contextual factors appear to have resulted in the significant effect produced by the task variable.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **AE(s)** | American speaker(s) of English |
| **Cat(s)** | Categories |
| **CLT** | Communicative language teaching |
| **CofP** | Community of practice |
| **DM1** | Decision-making task 1 |
| **DM2** | Decision-making task 2 |
| **EFL** | English as a foreign language |
| **ESL** | English as a second language |
| **FC** | Free conversation |
| **FLA** | First language acquisition |
| **IELTS** | International English language testing system |
| **JE(s)** | Japanese speaker(s) of English |
| **JET** | Japan exchange of teaching |
| **JJ(s)** | Japanese speaker(s) of Japanese |
| **L1** | First language |
| **L2** | Second language |
| **NNS(s)** | Non-native speaker(s) |
| **NS(s)** | Native speaker(s) |
| **SLA** | Second language acquisition |
| **TEFL** | Teaching English as a foreign language |