

“How do you become a samurai?”:  
Shifting Expert-Novice Relationships in ESL Chat Room Conversation  
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## Introduction

Over the past decade, researchers have become increasingly interested in examining the effects that computer mediated communication (CMC) may have on the development of a second language in the classroom setting. Early studies looked at the use of e-mail, discussion boards, and synchronous chat in classroom settings to facilitate language learning (see for examples, Warschauer, 1995, 1996, 1997). With the emerging demands of distance learning via the Internet (Cohen and Brawer, 2003; Levin, 2001), researchers have recently begun to examine the use of synchronous computer chat (SCC<sup>1</sup>) as an effective tool to promote language learning through online classroom activities (Kitade, 2000; Smith, 2001; Freiermuth, 2001; Lam, 2003; Paver, 2003).

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<sup>1</sup> Given the possibility of confusion between Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Web-based chat programs, SCC is the term that I will use throughout this paper for any Synchronous Computer-mediated Chat program, either IRC or Web-based.

This study hopes to contribute to the latter body of research by examining the possibilities for language socialization through the use of SCC in an English as a second language (ESL) classroom. In particular, this study examines ways in which expert and novice relationships are constituted by students and English tutor in a small online community of ESL learners. In addition, this study examines ways in which these roles may shift among the participants throughout the emerging interaction.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is centered in language socialization theory of language development. As such, the study draws heavily on the associated concepts of expert-novice relationships in interaction and co-construction of meaning in interaction. In the sections that follow, these notions are briefly discussed in turn.

### *Language Socialization*

When people enter new and unfamiliar social communities, they often become engaged in a process of learning, understanding, using, and acquiring the cultural and linguistic norms of those communities. This process of cultural socialization and language acquisition constitutes the notion of language socialization as discussed by Schieffelin and Ochs (1986, 1996), and Ochs (1996). As Schieffelin and Ochs explain,

Language socialization has as its goal understanding how persons are socialized to become competent members of social groups and the role of language in this process. The study of language socialization, therefore, concerns two major facets of socialization: socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language. (1996: 252)

Following from this view, culture and language are seen as inextricably linked, with language being the means through which culture is expressed and perpetuated by community members. One of the primary goals of

language socialization research is to better understand and describe this process (Ochs, 1996; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1996).

### *Expert-Novice Relationships*

A common task of language socialization research is the examination of expert and novice relationships in social interaction. Originally applied to child language development, the concept of expert-novice has been extended to the realm of second language development (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1996; Ohta, 1996). In this context, the roles of “expert” and “novice” are not seen as rigidly fixed categories. Instead, roles of expert and novice are constructed between community participants throughout evolving interaction. Furthermore, participant statuses as expert and novice continually shift as interaction proceeds. According to Jacoby and Gonzales (1991: 152),

In some moments of interaction an expert may be merely one who is momentarily constituted as “more-knowing” (rather than “all-knowing”), while a novice may be one who is momentarily constituted as “less-knowing” (rather than “not-knowing”).

The goal of examining expert and novice relationships in interaction is to understand how and at what points in interaction these statuses emerge.

### *Co-construction*

Another notion central to language socialization, and closely associated with the notion of expert-novice relationships, is that of co-construction as described by Jacoby and Ochs (1995). Jacoby and Ochs define co-construction as

*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. (1995: 171, emphasis in original)

As with the notion of expert-novice relationships, concepts related to this idea of co-construction have also been applied to second language research from origins in child language development research, most notably the phenomenon of foreigner talk (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995), collaborative learning activities such as role play (Ohta, 1996), and collaborative theory (Murakami, 2001).

### *Research Questions*

To examine the roles that the notions of expert-novice and co-construction may play in the process of language socialization through the use of SCC in online classroom chat activities, the following research questions are investigated:

- 1) In what ways are expert and novice relationships constituted throughout the interaction?
- 2) How do participants co-construct meaning through their roles as expert and novice?

## Literature Review

There is an increasing body of literature into the sociological and linguistic features and functions of SCC. Early sociological studies examined the socialization of participants into chat communities (Surratt, 1996; Wellman & Gulia, 1999) and the role that gender plays in chat communities (Soukup, 1999; Bowker & Liu, 2001). Linguistic studies have examined linguistic variation in SCC (Paolillo 1999, 2001), openings in SCC (Rintell, Mulholland, & Pittam, 2001), and interactional features unique to SCC (Herring 1999).

Regarding the use of SCC in the second language classroom setting, Warschauer (1996, 1997) conducted some of the first studies of its possibilities and advocated for its sound pedagogical usage. More recently, Freiermuth (2001) studied the interaction of mixed NS/NNS groups engaged in classroom-based SCC

activities and concluded that NNSs take more opportunities to use language in an online setting than in a face-to-face setting. In a study of task-based language learning via SCC, Smith (2001) concluded that this medium is effective for promoting language development, especially when the SCC tasks require participant negotiation.

More relevant to the current study, a few researchers have investigated specifically language socialization in the second language classroom through the use of SCC. For example, Paver (2003) investigated the effects that different CMC tools, including SCC, have on the zone of proximal development (ZPD). She concluded that an individual student's background, attitudes, knowledge, and motivation while engaged in CMC activities had a greater impact on the ZPD than did the CMC tools themselves. Additionally, Lam (2003)

investigated the identity formation of a group of immigrant Chinese high-school students in the U.S. through various CMC activities, including SCC. She found that through these various Internet-based activities, the students were socialized into unique forms of language use in English, which in turn positively affected their identities as English speakers.

Of most relevance to the current research are two additional studies of language socialization through the use of SCC that utilized conversation analysis (CA) methods to interpret the data (Kitade, 2000; Schönfeldt & Golata, 2003). Kitade examined collaborative interaction through the use of SCC in a second language classroom setting and reported positive benefits for language development, including facilitated interaction, self-correction, and collaboration. Schönfeldt and Golata examined the use of repair initiation in a natural (non-

classroom) environment and reported that the participants utilized linguistic features from face-to-face conversation in the computer-based environment, although the participants altered their usage when necessary to fit the constraints of the SCC medium.

Based on the previous literature review, there seems to be a large gap in the research of language socialization in the SCC environment, particularly in classroom settings. This study seeks to partially fill that gap by examining but a few of the possible phenomena associated with language socialization.

## **Methodology**

### *Participants*

The data comes from an intermediate-level ESL course at a Hawaii community college. The class consisted of 12 non-native English-speaking students (NNS), six male and six female. All but one male Korean

student were Japanese, and all were in the U.S. on F-1 study visas, with an average length of stay in the U.S. of approximately four months at the time of data collection. The teacher of the ESL course was an instructor in his second semester at the community college. In addition to the students and teacher, the class consisted of three native English speaking (NS) male tutors, dubbed “linguistic informants” by the ESL program. Two of these tutors were also Japanese heritage-language speakers.

### *Data*

The data was gathered in the summer of 2004 over a period of five consecutive weeks, during a weekly computer lab of which SCC was a recurring activity. The data consists of five separate chat sessions, lasting approximately 15 minutes each. All of the participants were physically in the same classroom at the time of the chat activities; however, they were instructed to remain

silent during chat time and to keep all conversation online. Furthermore, participants were instructed to write in English only during chat time, although they were free to talk about anything that they chose to talk about.

The chat program used for each of these chat activities is the standard course tool found on the University of Hawai‘i “MyUH Portal” web site<sup>2</sup>. The program records all interaction in the chat room onto a chat log visible to all participants. However, the chat log is not saved permanently. Before the last participant in a chat logs out of the chat room, it is necessary to copy the entire interaction and paste it into a word processing document for permanent storage. The exact transcript used for analysis in this study is the complete chat log from week three, a 15 minute session of approximately 143 lines in length, involving seven students (four female

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the MyUH Portal, please see <http://www.hawaii.edu/projectportal/>

and three male) and one tutor (a Japanese heritage-language speaker). During this time, the remaining five students in the class and the other two tutors were engaged in another Web-based activity and did not participate in this particular SCC session.

### *Discourse Analysis*

Following previous researchers who have investigated interactional phenomena of SCC (Kitade, 2000; Schönfeldt & Golata, 2003), CA methods are used to examine the data. Since the focus of this study is to examine how expert and novice roles are jointly constructed by participants in interaction, CA methods are useful for analyzing how “the constitution of expert-novice relations is interactionally achieved in the course of unfolding talk” (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991, p. 156).

Given the automaticity of transcript generation by the chat program and the nature of the written dialog,

standard CA transcription conventions are not followed. The transcript that follows is reproduced in its entirety, without modification, except to change names to pseudonyms in order to protect participant identities and to add line numbers to aid in the analysis.

### **Analysis**

To facilitate analysis of the data, this paper is formatted in such a way that the entire Internet chat transcript can be analyzed without breaking it into smaller segments, thus providing for a more coherent sequential analysis of the conversation as it originally was constructed, and therefore, a more coherent reading of the data in its entirety. As such, the chat transcript is aligned to the left of the page in sequential order by line number, and the corresponding analysis is more or less aligned to the right of the page.



1	George:	yo
2	Musashi:	Hi
3	Masaki:	hi
4	George:	whos here? type something
5	Takuro:	hi
6	Tei:	George!!!
7	Kazuko:	Tei
8	George:	ok three more
9	Miyo:	Hi!
10	George:	mako?
11	Masaki:	Mako is looking for this site
12	George:	MAKO
13	George:	Charles?
14	Tei:	Macco !!
15	Kazuko:	you like name
16	George:	is it mako or macco or MACO
17	Mariko:	mako is here
18	George:	thank you

At the outset of this transcript, George, the only tutor in this chat session, constitutes himself as the chat facilitator by providing the greeting token “yo” (line 1), which is taken up and responded to by the student participants (lines 2, 3, 5, 6, 9). This opening sequence in SCC is similar in structure to opening sequences found in common face-to-face communication (Rintel, Mulholland, & Pittam, 2001). George again constitutes himself as the one in control of the chat session first by calling on the students to participate in the chat (line 4), then by announcing the number of students currently engaged in the chat (line 8), and finally by calling on a student (line 10) and the other tutor (line 13) by name. In line 11, Masaki ratifies George’s leadership role by informing him that “Mako is looking for this site”, meaning that the other student is trying to login to the classroom chat session. Once Mariko (Mako) enters the chat room, she announces her presence to the other participants (line 17), to which George replies “thank you” (line 18), thus completing this opening and accounting-for phase of the chat session.

Simultaneously, in line 16, George asks a question to the entire chat room about the appropriate spelling of “Mako”, since participants had

19 George: so wassup?  
 20 Tei: i thik Macco is better  
 21 Mariko: anything  
 22 Musashi: good  
 23 Kazuko: anyway  
 24 Takuro: good  
 25 George: What do you want to talk about?  
 26 Masaki: like cocco  
 27 Mariko: MAKO this is it  
 28 Musashi: major  
 29 Mariko: what?  
 30 George: what about major?  
 31 Takuro: difficult...  
 32 Mariko: what?  
 33 George: what?  
 34 Musashi: mmm.. your major  
 35 George: who's major?

spelled it differently in lines 10-14. By doing so, George calls into question his knowledge of romanized spelling conventions of shortened names in Japanese. As the member who contributed the divergent spelling, Tei (line 20) attempts to constitute himself as an authority on the subject by proclaiming that his spelling is better. This proclamation is somewhat acknowledged by Masaki in line 26. However, Mariko soon claims ownership over her own name by informing the chat room participants of the correct spelling (line 27), although her claim to ownership is never ratified by the chat room participants, and, in fact, her name is never used again throughout the remainder of the chat session.

Again, George in line 25 displays an authoritative stance by directing the participants to choose a discussion topic. This stance is acknowledged by Musashi who proposes the topic “major” (line 28), thereby constituting himself as an active chat participant and one with some level of expertise, or at least interest, in his proposed topic. George then works with the chat room participants to co-construct the definition of “major” (lines 30-35) by asking clarification questions (lines 30, 35). Interestingly, however, when Mariko asks the chat participants about the current chat topic (line 36), George replies with

- 36 Mariko: what you guys  
talking?
- 37 George: major
- 38 Mariko: i know
- 39 Tei: so should we talk  
about sleeves?
- 40 George: sleeves?
- 41 Kazuko: slaves
- 42 George: shirt sleeves?
- 43 Mariko: what?

the original, unexpanded and ambiguous topic “major”. George’s reply again constitutes himself as an authority figure and a source of the chat room knowledge, even though Mariko seems to have addressed the entire chat room through her use of “you guys”; however, George’s under-developed reply also casts doubt on his knowledge of the specificity of the topic. Mariko’s response in line 38 of “i know” could be a reflection of her own desire to get more details about the proposed topic; hence, her question in line 36 could be viewed as one of clarification of the topic and not one of unknowing the topic.

In an abrupt shift, Tei proposes a new topic in line 39, followed immediately by George’s other-initiated repairs about this new topic in lines 40 and 42. However, in the intervening turn (line 41), Kazuko produces a “third-person repair<sup>3</sup>” by offering “slaves” as the correction. By doing so, Kazuko displays her expertise of English and of the proposed topic. Tei eventually provides his repair further on in line 48 of the chat. This repair sequence offers the possibility of an additional type of SCC repair not discussed in the work of Schönfeldt and Golata (2003) and also represents an

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<sup>3</sup> My own terminology.

44	George:	its hot in here
45	Musashi:	it's ok we are seriousness.
46	George:	what?
47	George:	seriousness is not a word
48	Tei:	slave
49	George:	is there only 4 people here?
50	George:	slave?
51	Mariko:	slave
52	George:	slave
53	Mariko:	slave
54	Masaki:	about slave
55	Kazuko:	slave
56	Musashi:	OK!
57	George:	OI
58	Mariko:	ok

example of meaning co-construction through negotiation.

In line 45, Musashi, who had previously offered the topic of “major” for discussion (line 28), provides the comment “it’s ok we are seriousness.”, although it is not clear if this comment is directed at George, who had just commented in line 44 about the temperature of the computer lab in which the chat participants were located, or at the proposal to discuss slaves. In response, George again indexes his role as tutor and authority figure by providing the explicit correction “seriousness is not a word” (line 47), presumably meant to mean “‘seriousness’ cannot be used in this way as an adjective,” because, in all seriousness, “seriousness” is in fact a word. In this case, George’s expertise as linguistic informant is not acknowledged by the other participants; therefore, it is unknown whether or not this explicit correction is taken up.

Similar to what was seen previously in his role as participant accountant, George again makes a comment (line 49) about the number of participants engaged in the chat. By asking if only four participants are in the chat room, he is in effect calling on the other participants to contribute to the interaction.

59 Tei: or SAMURAI!!!!!!  
 60 George: i like samurai  
 61 Mariko: me too  
 62 Tei: okay  
 63 Kazuko: *samui*  
 64 Mariko: so?  
 65 Takuro: mu,too  
 66 Musashi: heve you ever seen  
 last samurai?  
 67 George: ENGLISH!!!!

In the lines that follow (lines 48-58), six of the chat room participants seem to align themselves to the proposed topic of slaves. However, in another abrupt shift of topic, Tei, who had offered the previous topic of “slaves” in line 39, proposes yet another topic. This is interesting given the entire chat room’s negotiation of and alignment to the previous topic over the course of 21 turns. Participants immediately display positive stances towards this new topic (lines 60, 61, 65), and in an intervening turn (63), Kazuko code-switches to Japanese, providing the word “*samui*” (cold, as in temperature), presumably as a play-on-words with “samurai”. In effect, Kazuko is projecting a stance of “class clown”. However, this stance is not acknowledged by the other participants, including George, who assumes that Kazuko is displaying a different stance: that of “linguistic rebel”. In response, George aggressively projects his accepted stance of authority figure and the new stance of “code enforcer” by shouting<sup>4</sup> “ENGLISH!!!!” By doing this, he also displays a different kind of linguistic expertise by understanding that “*samui*” is not English, although he makes no indication that he explicitly knows the meaning of this word. It is not known

<sup>4</sup> In CMC code, typing in all-capital letters and using exclamation points is equivalent to shouting in face-to-face encounters (Crystal, 2001).

68	Kazuko:	never
69	Masaki:	yes
70	Mariko:	yes i did
71	Takuro:	yes
72	George:	Last samurai is great!!!!
73	Tei:	yes
74	Mariko:	i like it
75	Tei:	no
76	Miyo:	I like it,too
77	Tei:	it's too long
78	Takuro:	i think so

whether or not George's new stance is accepted, because the chat room participants make no further mention of either his or Kazuko's comments.

As Kazuko and George engage in a game of stance posturing, Musashi continues the topic of "samurai" by asking the other participants if they had seen the movie *Last Samurai* (line 66). In doing so, he aligns himself to the current topic and also displays evidence of his movie knowledge. In the immediate lines that follow, all other seven chat room participants make contributions to this sub-topic. Different responses by six participants indicate that they have seen the movie (lines 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 78); only Kazuko provides a negative stance of never seeing the movie (line 68).

George (line 72) contributes a very positive evaluation of the movie, projecting a strong image of himself as "movie fan", as does Mariko in line 74, although somewhat less pronounced. Miyo (line 76) also provides a positive evaluation of the movie, although her use of the intensifier "too" additionally closely aligns herself with the opinions of George and Mariko. In lines 73 and 75, Tei makes seemingly contradictory statements. However, his "yes" in line 73 is likely a positive response to him seeing the movie, while his "no" in line 75 is

79	Mariko:	i wanted be samurai!
80	George:	WHat about "big trouble in little china"
81	Kazuko:	really?
82	George:	How do you become a samurai?
83	Mariko:	Can i be
84	Tei:	idn't know
85	Miyo:	What's that?
86	George:	a movie
87	Mariko:	<i>cyonnmage!</i>
88	Musashi:	I want American people to recomend that movie to understand Japanese culture.
89	Tei:	idn't know
90	Miyo:	I don't know that.
91	George:	its better than last samurai

a negative response to George's notion that the movie is great. Tei further clarifies his statement in line 77 by explaining that "it's too long", and in line 78, Takuro agrees, thereby aligning himself with Tei's negative stance towards the movie. As a result, in the span of seven lines, the chat room is divided between *Last Samurai* likers and *Last Samurai* dislikers.

In line 79, Mariko continues the topic of "samurai" by exclaiming "i wanted be samurai!" By forming this exclamation in the past tense, Mariko is indexing the fact that she has had this idea for some time previous to "now". At approximately the same time, George (line 80) continues the sub-topic of "samurai movies" by asking if participants have seen *Big Trouble in Little China*.

In what follows is an example of "virtual adjacency" of embedded conversations in SCC (Schönfeldt & Golata, 2003). George engages with Mariko and Kazuko on the topic of becoming a samurai (lines 79, 81, 82, 87) while at the same time engaging with Tei and Miyo on the continuing movie topic (lines 80, 84-86, 89-91). As George manages these simultaneous conversations, he projects himself at the same time as being knowledgeable of samurai movies yet unfamiliar with the ways of becoming a samurai, thereby

92 Mariko: *Cyon mage!*  
 93 George: *mage?*  
 94 George: but its not japanese  
 95 Takuro: *mage*  
 96 George: what is *mage*?  
 97 Musashi: hair style  
 98 Masaki: yes  
 99 Mariko: right

exhibiting varying degrees of cultural expertise on related topics.

Furthermore, Musashi's turn in line 88 represents the continuation of a third conversation thread linked to his original contribution about the movie *Last Samurai* from line 66. Musashi's statement "I want American people to recomend that movie to understand Japanese culture." appears to be projecting varying degrees of expertise on multiple topics at the same time: 1, that he is in some capacity to critique the movie (i.e., he has seen the movie and is knowledgeable about the extent to which it reflects Japanese culture); 2, that he has some understanding that Americans need a better understanding of Japanese culture; and 3, that by seeing *Last Samurai*, Americans will gain a better understanding of Japanese culture. However, his comment is neither accepted nor challenged by the participants, as this topic is not continued.

A bit further on in the data (line 92), Mariko repeats her unacknowledged exclamation "*cyonnmage!*" from line 87, thus continuing her conversation with George about how to become a samurai. George asks "*mage?*" in line 93, perhaps akin to a self-directed utterance, whispered under one's breath, which serves to label himself at this moment in the interaction as a novice. Next,



100	George:	a lot of fake words are being used
101	Masaki:	not fake
102	Kazuko:	fake?
103	Mariko:	that's japanese
104	Tei:	<i>CHONMAGE</i> is hairstyle
105	Masaki:	right
106	George:	ENGLISH!!!!
107	Mariko:	no!
108	George:	Y?
109	Mariko:	Japanese

Takuro (line 95) repeats the lexical item, and in doing so, achieves two things: he confirms that the original contributions of the item were correct, and he indexes his own expertise of Japanese. Lacking the linguistic resources, George now explicitly asks “what is *mage*?” (line 96), to which Musashi immediately replies “hair style” (line 97). This is followed up in lines 98-99 by Masaki and Mariko who confirm this definition. As a result, the relationships between expert and novice have clearly shifted in the chat room due to the code-switch by Mariko in lines 87 and 92 to Japanese. The students are now the experts, and the tutor is the novice.

Still seemingly not understanding, George accuses the students of using “fake words” (line 100), which prompts cries from Masaki (line 101) and Mariko (line 103) as to the correctness of the words. In the meantime, Kazuko (line 102) asks a question about the lexical item “fake”, similar to George’s question from line 93; however, her question goes unacknowledged, along with her self-constituted status as a novice at this point of the interaction. Continuing with the co-construction of the meaning of the word “*chonmage*”, Tei somewhat repeats its definition as “hairstyle” (line 104). Masaki again acknowledges that this is the

110 George: *kurosuzo!!!*  
 111 Takuro: *korosuzo!!*  
 112 Mariko: *aho!*  
 113 Tei: *korosuo?*  
 114 George: Kazuko? where are you  
 115 Kazuko: me?  
 116 Musashi: Kazuko-!!  
 117 George: yeah  
 118 Kazuko: me in here.  
 119 Mariko: so, *chonmage*?  
 120 Musashi: all right!  
 121 George: dont speak too much  
 122 George: all right

correct definition (line 105). Perhaps in a fit of frustration with his current status as a novice, George re-assumes the role of code enforcer and shouts “ENGLISH!!!!!!”, this time with **five** exclamation points. However, this time he is met with resistance from Mariko in lines 107 and 109, although it is not clear if her resistance is directed at the notion that the participants use English only or if her resistance is intended to further goad the chat police by stressing “no, *chonmage* is not English, it’s Japanese”.

Finally, as if to give in to peer pressure, George breaks his own policy by exclaiming “*kurosuzo!!!*” (line 110), a Japanese profanity which literally means “I will kill you”. In the very next line (111), Takuro provides the correct romanized spelling of the curse word; however, it is not clear whether or not George takes up this correction since the correction is in the form of a recast, as opposed to an explicit correction, and George makes no attempt at repair. Perhaps to further confuse matters, Tei in line 113 also misspells the word, only this time it is framed as a question for reasons unknown. During this exchange, the original instigator of the code-switch, Mariko (line 112), shouts out “*aho!*” (“stupid”), probably at the use of the profanity and not at the use of Japanese.

123	Miyo:	What are we talking about?
124	George:	what is <i>chonmage</i> ?
125	Mariko:	i see sur
126	Kazuko:	like you
127	Musashi:	I dont know..
128	George:	i was being sarcastic!
129	Tei:	Hair Style
130	George:	CHARLES?
131	Miyo:	samurai has <i>chonmage</i> .
132	Musashi:	sarcastic??
133	George:	oh I C'

In an attempt to change the subject, George calls on a student who has been silent for some time (line 114). Kazuko and Musashi follow along with George for several lines (115-120), but Mariko redirects the conversation back to the previous topic in line 119. Miyo's contribution in line 123 seems to indicate that she is lost in the conversation, although she aligns herself to the other participants by her use of "we". Her loss is seconded by Musashi in line 127 who responds that he also does not know what the current topic is.

Giving in yet again to the topic that has caused him so much confusion, George produces "what is *chonmage*?" (line 124). There seem to be two possible interpretations for this contribution in this turn: 1, is that it is a question formulated in response to Markio's plea in line 119 to resolve the confusion over *chonmage*; and, 2, is that it is in fact a statement formulated in response to Miyo's question in line 123 about the current topic. The latter interpretation seems most plausible because if it were in response to Mariko's redirection of topic, then it probably would have been formulated more emphatically, as an exasperation to resolve the issue and close the topic. In an effort to do just this, Tei provides the definition "Hair Style" for the second time (line 129), and Miyo

134 George: what about *bozu*  
 135 Mariko: what?  
 136 Tei: *bozu* is me  
 137 Musashi: bold heir  
 138 George: what?  
 139 Miyo: *bozu*??  
 140 George: HAIR  
 141 Takuro: me,too  
 142 Mariko: bye !  
 143 Kazuko: boy!

further explains that “samurai has *chonmage*” (line 131). Finally, after 41 lines of meaning negotiation between all seven participants in the interaction, George (line 133) triumphantly announces “oh I C” – which stands for “oh, I see” in Netspeak<sup>5</sup> (Crystal, 2001).

With an understanding now that *chonmage* is a type of samurai hair style, George asks “what about *bozu*” (line 134). In Japanese, *bozu* roughly means “monk”. Interestingly, George chooses to continue to code-switch by using the Japanese lexical item instead of the English equivalent. By doing so, it is possible that George is indexing his cultural alignment to the student participants. However, the exact reason is not clear.

Mariko next asks “what?” (line 135) for unknown reasons. Perhaps it is because she did not expect the topic to turn in this direction. Perhaps it is because she did not expect George to produce such a question. Perhaps it is because *bozu* is a somewhat uncommon lexical item. Or perhaps it is a combination of all three of these possibilities. In any case, Tei (line 136) seems to understand George’s question, at least partially, because he contributes the

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<sup>5</sup> Netspeak is the term that includes all forms of CMC jargon: e-mail, discussion board, chat, Internet, and Web.

answer “*bozu* is me”. In Japanese, “*bozu*” is also used as slang to mean “someone who is bald”. Tei had recently cut his hair very short, so by aligning himself to the concept of “*bozu*”, he is indexing the fact that he is almost bald.

In the next line, Musashi provides “bold heir” as a more plausible answer to George’s question (line 137). By doing so, he provides his understanding of George’s question as something like “What kind of hair style does a monk have?” while also indexing his cultural knowledge. Several lines later (141), Takuro indicates his alignment to the original question and to Tei’s answer by replying “me, too”, since he, too, recently had cut his hair extremely short. In the intervening interaction, George is given an final opportunity (line 140) to re-exert his status as authority figure and linguistic informant by explicitly correcting Musashi’s turn in line 137. However, it is

interesting to note that George elects to correct only the lexical item “hair”, which had caused so much trouble previously in the chat, and not the lexical item “bald”, which is the central concept in the current topic of conversation. The chat session ends soon afterwards without Musashi acknowledging the correction.

### Discussion

Through sequential analysis of the unfolding interaction, many findings emerge from the data with respect to expert and novice relationships, thereby helping to answer the first research question:

*In what ways are expert and novice relationships constituted throughout the interaction?*

Analysis of the data shows the following relationship categories:

- tutor as expert- either self-or mutually-constituted; by displaying the stance of authority or by

acknowledgement as an authority; and by displaying cultural and linguistic knowledge;

- tutor as novice- either self- or mutually-constituted; by displaying a lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge of a secondary code; and by acknowledgement as a novice;
- student as expert- either self- or mutually-constituted; by displaying cultural and linguistic knowledge; and by acknowledgement as an authority; and
- student as novice- either self- or mutually-constituted; by displaying a lack of cultural and linguistic knowledge; and by acknowledgement as a novice.

In sum, both tutor and student assume roles as expert and novice at given points throughout the interaction.

These roles are self-constituted by the participants by

displaying knowledge and stances that index themselves as either expert or novice. Additionally, these roles are mutually-constituted through acknowledgement by other participants as either expert or novice after displays of knowledge and stances.

Additionally, a number of findings help to answer the second research question:

*How do participants co-construct meaning through their relationships as expert and novice?*

Analysis of the data indicates that the participants in this study performed the following:

- co-construction of meaning through alignment- either to the recognized expert or novice at given points in the interaction;
- co-construction of meaning through cultural sharing- by expert participants to novice participants at given points in the interaction; and

- co-construction of meaning through negotiation-mutually managed by expert and novice participants at given points in the interaction.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined ways in which expert and novice roles were constituted by participants in a small SCC community that functioned as an activity of an ESL classroom. The study contributes to the body of research into the use of SCC as a tool for language development in classroom settings by showing how expert and novice relationships shifted among the NNS students and their NS tutor throughout the emerging interaction, and, in the process, how the participants co-constructed meaning through their roles as expert and novice. Findings of the study indicate that linguistic and cultural knowledge were primary factors that determined the roles of expert and novice. Additionally, code switching between the primary

chat room code of English and the culturally shared code of Japanese contributed to participant roles as expert and novice.

This study was very limited in scope, examining language socialization phenomena in just one isolated interaction. However, it confirms in the novel interactional medium of SCC what previous researchers have claimed: that the statuses of “expert” and “novice” are not rigidly fixed, but are rather flexible, momentarily constituted in the evolving interaction (Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991). In consideration of this finding, CA methodology was useful for the sequential analysis of the research data. The CA approach provided in this study allowed for a continuous analysis of the entire interaction and should be considered for future studies of SCC interactional data.

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**APPENDIX: Chat Transcript**

1 George: yo  
 2 Musashi: Hi  
 3 Masaki: hi  
 4 George: whos here? type something  
 5 Takuro: hi  
 6 Tei: George!!!  
 7 Kazuko: Tei  
 8 George: ok three more  
 9 Miyo: Hi!  
 10 George: mako?  
 11 Masaki: Mako is looking for this site  
 12 George: MAKO  
 13 George: Charles?  
 14 Tei: Macco !!  
 15 Kazuko: you like name  
 16 George: is it mako or macco or MACO  
 17 Mariko: mako is here  
 18 George: thank you

19 George: so wassup?  
 20 Tei: i thik Macco is better  
 21 Mariko: anything  
 22 Musashi: good  
 23 Kazuko: anyway  
 24 Takuro: good  
 25 George: What do you want to talk about?  
 26 Masaki: like cocco  
 27 Mariko: MAKO this is it  
 28 Musashi: major  
 29 Mariko: what?  
 30 George: what about major?  
 31 Takuro: difficult...  
 32 Mariko: what?  
 33 George: what?  
 34 Musashi: mmm.. your major  
 35 George: who's major?  
 36 Mariko: what you guys talking?  
 37 George: major

38 Mariko: i know  
 39 Tei: so should we talk about sleeves?  
 40 George: sleeves?  
 41 Kazuko: slaves  
 42 George: shirt sleeves?  
 43 Mariko: what?  
 44 George: its hot in here  
 45 Musashi: it's ok we are seriousness.  
 46 George: what?  
 47 George: seriousness is not a word  
 48 Tei: slave  
 49 George: is there only 4 people here?  
 50 George: slave?  
 51 Mariko: slave  
 52 George: slave  
 53 Mariko: slave  
 54 Masaki: about slave

55 Kazuko: slave  
 56 Musashi: OK!  
 57 George: OI  
 58 Mariko: ok  
 59 Tei: or SAMURAI!!!!!!  
 60 George: i like samurai  
 61 Mariko: me too  
 62 Tei: okay  
 63 Kazuko: *samui*  
 64 Mariko: so?  
 65 Takuro: mu,too  
 66 Musashi: heve you ever seen last samurai?  
 67 George: ENGLISH!!!!  
 68 Kazuko: never  
 69 Masaki: yes  
 70 Mariko: yes i did  
 71 Takuro: yes  
 72 George: Last samurai is great!!!!  
 73 Tei: yes

74 Mariko: i like it  
 75 Tei: no  
 76 Miyo: I like it,too  
 77 Tei: it's too long  
 78 Takuro: i think so  
 79 Mariko: i wanted be samurai!  
 80 George: WHat about "big trouble in little china"  
 81 Kazuko: really?  
 82 George: How do you become a samurai?  
 83 Mariko: Can i be  
 84 Tei: idn't know  
 85 Miyo: What's that?  
 86 George: a movie  
 87 Mariko: *cyonnmage!*  
 88 Musashi: I want American people to recomend that movie to understand Japanese culture.  
 89 Tei: idn't know  
 90 Miyo: I don't know that.

91 George: its better than last samurai  
 92 Mariko: *Cyon mage!*  
 93 George: *mage?*  
 94 George: but its not japanese  
 95 Takuro: *mage*  
 96 George: what is *mage*?  
 97 Musashi: hair style  
 98 Masaki: yes  
 99 Mariko: right  
 100 George: a lot of fake words are being used  
 101 Masaki: not fake  
 102 Kazuko: fake?  
 103 Mariko: that's japanese  
 104 Tei: *CHONMAGE* is heirstyle  
 105 Masaki: right  
 106 George: ENGLISH!!!!  
 107 Mariko: no!  
 108 George: Y?

109 Mariko: Japanese  
 110 George: *kurosuzo!!!*  
 111 Takuro: *korosuzo!!*  
 112 Mariko: *ahol*  
 113 Tei: *korosuo?*  
 114 George: Kazuko? where are you  
 115 Kazuko: me?  
 116 Musashi: Kazuko-!!  
 117 George: yeah  
 118 Kazuko: me in here.  
 119 Mariko: so, *chonmage?*  
 120 Musashi: all right!  
 121 George: dont speak too much  
 122 George: all right  
 123 Miyo: What are we talking about?  
 124 George: what is *chonmage?*  
 125 Mariko: i see sur  
 126 Kazuko: like you  
 127 Musashi: I dont know..

128 George: i was being sarcastic!  
 129 Tei: Hair Style  
 130 George: CHARLES?  
 131 Miyo: samurai has *chonmage*.  
 132 Musashi: sarcastic??  
 133 George: oh I C'  
 134 George: what about *bozu*  
 135 Mariko: what?  
 136 Tei: *bozu* is me  
 137 Musashi: bold heir  
 138 George: what?  
 139 Miyo: *bozu??*  
 140 George: HAIR  
 141 Takuro: me,too  
 142 Mariko: bye !  
 143 Kazuko: boy!