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INTERSECTION(S) BETWEEN SOCIOCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE, CLASSROOM  
DISCOURSE AND STANCE

A Thesis  
Presented in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
In the Department of Modern Languages  
The University of Mississippi

by

JOHN MUNYUI MUCHIRA

May 2013

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## ABSTRACT

Speakers of all languages align their talk to that of their peers in order to create identity in social discourse. While students' interactions in class reveal an awareness of their personal educational achievements, they also exhibit a desire to inform others about their socio-cultural knowledge, their beliefs, and feelings. A number of studies have shown how participants create interactional environments where they cannot only expand their knowledge in instructional styles but also to a great extent construct and reconstruct their personas. Sociocultural knowledge and stancetaking has a great impact on classroom discourse and language learning. My study was conducted on an advanced business English class offered at a university in the southern region of the United States. In this study, I audio recorded a fifty minute class session, then transcribed the data from the session and coded it into major themes to analyze. The session involved discussions centered around three commercials, about which the students were asked to post on a class blog explaining whether they thought the commercials were internationally marketable. Six students in the audio recording were investigated to show how they enacted their interpersonal and epistemic stance by aligning with their peers and professor to demonstrate sociocultural knowledge. This study seeks to explain how language teachers' awareness of their students' stance enactment strategies could inform their teaching. By analyzing the stances taken by students engaged in classroom discussion, we show how they construct their social identity. The professor and the students in the study are envisioned as co-participants in building a community of learners, a community in which intercultural negotiation of meaning is possible

and the importance of “self” and “others” is reinforced.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to everyone who guided me through my time of stress and anxiety to make my thesis writing possible. In particular, I thank my wonderful parents, Francis and Felidah, for their financial sacrifice, their emotional support, and their encouragement throughout my life. Without their great love for education, their belief in my potential and continually inspiring me, I could not have made this great accomplishment as a first generation child. A very special thanks to my life partner and soul mate, Brenda. She has been the source of my inspiration, and she has walked with me every single step of my life. Thank you for your efforts. I love you all.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ESL	English as Second Language
L2	Second Language
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
IRF	Initiation Response and Feedback
IEP	Intensive English Program
VCR	Videocassette Recorder
DVD	Digital Versatile Disk

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Literature on stance has revealed much concerning how participants of various activities use language to construct identity and enact stances (Ochs, 1993; Schilling-Estes, 2004; Bulcholtz & Hall 2005; Johnstone 2007; Kiesling, 2009). However, few studies have examined, the ways in which English as Second Language (ESL) learners enact stances during classroom discourse, as they negotiate with each other, collaborate, and engage in task related activities. This study seeks to analyze how classroom interactions create opportunities for second language stance enactment(s) in participation structures.

Using Sociocultural Theory (SCT) as a framework, stancetaking during classroom tasks will be closely investigated. SCT is an approach established by Vygotsky that claims that interaction not only facilitates language learning but also is a causative force in language acquisition. According to SCT, all learning is envisioned as essentially a social process whose foundation is in sociocultural settings (Saville- Troike, 2006). My work contributes to the field of English as Second Language (ESL) studies, by focusing on the intersection of sociocultural knowledge, classroom discourse, and stance. With a detailed examination of participants' classroom interaction and their attempts to negotiate meaning, this study will show how learners align their talk according to the identity they wish to construct, enacting stances selectively and creatively. The analysis of the study will show how interactions during classroom activities serve to define participants' social identities and the stances they wish to enact in order to successfully accomplish their educational goals. Specifically, we will first investigate how understanding the

Other(s) can impact in community building in terms of relationships, alignments, attitudes, feelings and general approach to issues related to the interactions. In this study, the “Other” is conceptualized as a person who fits one (or more) of the following characteristics: their profession is different from the speakers, they are not part of his/her social group, their religious beliefs differs from the speakers, do not share the same cultural background, or any cultural affiliation.

This study also examines how the discussions carried out in the classroom were cognizant of the culture of the student' participants, particularly the cultural connections that were reinforced by the students during class discussions about television commercials. Most interestingly, the students investigated in this study exemplified distinct enactments of stances within the scope of intercultural negotiation of meaning.

Finally, this study contributes to ESL pedagogy by making teachers more aware of stancetaking and how it might impact student learning. Through creating connections that relate to students' desired social identities, language instructors working in multicultural environments can reinforce classroom interactions by allowing students to inform their peers about their socio-cultural backgrounds.

#### Statement of problem

Many researchers have used a sociocultural perspective to analyze discourse. However, relatively few studies have examined stance enactment in classroom discourse. This study seeks to address order this gap by using the sociocultural framework to analyze how learners enact stance during task-based interactions in an ESL classroom. Essentially, the study investigates how language is a tool for use when expressing (dis)alignment toward topics and other people in

the society (Others). Looking at the participation structure in ESL classes, where the teacher is usually the one leading classroom discussions, the construct of stancetaking is assessed within the lens of SLA. As the main focus in class is learning, this study suggests the need for ESL teachers to be more aware of their student's stance enactment strategies.

### Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study reports findings on stance enactment in classroom discourse using the sociocultural framework. The following two research questions are addressed.

Question 1: In what ways do students enact stances during classroom activities?

Hypothesis 1: Students enact a variety of stances within the ESL classroom setting, using both covert and overt linguistic strategies.

Question 2: How could knowledge of L2 stancetaking make teachers aware of their students' stancetaking.

Hypothesis 2: Knowledge of L2 stancetaking is an effective tool for looking at the ways students creates alignments among themselves, their teachers and to their home countries.

### Significance of this study

As the ESL and foreign language classrooms uphold the use of communicative language teaching, it is important for classroom interactions to be developed with the consideration of sociocultural factors so that students can participate effectively. Knowledge on how teachers should orient their talk according to the stances taken by their students during classroom discussions is paramount. It can therefore be construed that classroom discourse calls for continuous reconstruction of the students' discussions as they engage in learning related

activities. Literally, reconstruction is the re-creation of desirable opportunities in an interactive environment by supporting utterances of the others or making explanations that are directly connected with that of the speaker(s). Classroom talk requires cooperation between ‘self’ and ‘others’, as it is a structured institutional discourse; interactants make efforts to convey their knowledge, cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and desires. Investigation of discourse in a classroom setting using the sociocultural framework will clearly make the alignment by students with the construct of social identity, since spoken language is a significant resource for indexing identity of participants.

Studies such as Schiffrin 1996, Ochs 1993, and Benwell & Stoke 2006 reveal that speakers construct different versions of self in relation to the expectations that their listeners have as they perform narratives and through participation in discussions and interactions that could index their identity and stances. Research on stance in classroom discourse has mostly been conducted at elementary and middle school levels; for instance (Gallas 1995; Cazden 2001; Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005), with just a few studies examining discourse in an adult ESL classroom setting. This study will therefore use the sociocultural framework to investigate the intersection(s) between sociocultural knowledge with classroom discourse and stancetaking in an advanced-level ESL class at a university in the southern part of the United States.

CHAPTER II  
LITERATURE REVIEW  
SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) is an idea about mediated human interactions. It was founded by L. S. Vygotsky, a Soviet Union psychologist, semiotician and pedagogue, who argued that symbolic tools mediate higher forms of human mental functioning and that language is among the most important symbolic tools since humans can use it to organize their own and others' social and mental functioning (Vygotsky, 1986). Within sociocultural theory, learning and development are seen as mediated processes in which language plays a crucial role (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Wertsch, 1985).

Miller & Zuengler (2006), in their history of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, state that SLA research began to appear in the mid-1980s through Lantolf's publication of an article devoted specifically to sociocultural theory and second language learning and since then, the theory has gained momentum. Sociocultural theory is heavily focused on the impact of socially enacted and culturally organized meanings on the formation and functioning of mental activity (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Lantolf & Thorne further argue that, since SCT is a theory of mediated mental development, it is therefore most compatible with theories of language that focus on communication, cognition, and meaning rather than position that seems to privilege structural form.

Lantolf (2004) posits that, despite the label 'sociocultural', SCT is not a theory about the

social or the cultural aspects of human existence, but rather, it is a theory of mind that recognizes the central role that social relationships and culturally constructed artifacts play in organizing the ways that humans think. Wertsch (1985) is credited as having coined the term ‘sociocultural’ as a way of capturing the notion that human mental functioning results from participation in, and appropriation of, the forms of cultural mediation integrated into social activities (Lantolf, 2009). With the continuous globalization of education, the interaction of cultures and second languages situates the central aspects of the learning process in correlation to affective concerns, such as the motivation, personal, intersubjective relationships between speakers, as well as the intentions of participants (Kinginger, 2002).

Donato (1994) also argues that Vygotsky’s notion of semiotic is paramount in foreign language learning, as it focuses on what students are trying to achieve through their verbal interactions as they engage in speaking tasks in second language classrooms. Second and foreign language research assumes that student discourse is the result of encoding, decoding, and modifying internal representations of the new language (Brooks & Donato, 1994).

Brooks, Swain, Lapkins, & Knouzi (2010) apply a sociocultural theory of mind perspective to investigate how students distinguish between their understanding of a grammatical concept and showing awareness of it in written or spoken form. The authors use the term ‘linguaging’ to refer to this process. Using Vygotsky’s distinction between scientific and spontaneous everyday concepts, Brooks et al. (2010) observed that, through linguaging, the development of grammatical concept of role in French is demonstrated in their research of two university-level participants through linguaging, interestingly progressed from no knowledge of voice, a cognitively difficult grammatical concept in French, to a superficial knowledge. Swain (2006) defines linguaging as “the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and



experience through language” (2006: 89) and Swain, Lapkin, Knouzi, Suzuki, & Brooks (2009) add that languaging is a form of verbalization used to mediate solution(s) to complex problems and simple tasks.

Brooks and her colleagues found that languaging mediated their understanding by referring to English as they talked their way through the text. The authors also maintain that effective construction, which only occurs through dynamic transformation of concepts in zone of proximal development (ZPD), must provide opportunities for spontaneous and scientific concepts to come together and interact. Vygotsky (1978:86) defines ZPD, as “the distance between the actual development 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.” Scaffolding refers to the assistance offered by the more capable peers, while the accomplishments made with assistance are referred to as assisted performance (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991).

Donato (1994) in a similar study investigates the collaboration of French college level learners in their group activities. He examines scaffolding behavior of learners during peer interactions, and shows how they mediate each other in their ZPD in order to collaboratively construct the linguistic forms they require to complete an L2 task. In a language acquisition context, ZPD studies indicate that learners boost their performance through collaboration regardless of the skill level of peers. Swain & Lapkin (1998) and Ohta’s (2001a) data results show that the production skills of individual L2 speakers are developed through successful accomplishment of collaborative activities.

Brooks & Donato (1994) further argue that when learners interact verbally during a task, they are not limited to simply encoding and decoding messages about the topic at hand. Learners

also attempt to control the problem solving tasks allowing them to engage in verbal constructions and orient themselves to the language and task demands, as they understand them. Vygotsky (1986) refers to this kind of control as “regulation” and considers it to be a major feature of cognitive development. The focus of attention in a Vygotskian analysis thus aims to interpret how speaking creates a shared social reality; this kind of study supports the idea that individuals speak in order to plan and accomplish task-relevant actions, rather than encoding and decoding in order to speak (Donato, 1994).

Language socialization researchers (Schieffelin & Ochs 1986) closely identify with the Vygotskian sociocultural approaches and learning. They emphasize that sociocultural information is generally encoded in the organization of conversational discourse. The social identities of participants interacting in various discourses are portrayed by their responses, the (dis)alignments they make with the others present in their interactional space. Hence, the cultural beliefs, practices, and alignments are among the sociocultural information conveyed as people converse amongst themselves. Language socialization research has hence investigated the interconnected process through linguistic and cultural learning in discourse practices, interactional routines, and participation structures and roles (Zuengler & Miller, 2006).

## CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

In order to discuss classroom discourse, we must first look at the ways that sociolinguistics uses the term “discourse”. According to Rogers (2004), “discourse” is used to refer to a whole package: a way of not only using words but deeds, objects, tools, etc. in order to enact a socially situated identity. Brown & Yule (1983) argue that discourse analysis is necessarily the analysis of language in use; hence, analysis cannot be restricted to the description

of linguistic forms independent of their purposes or functions, which those forms were designed to serve in human affairs.

“Discourse” refers to how we use words in specific situations, and how the society existing around us associates those words to the creation or enactment of identity. In a classroom context, discourse analysis examines how students use language to negotiate meaning, as well as how their peers and teacher interpret that language. Using both overt and covert linguistic strategies, participants selectively use words to enact various stances, depending on the context in which the interactions occur. It is worth noting that as participants interact in institutional settings, their language use is, to some extent confined by social demands, participants’ knowledge and social attributes. Gumperz (1982) posits that an understanding of the role of language in education and social processes requires a closer understanding on how linguistic signs interact with social knowledge in discourse.

Linguists, Sinclair & Courthard (1975) interested in speech act theory analyzed the discussion of form-function relationships and how particular utterances have specific interpretations in the classroom. Basing their research on grammatical features and discourse direction, they comprehensively coded student and teacher utterances, and identified the Initiation/ Response/ Feedback (IRF) construct (Mayer, 2012). Sinclair & Courthard (1975) also note that the speakers and hearers are engaged in interactive negotiation of meaning in social discourse. According to Mayer’s (2012) analysis, subsequent research supports Sinclair and Courthard, with over two-thirds of the speech in classrooms exemplifying the IRF discourse pattern.

From an ethnomethodological perspective, Mehan (1985) analyzes turn-taking, topic initiation and speech style during segments of ‘discussions’ in classes from diverse disciplines at

Harvard University. He further investigates Initiation, Response, and Evaluation (IRE) as a pattern of classroom discourse. In ESL classrooms instruction becomes interactional space where the teacher is constantly engaging with students in responsive-type activities. The effects of such interactions (discussions) are best investigated through a discourse study. The patterns of turn-taking between students and between the teacher and students are also important when investigating their relationships, identities, and stances. When presenting the concept of discourse as reconceptualization, Cazden's (1988) position is slightly different from that of Mehan (1985). Cazden believes teachers should expand students' answers while evaluating them, rather than simply accepting or rejecting them; this allows students see their responses in a new way. Discourse then, in Cazden's view, is a catalyst for problem solving. In a language classroom, discourse could help to ease the sense of "evaluation for correctness" typically felt by student participants. These feelings would be enacted as students envision the learning process as a responsibility of the entire classroom community rather than as an individual's task.

In the mid-1990s, classroom discourse analysts Catherine O'Connor and Sarah Michaels introduced the sociological lens of participant framework to classroom discourse analysis (Mayer, 2012). They investigated 'revoicing' as a tool for conveying sociocultural knowledge and a medium of socialization into ways of thinking and acting (O'Connor & Michaels, 1993). "Revoicing" is the situation whereby the teacher repeats, summarizes, paraphrases, elaborates and even translates a part of a (whole) student's utterance while allowing that student to retain ownership of the reformulated concept. O'Connor and Michaels work reveals how teachers' discursive practices help to coordinate stances taken by their students as they engage with them and academic tasks. In ESL classes, teachers put this principle into effect by repeating students' utterances to the entire class, or modifying them in other ways, while evaluating how students'

responses contribute to the learning process or align with their identities; this creates opportunities for enactment of stances. Sociolinguistics and classroom discourse research by Erickson (1996) and Mehan (1985) also offer an effective analysis of turn-taking patterns. As classroom discussions unfold, students' take turns when called upon by the teacher to respond or make a contribution to a previous topic, while other students can enter the conversation without the teacher needing to allocate them a turn. While investigating construction of social identity in an ESL classroom context, it is important to analyze students' participation patterns and the effect of their socio-cultural backgrounds on those participation structures. Participant structures according to Philips (1972) are ways of arranging verbal participation structures; these structures are fundamental in analyzing classroom communication amongst students.

In her explanation of the prevalent interactional contexts in classroom discourse, Rymes (2009) argues that language learning is an interactive process through which learners gain the tools necessary to participate in multiple social worlds. Furthermore, with an understanding of contextualization, students become more conscious of what they can and cannot say, and how others interpret it within classroom discourse, thereby enacting stances in their formal social world of engagement as they participate in classroom activities. A contextualization cue is defined by Gumperz (1982) as any linguistic form feature that contributes to the signaling of contextual presuppositions and the interactive process.

While investigating cross-cultural communication, Hall (1966) found that variation in perception and interpretation of trivial facial and gestural signs are major causes of misunderstandings. Hymes (1972), in his research on communicative competence, maintains that culturally specific communication tools are needed for one to participate appropriately in culturally specific speech events. Additionally, Gumperz (1982) explains the role that prosodic

mechanisms (such a tone grouping, accent placement and tune play) in segmenting the stream of talk, signaling thematic connections, and providing information about activities. He further investigated how social identity is constructed as people perform verbal acts and stances. Students' interactions constitute use of language and stancetaking in an effort to construct and re-construct their social identity. Verbal communication being the most dominant discourse, but not the only one, is usually accompanied by paralinguistic communication, especially in ESL classes where students use spoken language to participate in both voluntary and mandatory class activities.

With the multiculturalism of ESL classes, comes cultural-specific use of non-verbal signs. During group discussions and presentations, students may choose to use a particular sign that, though not necessarily familiar to the teacher constructs an identity for the students, hence enhancing enactment of stance with the teacher. Likewise, the instructor can use signs to index various personas that are beneficial as classroom management strategies or significant resources for meaning negotiation. Since learning opportunities are accomplished through face-to-face interaction, creation of effectual learning environments, and ultimately the shaping of learners' development are consequential (Hall & Walsh, 2002). Appropriate combination of verbal and non-verbal languages by teachers can helps to create a community of learners, thereby creating an interactionally conducive environment.

Markee (2004) investigates what he terms as 'Zones of Interactional Transition'. These zones are the periods in classroom discourse in which teachers and students negotiate mutual understanding and classroom control. In Markee's study, the aforementioned discursive skill is exemplified through the context of counter question sequences and tactical fronting talk. His study also shows that not all of the talk in such episodes is devoted to language learning; a

portion negotiates social issues and management of the classroom environment. Interaction, participation, and negotiation create learning opportunities in the L2 classroom (Van Lier, 1991). Van Lier (1996; 2004) also discusses the role of interactional conversation in terms of a continuum of classroom power in L2 instruction. He argues that power varies from authoritarian, to authoritative and finally to expository, while conversational or 'contingent interaction' allows for the best quality learning environment.

While investigating power relations in the classroom, Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris (2005) perform a microethnographic discourse analysis in classroom literacy events by exploring distribution of turns, topic initiations, revoicing, and interruptions. They posit that unequal distribution of turns and the cultural, linguistic, economic, and symbolic capital reveals inequity and lack of social justice. Language use in classroom indexes power relations, and can therefore be used to enact an authoritarian stance. While the teacher is usually more likely to interrupt students because of authority issues in class, occasional interruption by students, especially during discussions, indexes power relations and struggles in stance enactment with their teacher.

Investigation on language use in classroom, as expounded by (Donato, 1994; Kowal & Swain, 1994), informs us how the microanalysis of classroom discourse allows us to witness the use of language as a mediation tool in the learning process. Their work suggests that discourse is a major area of inquiry in sociocultural theory of mind. In my study, we will use their research results to better investigate how students negotiate meaning through verbal interaction(s). For instance, Swain et al. (2002) asserts that peers, working within the ZPD of each other, can support learning through questioning, proposing possible solutions, disagreeing, repeating, and managing both social and cognitive activities. We also find that research on form-focused

instruction shows how learner's involvement in communicative activities in the classroom leads not only to negotiation of meaning of messages but also to negotiation of form (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Swain 1996).

Working within the social-cognitive framework, Ohta (2001) examines how the classroom corpus of seven adult Japanese students learning can assist each student's performance in the classroom, hence promoting second language development through scaffolding. In discussing discourse as a scaffold, Cazden (1988) proposes that students should participate even in the most difficult classroom task, while the teacher constantly offers help. However, as student competence is achieved, that help should be gradually withdrawn (Cazden, 1988). In addition to investigating peer-peer interaction, Ohta (2001) also demonstrates how the social interaction tasks that occur during interactive language learning constitute learning. Her findings support Kowal & Swain's (1997) investigation, which reports that even less proficient students can provide assistance to more proficient peers (Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002).

Report studies on 'peer-peer dialogues in language learning' by Swain et al. (2002) indicate that through dialogues, learners are capable of constructing utterances that are beyond what each could produce individually. Their analysis reveals that assisted performances take place as peers finish each other's utterances and prompt one another, through co-constructions. In one comparative study that contributes to language pedagogy, He and Ellis assessed the effects of teacher controlled exchanges and peer collaborations after a listening activity on vocabulary acquisition. They discovered that interactions in 'dialogically symmetrical discourse' (1999:131) were more conducive to incidental vocabulary acquisition than teacher-learner controlled ones. Swain et al.'s (2002) discovery is significant in classroom discourse study since they found that scaffolding and the internalization of the language occurs in social



interactions; for instance, during negotiation of meaning in classroom discourse and how it supports L2 development.

## STANCE

First, the literature of stance in the classroom cannot conclusively be discussed without delving into the concept of identity because language and issues of identity are closely related. Identity is the versions of “self” and is not constant as one creates different personas (identities) in different contexts. In a classroom situation, close analysis of student-teacher discourse seeks to investigate how identity is constructed as “they” (participants) engage in various learning activities according to the demand of the “situation” at hand. A student may therefore portray different identities when answering a question directly from the teacher, asking a question for clarification, or answering a question posed to the whole class. Hall & du Gay (1996) conceptualize identity as a process of continual emerging and becoming. As a process, identity affects learning in second and foreign language classrooms. Students’ discursive activities aim to achieve instances in which they can negotiate meaning in the classroom while at the same time, creating alignment with their peers. Achieving this leads to stance(s) enactment amongst peers and the teacher.

To show that identity is constructed, hence aiding stance creation, Schilling-Estes (2004) discusses how speakers use variable features in order to display and form their personal, interpersonal, and group identities. In support of the concept that identity is discursively constructed, Hall states that [“precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse; we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies”] (1996:4).

Informed by the aforementioned position, we will discuss how identities are instrumental in stance enactment within the classroom discourse.

Closely connected to our discussion, Ochs (1993) suggests that through verbally performing certain social acts, and verbally displaying certain stances, speakers usually attempt to establish their own social identities. Even with well-stipulated goals and objectives in the language classroom, we find that interruptions by the teacher and students' responses index their stances. Also, particular linguistic forms recognized amongst students help to group discursive activities that can index interpersonal stances such as; friendliness or intensity, or social actions such as apologizing and making requests. By showing how the concept of stance is inseparable with identity, Kiesling (2009) alludes that the discussion of personae and personalities inevitably brings up the question of identity.

One key feature of "I and Other(s)" that serves a significant point in classroom discourse analytic study is the "othering" which is salient in our investigation. Students, as social actors, continually align themselves not only with each other, but also with the teacher, by using both verbal and non-verbal language. An opinion of a particular student in a class may sometimes represent the opinion of "Others" (peers or his/her social group) since they are one "together". This group representation is a means of enacting stance of solidarity and/or constructing social identity in building a community of learning. Teachers should try to interpret discourses as they aim to create relevant negotiation of meaning in classroom practice.

Kiesling's (2009: 272) definitions of stance as "a person's expression of their relationship to their talk (their epistemic stance--e.g how certain they are about their assertions), and a person's expression of their relationship to their interlocutors (their interpersonal stance--e.g., friendly or dominating)" confirms Jaffe's (2009) position that people organize interactions

through stances. Just as there are varied relationships in any organization, classroom study envisions distinguishing student-student and teacher-student relationships. Attempts to enact both epistemic and interpersonal stances by classroom participants suggest that discourse is a dynamic process of identity construction. Kiesling (2009) further argues that speakers ultimately make linguistic choices in order to take stances. Having this in mind is fundamental for the interpretation of classroom discourse, which invariably shapes learning. Most importantly, Kiesling (2009) states that any choice of linguistic form made by speakers is based ultimately on the interpersonal or epistemic stance they wish to take with their various interlocutors at a particular time. Through the cultural model, stances become associated with various identities.

Kiesling argues that “identity and personal style are both ways of stereotyping habitual patterns of stancetaking, or repertoires of stance” (2009:175). This idea by Kiesling implies that we cannot divorce stancetaking from identity formation. Discourse pairs in his article offer an illumination of aspects of identity formation whereby he argues that stance is compatible with a focus on both personal style and identity categories such as gender, race, class, religion and so forth. These categories are salient in narratives, group discussions, presentations, and IRE structures as valuable contributing factors in the struggle for stance enactments.

Benwell & Stoke’s (2006) argument of language as a window into the mind/ experience when coupled with identity is constructed, show that students’ and their teacher’s use of language is not merely meant to accomplish classroom related tasks but also serve as a tool for stances enactment. While discussing the notion of identity in narratives that characterize ESL classrooms, Benwell & Stoke (2006) reveal that in our ability to tell different stories, we can construct different versions of self. This idea is in conduit with Schiffirin, who states that “our identities as social beings emerge as we construct our own individual experiences as a way to

position ourselves in relation to social and cultural expectations” (1996:170).

To support the aforementioned argument, Rymes (2009) asserts that for teachers, the language adopted and the way they choose to understand the language used by their students significantly shapes what type of learner they are in the classroom in terms of their persona. This supports our discussion on discourse analysis as it allows teachers to interpret classroom discourse in terms of identity construction and chances of stances enactments more than the actual assessment of students’ conformity to classroom discourse structures such as IRE and turn-taking.

Bulcholtz & Hall (2005) explore the varied ways that scholars approach the question of identity. The authors seek to anchor identity in interaction, whereby identity is seen as an emergent feature in discourse and does not precede it. Therefore, they argue that the construct of identity is an intersubjectively achieved, social cultural phenomenon. Additionally, they posit that linguistic resources that indexically produce identity are broad and flexible, and include implicatures, stances, styles, and entire languages. Bucholtz & Hall’s (2005) study is significant to the investigation of classroom discourse, as scholars best understand the complex nature of identity as a social, cultural, and interactional phenomenon.

Du Bois’ (2002) framework of analysis of stance, which is both a subjective and intersubjective phenomenon, characterizes stance as social action. Du Bois defines stance as “a public act by a social actor that, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means (language, gesture, and other symbolic forms), through which social actors simultaneously evaluate objects, position subjects (themselves and others), and align with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field” (2007: 163). Du Bois believes one evaluates him-/herself, and thereby positions him-/herself with the other participant. His position

on stance is in tandem agreement with Bucholtz (2009), who attempts to explain the indexical theory of style by positing that the social meaning of linguistic form is not from social categories (gender, ethnicity, age or religion), but rather from subtler and more fleeting interactional moves through which speakers take stances, create alignments, and construct personas. Du Bois is therefore in agreement with the concept that stance enactment is a personal style.

Ochs (1993) illustrates examples of epistemic and affective stance in language, though Cazden (2001) argues that epistemic/knowledge related language dominates in the classroom in which affective or emotional language is hard to find. In Gallas' (1995) classroom, hesitations in epistemic stance helped to construct successful science talks. Gallas' study unveiled that a greater diversity of classmates joined in the conversation when students began to preface their comments with phrases such as 'I think' or 'maybe'. Together with her teaching interns and students, Gallas discovered how question-asking strategies influence the inquiry stance. Since classroom language is believed to affect learning in second and foreign language contexts, understanding the construct of identity and stance enactment can benefit classroom teachers by allowing them to use all mechanisms necessary for successful negotiation of meaning.

Epistemic stancetaking, as Jaffe (2009) indicates, aims to establish the relative authority of interaction, while at the same time applying that authority in a wider sociocultural field. In the classroom situation that forms the context of our investigation, we are going to look at the literature related to stancetaking and how the teachers not only positions themselves as authority but also creates space for students to construct their social identity. Additionally, the participants' discourse is examined to understand their negotiation of meaning in this particular classroom event. Without such sociocultural discursive practices, the dynamics of stancetaking would be paradoxical, especially within classroom situation.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: ANALYSING STANCE IN THE LENS OF ON-TASK TALK

Ohta (1995) conducted a qualitative case study of a teacher-fronted and pair work interaction that involved two intermediate learners of Japanese. She investigates how learners in these contexts constitute L2 development. Her analysis reveals that collaborative interaction in learner-learner role-play tasks results in increased accuracy in L2 use. Her results provide evidence that learners with weak and strong L2 skills benefit from working with a more advanced learner. This analysis of teacher-fronted and pair work interactions occurring in a natural classroom setting also shows how pair work functions in the L2 acquisition of the two learners.

In this research, the teacher-expert sets up the pair activity, while exercising control over classroom interaction. The teacher creates the context and task design, and enforces a level of control to ensure that the language being produced by these learners is appropriate. As another classroom role comes into being; however, once pair work begins, new roles must be co-constructed by the learners within their pairs. We find that the new roles created usually depend on learners' personalities and language proficiencies of the student pairs. Though the teacher retains the role of teacher-expert, the role changes subtly as he/she ceases to be the allocator of turns, and transfers that measure of control over to the learners. The teacher then, takes a new support role as he/she moves around the classroom, offering assistance to the pairs as needed.

My research will add to this study by investigating how the learners enact stance as they negotiate meaning in order to accomplish tasks. Ohta (1995) argues that pair roles are also influenced by participants' personalities and there is no doubt that as students engage in

classroom related discussions, their identities influence their peers to either agree or disagree with their views. For that reason, it is paramount to delve into how learner's identity is indexed during the overall classroom interactions, and how stance enactment(s) facilitate(s) learning. My research does not examine the use of features such as prompts and clarification requests during classroom collaborative activities as opportunities related to subject knowledge but as indexicalities of their identity and stancetaking strategies.

O'Connor & Michaels' (1993) discussion of the classroom discursive strategy refers to as 'revoicing' whose structure reveals how knowledge of the development of student literacy affords teachers a vehicle for stipulating larger educational goals shows the need to understand different ways of engaging and supporting students within the ESL classrooms. The authors observed recurrence of the aforementioned discourse strategy during their long-term studies of two classrooms. My research adds to this, whereby I suggest that stance enactment strategies as 'discourse' features can accord the teacher an instrument of peer-peer interactions, identity creation, community building through cross-cultural comparisons appropriated in classroom discourse. In that, negotiation of meaning through SCT framework will strike a balance in language use, hence delivering socialization in an educational setting. Undoubtedly, all students would be successfully inducted into speech activities associated with intellectual work in the envisioned community of learners. Though I will build on this research to look at discourse as a window of learning, more research is needed to analyze talk that creates conducive learning environments through reduction of anxiety levels of students during classroom interactions.

In illustrating how teacher's discursive practices work in an attempt to coordinate academic tasks with social structures (the roles and stances taken by students as they engage with the teacher and others), O' Connor & Michaels (1993) note that students and teachers jointly

construct lessons during the classroom discourse. The authors observed up to 150 events whereby the two teachers orchestrated classroom group tasks and routinely conducted large-group discussions that continued for at least thirty minutes.

It is important to note that my research contributes to the stated concept of solidarity stance, which is usually experienced in language classrooms. The implications of stance in students' participation are also proposed as a means of creating a community of learners in ESL classes. Besides, the potential of those stances in reconstruction of socialization among students will be analyzed.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Setting and Participants

This study was undertaken using data collected during the third week of the spring 2013 semester at a university in the southern region of the United States. The data was derived from audio recordings and transcripts of a fifty-minute, advanced ESL classroom interaction in the Intensive English Program (IEP) of the university. Specifically, the section was a Business English class. The participants included the professor and fifteen ESL students (eight male and seven female students). All of the participants were international students from diverse geographical regions, including Asia (Japan, Thailand, and South Korea), the Middle East (Oman) and Europe (Denmark and France). The professor was a white, American female, with more than eight years of experience teaching ESL students. Given the proficiency level of the students (Advanced or Advanced Plus) and the experience level of the teacher, there seemed to be ease in the interactions between professor and students.

The class was held at the basement floor of a classroom in the Division of Outreach and Continuing Education. The room had an overhead projector, Mac computer, and VCR/DVD player; and a smart board on the wall was adjacent to the door. The door remained closed throughout the lesson, to avoid disruption. I was positioned in the corner closest to the entrance, and remained passive as I collected the data.

Table 1 and Table 2 below show the seating arrangements of the students. The students

in table 1 were seated close to the door while those in table 2 were seated at the opposite side of the classroom. I have labeled their country of origin and their gender as names may not exactly define gender in all the cultures. To ensure confidentiality, I have given pseudonyms to all the students' participants throughout my research.

TABLE 1

Sue FEMALE SOUTH KOREA	Rose FEMALE SOUTH KOREA	Maya FEMALE SOUTH KOREA	Olivia FEMALE FRANCE	Christine FEMALE FRANCE
Aliya FEMALE OMAN	Beth FEMALE DENMARK		Derrick MALE DENMARK	

TABLE 2

Eichi MALE JAPAN	Annan MALE THAILAND	Jack MALE SOUTH KOREA		
Ken MALE SOUTH KOREA	Chin MALE SOUTH KOREA	Kazim MALE OMAN	Adam MALE OMAN	

I have given an outline of the class schedule below as a brief description of all the activities that the students were engaged in at the time of my study.

## Class schedule

0-14:58: taking a test and professor giving back the tests to the students.

14:58- 20:17: All the students participate in the “SPEED” game activity conducted by the professor. The professor facilitates the game by asking students to read the categories written on the cards and gives other vocabularies associated with the category.

20:18-21:30: general introduction on commercials and the introduction on the commercial; “*God Made a Farmer.*” This video is a super bowl commercial by Paul Harvey.

22:17- 24:30: setting up the audio and playing the video of the commercial, “*God made a Farmer*”

24:30-30:32: classroom discussions about the commercial; “*God Made a Farmer.*” The students discussed whether or not the commercial is internationally marketable. They used religious beliefs of their respective countries as the major determining factor.

30:33-31:14: introduction of the parody; “*God Made a Factory Farmer.*” The professor introduced the parody by mentioning its association with the voice of the radio announcer from “*God Made a Farmer*”.

31:15-32:58: video on “*God Made a Factory Farmer*” plays

32:58-39:01: discussions on “*God Made a Factory Farmer*” commercial. Students use their intercultural knowledge to discuss the parody.

39:02- 39:59: introduction of the “*Thai*” commercial. This is a commercial about insurance.

40:00-41:06: video of the “*Thai*” commercial plays

41:10-45:56: discussions on the “*Thai*” commercial. The professor explains the difference between health insurance and life insurance by citing her life insurance policy and

dramatizing the explanation given by one of the students.

47:30-48:28: “*Volkswagen Darth Vader*” commercial plays

48:35-50:08: discussions about the commercial; *Volkswagen Darth Vader*”

50:09-50:08: lesson conclusion.

During the first ten minutes of class, the students took a test, after which they gave it to the professor and went outside of the classroom. This requirement by the professor was to minimize disruption for those who had not finished. Students finished taking the test at different times and after all the students had finished the test, the teacher called them back into the classroom. All the students occupied their previous seating positions after the test. As the class progressed, the teacher walked around the classroom while the students remained seated. No group activities were assigned to students, as the professor directly interacted with the whole class and occasionally called upon students to respond. To facilitate maximum participation, she also frequently called upon the students who were not volunteering to answer questions. Throughout the lesson, the students heavily contributed to the classroom discourse, but the professor remained in complete control of the topics discussed.

Audio-recorders were used to capture the classroom discussions used in the research. I positioned two audio-recorders at each table in a place that I thought would be both effective and not obstructive to the students. The third audio-recorder was placed at the desk with the Mac computer. The audio-recorders captured the entirety of the class, without changing their primary location.

The knowledge of use of audio recorders can affect learners and the professor as both engage in classroom activities, and it has been argued that this realization can affect the results of research. The fact that researchers want naturalistic data, and yet know that the presence of a

recording device affects the behavior of the participants is referred to by Labov as the “observer’s paradox” (1972:209). The analysis of my data - especially students' participation - could have been affected by my presence in the classroom; however, it would have been unethical to collect any data without the knowledge of the participants.

I sampled the recordings and selected the clearest version to use for transcription. The recordings were then transcribed using transcription conventions below, which were developed by Jefferson (1984):

- = An equal sign indicates latching; that is, there is no interval or overlap between adjacent utterances.
- [ ] Double brackets indicate overlapping utterances.
- (*text*) single parentheses indicate transcription doubt
- ((*text*)) Double parentheses are used to indicate transcriber's interpretative/scenic explanation
- . A period indicates a fall in tone.
- (0.0) Numbers in parentheses indicate the length of a pause by tenth of a second.
- ↑ ↓ Arrows indicate pitch resets; marked rising and falling shifts
- In intonation.
- ((pause)) Indicates untimed intervals.
- :*text*: Colons indicate an extension of sound.
- , Comma indicates a continuing intonation.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising intonation.
- ! An exclamation mark indicates an animated tone
- - A single dash indicates halting, or an abrupt end of sound or a word.

- *text*: Underlining indicates some form of stress or emphasis from pitch or loudness.
- *TEXT* Upper Case indicates extreme loudness compared with surrounding talk.
- °*text*° A degree sign indicates a passage of talk is quieter than the surrounding talk.

Once I had transcribed the recordings, I analyzed the data by searching for patterns and explaining how the classroom interactions inform my research. I started by selecting a series of interactions for analysis without necessarily having any preconceived ideas about the data. Before considering how the sections of discussion helped the participants accomplish their intentions (namely negotiation of meaning, reflecting their identity, and enacting stances), I examined aspects surrounding the different participation structures. Certain pauses were timed, in an endeavor to learn how the participants' turn-taking provided certain understanding of the actions and issues being discussed (ten Have, 1999). Afterwards, I analyzed the transcribed work in terms of themes of the utterance, patterns of interaction, and Initiation Response Feedback (IRF) structure. In this structure I investigated the discussions initiated by the professor, the response(s) they elicited from the students and the evaluative comment(s) that followed those responses from both the professor and the students. The pattern of discussions changed according to the coded transcript for the IRF structure and therefore, I also analyzed the interactive stages, while examining how the participants simultaneously enacted their stances. The interactive stages similarly included the initiation, response, and feedback of the participants. I coded the speech according to two major themes prevalent in the discussions, and selected the excerpts that best exemplified each of these central themes. Lastly, I have revisited the construct of stance and discussed it in context with the classroom discourse.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

##### A. “Othering” in community building

This study closely examines how the participants used language as a display of their stances. For the students, the construction of the self as a supportive and collaborative peer is accomplished in their interactions with each other and with their professor. Supporting statements made in the classroom discussion evidences the students’ respect for “others” in the classroom and their desire to align with the other students. In the examples that follow, we will see how the idea of “othering” creates a friendly identity, which reflects closeness, agreement, tolerance, and respect in an ideal community of interactants. Though the students investigated in this study are all “others” in the United States, they supported each other in the classroom by voicing their individual backgrounds and cultures. This specific classroom is a learning community where students use language to demonstrate understanding of the content being discussed, and create and maintain relationships with their peers. Stance enactment is therefore investigated as a discourse resource.

Six students in particular, Aliya, Beth, Kazim, Derrick, Eichi, and Jack, will be the focus of my analysis because they demonstrated construction of social identity through aspects of “othering” as they engaged in intercultural negotiation of meaning. The countries of origin of all the students present during the time of this study can be obtained from Table 1 and Table 2

presented previously. In this analysis, I will describe how the students' responses during a classroom activity indicate their identities. I will examine how they enacted interpersonal and epistemic stances through their friendliness, solidarity, and cultural awareness, and content knowledge. In the various commercials discussions examined in this study, I will show how the sociocultural practice and the communities of interaction are relevant. As the students referenced their cultural practices with confidence and awareness of the cultural differences of their peers, they did not signal any intention of disrespecting the cultural beliefs and practices of the "others". This sense of "othering" allowed interactions and acceptance by other members of the classroom community through supportive responses. When the participants' lifestyle or society differed with those of their colleagues, they made efforts to offer intercultural comparisons, consequently enacting stances. I will examine how each of the six students enacted interpersonal stances with his/her peers during the classroom activities and how they enacted an epistemic stance, specifically as they discussed the commercials that they were knowledgeable about.

To start, Aliya realizes the strength in the virtue of being hard working and she uses her turn not only to confirm her hardworking persona but also as a tribute to "Others" in the community. She is obviously aware of most societies perception of hardworking members. She advocates for a social system where good qualities are not viewed as attributes but as virtues and are meant for the development of the surrounding communities. After introducing the concept of the super bowl commercials, the professor mentions one of the commercials; "God Made a Farmer," about which one of the students had posted on the class blog. In *Excerpt 1* below, Aliya aligns with Beth and Kazim, whose responses reveal the creation of an identity of "good" students by signifying "hard work" as a very important quality.



*Excerpt 1*

43 Professor: ...what do you think about

44 this commercial?

45 Aliya:I think it's a notice to everybody that nothing comes

46 easy and you have to work hard at getting something and

47 there's no low, like that this job maybe, a lot of

48 people like run away from being a farmer or like make

49 jokes about farmers but it's really a hard tough job but

50 it deserve it and its, it builds so many things inside of

51 you more than what if you were a teacher or anything

52 else. or perhaps if you work at a business area, sector

53 or stuff like that you won't gain these kinda like

54 benefits, strong beliefs and you have strengths and

55 struggles to do your work, to have a schedule. it's a

56 hard, tough job and it's only for a strong man.↓

57 Professor: okay, anyone else have anything else to say?

58 okay we'll go with Kazim then Beth. first Kazim.

59 Kazim : I think, uh: in my perspective that uh:((pause))to

60 to have a good thing, you have to work harder eh we can

61 have uh:((pause))some simple stuff but we don't have to

62 work. uh: hard so if you work like. if we don't work.

63 hard we will get just a basic and simple

64 thing((pause))but if we work uh harder we can get the

65 good, the good stuff.

66 Professor: okay, and Beth you want to contribute to that?  
67 Beth: I think that the commercial is(0.4)really playing on  
68 emotions a lot. and I don't see:I you can really see what  
69 they are trying to do because really the car has nothing  
70 to do with being a farmer. it's two different things. you  
71 don't need to have the car to be a farmer and it doesn't  
72 necessarily have to be a farmer who has this car. but  
73 ((pause))it works and then, yeah they they're trying to  
74 speak to the eh religious, self-conscious, hard-working,  
75 eh American people. but I just think it's way out of  
76 proportion ((laughs))that they are really putting so much  
77 attention to your emotions or a car.  
78 Professor: okay, now did one of you guys have, I think that I  
79 saw a hand go up over here. did one of you guys want to  
80 say something about this or anyone else. oh Aliya wants  
81 to say something again. okay, quickly though, okay  
82 Aliya: yeah I think this is not just for oh farmers it's  
83 for everybody who's working hard.

Aliya's effort to align with her peers is evident in her use of the word "everybody" (*line* 82), "Yeah I think this is not just for oh farmers it's for everybody who's working hard."

Because this is the second time Aliya contributes to this topic, she deconstructs her previous stance where she attempted to argue that the nature of the job done by farmers is harder and shows the true spirit of diligence in comparison to other occupations such as teaching, or working or business related work. Her use of "everybody" (*Excerpt 1, line 45*) reveals that she

regards herself as one of the “Others” and respects the contribution brought by farmers and business people in society.

As a community builder, Aliya does not want to be misunderstood as challenging the honor attributed with other professions. Therefore, she deconstructs her previous view that farmers are superior beings, which is an effort to reenact her interpersonal stance with her peers and the professor. This aspect of “othering” shows that she understands that supporting the view of other students’ participants in a discussion is a means of aligning with them. In addition, Aliya was concerned that her statement could have been interpreted to mean that she disregards the teaching profession, and we are not sure if her professor would take it kindly. She validates the belief that American society highly values hard work. By showing that the commercial, “*God Made a Farmer*” is not only marketed to farmers but is applicable to others working outside the “praised” farming occupation. She succeeds in reinforcing her identity to the professor as a hard working student, and at the same time reminds her peers that she did not mean to be controversial by not recognizing the various occupations where other professionals have demonstrated admirable virtues. In a learning community, respect is a binding factor that allows cohesion and desire by participants to engage in negotiation of meaning. By stating that there are many more benefits when working in a business area or sector just as in farming, we find that this is an effort of aligning herself with the professor by creating a very desirable character of playing a role of community builder who values people working in other professions. Aliya’s stancetaking showcases her understanding of the significance of “Othering” in development of society. Similarly, the professor values the contribution of students, which supports their efforts of fostering “othering” in the classroom discourse.

In an effort to enact an epistemic stance, Aliya uses the discourse strategy of the display

hesitation “I think” in (*Excerpt 1, line 82*) “Yeah I think this is not just for oh farmers...”

Similarly Kazim uses the same hesitation in (*Excerpt 1, line 59*), “I think, uh: in my perspective...” Epistemic stance is usually displayed when an actor demonstrates knowledge/understanding in some areas hence indicating what can be regarded as right or wrong. It also refers to an act of revealing awareness or the capacity by a speaker to validate utterances. Through the discourse strategy illustrated above, the two participants show the information they are going to present can be challenged, as it is just their own opinion. Since in both cases the hesitation is used to introduce the concepts, it is a means of inviting immediate response from the listeners and could greatly enhance negotiation of meaning. Interestingly Kazim reinforces his stance by also using the phrase “...in my perspective...”

In *Excerpt 2* below, we will examine Beth’s explanation of the commercial; “*God Made a Farmer*” and discuss how it reveals her knowledge of that particular commercial, European civilization, and most importantly her knowledge towards the “others” hence a strategy of enacting an epistemic stance.

*Excerpt 2*

20 Beth: ((clears throat)) it shows pictures of uh: many  
21 different farmers ((pause)) like very old school  
22 farmers. but also more modern uh: how it’s sort of  
23 like how farming has evolved into what it is now.

We can deduce from this Excerpt that Beth recognizes both the present development of farming and the process (evolution) that it has gone through and is a good way of acknowledging the efforts made by “Others”; who did not probably have the same privileges that we have in the modern society. Without them, evolution experienced in various sectors could not have been achieved. We find that Beth does not use the hesitation “I think” like her peer; Aliya (above)

since she is reporting what is seen “...it shows pictures...” (*line 20*) rather than her perception of the commercial. Thus, Beth enacts an epistemic stance by showing her professor and peers that she is an observant and resourceful student, capable of describing present events/issues arising in discussions confidently. Though Beth matches the pictures to two categories of farmers (old school and modern) in *lines 21* and *22*, her contribution draws from her belief, that farming like other occupations, has developed with the technological discoveries. Through perhaps claiming that the farming system has benefited from technology advancements hence looking different from the “old school” farming, Beth enacts an epistemic stance as she creates an identity of being a reasonable and bright student. From her utterance and being the first one to respond, we can deduce that she is not reinforcing anyone's argument but signaling a sense of “othering” by valuing contributions made by the “others” in the society.

*Excerpt 3* is also a good example of stancetaking as not only an event but also a process. Classroom discourse has shown that students strategically enact their interpersonal stances by validating their peers' previous utterances or reintroducing issues, which had dominated the discussion with an intention of supporting their peers or the teacher's claims. At other times, they use such chances to clarify their stance on the topic hence enacting either an interpersonal or epistemic stance or both. Beth's response to the professor's question reveals her effort to enact the stance of othering.

*Excerpt 3*

86 Professor: that's the question here. okay, so let's  
87 think about this first for a second. what are the  
88 traits that might be selling the truck that this, this a  
89 commercial is conveying? (0.8) well, you said it.hard-  
90 working. How about something else? not just

91 hardworking, but what do you become when you're hard-  
92 worker? (0.8)  
93 Aliya: strong°°  
94 Professor: STRONG. TOUGH.  
95 Beth: but also it(0.2) says all the time that God made  
96 them a worker.°°

Besides enacting their individual stances, the participants in this study are also collaboratively negotiating meaning. Apart from demonstrating how the “Others” affect achievements of the goals of the community, they make efforts to enable a community of learners in the ESL classroom. Beth's use of “but also” in (*Excerpt 3, line 95*), above shows her strategy to support her peers, hence confirming to her learning community that she is not in disagreement with their views of the other traits of selling the truck in the commercial. From this utterance, Beth therefore enacts an interpersonal stance with Aliya, who mentions “strong” as one of the traits. We find that Beth's response serves as an addition to what Aliya had stated, perhaps in order to erase a feeling of “Otherness”. Though this is not a new idea in the class, it indexes how students can support their peers’ responses (the contribution of the “Others”) by responding with utterances close to the ones that already seems valid, even without necessarily struggling to be creative.

As a signal of how her response is salient to the commercial, Beth uses the words, “says all the time” (*line 95*). Her contribution is significant as it reinforces the trait of hard work discussed above. This is the same trait that Kazim supported when he was responding to the professor's question above. “...if we work uh harder we can get the good stuff.” (*Excerpt 1, line 64-65*)

In conclusion, in the three excerpts, the students evaluate their peers’ utterances and enact

appropriate stances as they negotiate meaning while discussing the commercials. It is also worth noting that the professor creates a discursive environment in her facilitation role, while allowing students to construct the “othering” in this community of learning.

#### B. Negotiating Intercultural Meaning

In multicultural classrooms similar to the ESL class investigated in this study, participants explicitly and implicitly talk about their own cultures, if they have lived in the host’s culture for some time, they may be tempted to make comparisons. By a close investigation of the scenarios created in language classrooms; the questions raised; examples given by participants; and the discussions alignments, much is revealed as to the salience of the cultural component in classroom discourse. Interactants create their desired identities using their cultures as the mirror while at the same time adjusting their arguments depending on the “other” cultures emerging during discussions.

While engaging in classroom discussions, students articulate similarities and differences between their home countries and the United States, and between their cultures and the cultures of their classmates. These comparisons are excellent opportunities for us to examine stancetaking. The students examined in this study constructed their social identity using their countries of origin as the main reference points. The names of the students, gender and home countries are in Tables 1 and 2 illustrated in the previous chapter.

The excerpt below clearly illustrates how students negotiate intercultural meaning within classroom discourse. A teacher’s offering a framework for such negotiations could enhance students’ participation, as they would be willing to talk about their own cultures. Before the teacher called upon the students to say whether the commercial “*God Made a Farmer*” could be





*Farmer*” and believes it could be an internationally marketable. She stresses “hundred percent yes” (*line 120*), and “definitely, yes...” (*line 126*), to express her opinion that the commercial would be relevant outside the United States. She further validates her response by mentioning “in the Middle East” (*line 128*), which implies similarity in identity of the people from her native country (Oman) and those of the entire Middle East region. The societies’ position on religion seems is one of the major factors whether the commercial is relevant to particular society. Differing from Aliya, the two students from Denmark (Derrick and Beth) believe that the commercial cannot work because religious matters are not spoken about in public. These students seem to be (re)creating a cultural stereotype of the Middle East as “religious” and Scandinavian countries as “not as religious”. Consequently, they are enacting an epistemic stance with their fellow students and the professor by creating identities that “match” popular stereotypes of their cultures. Beth alludes that Denmark it would be challenging to prove that God actually made a farmer, which is the message conveyed in the commercial and the opposite of what is implied by Aliya concerning the Middle East. Aliya reinforces her stance with lexical choices “..yes” (*line 126*) and “yeah”, (*line 128*), to show that she equally accepts the other participants’ (re) creation of the stereotypes and supports them as “other” but not “bad”. Aliya mentions that (the people of the Middle East) believe in God, “yeah we believe in God”, and does so as a means of recreating her identity as a member of the Middle Eastern society whose religious beliefs are similar with those of the Oman. Additionally, she stresses how society has prioritized belief in God, “the first thing we believe in...” (*lines 130-131*).

Unlike the first commercial where students from various cultures represented in the class did not agree on how the commercial could be applicable in their countries, the reaction of the students on the parody “*God Made a Factory Farmer*” is different. Nevertheless, as we will find in the

excerpt below, Aliya, is concerned about the stereotype of Mexicans that is displayed in the commercial, and she is reacting to it as an act of stancetaking.

*Excerpt 5*

272 Aliya: um: I think he displayed a picture of like it's true,  
273 it's true, that it's that everything was made for a  
274 reason and that's true ((pause)) but...

275 Professor: [mmh]

276 Aliya: but the way he displayed it it's absolutely wrong.  
277 Mexicans are not ((pause)) they're not just because they  
278 are strong and they're like, they are broughtn' here to  
279 do this work. this is what life made them. life made them  
280 take this...

281 Professor: [YEAH, yeah, yeah...

282 Aliya: [yeah]

Aliya's stress of the word "wrong" after the adverb "absolutely" shows her identity as being respectful to the others. She understands that societies need each other, and though she is legally in the US as an international student, she empathizes with Mexicans, who are often the focus of American cultural discourse on illegal immigration. She is considerate of what draws possibly them to that state, and she is indirectly asking her classroom community, and in extension the United States community, to rethink their perception of illegal immigrants.

In *Excerpt 5*, Aliya is reconstructing her belief in religion; she believes that the parody symbolizes the true image of the factory farming system. By arguing that "everything was made by God", she is confirming her interpersonal stance on the topic through reacting to the parody. She reinforces the stance she has taken on religion by using the statement: "everything was made

for a reason” (*lines 273-274*). She contests the main message in the commercial, the idea that though people from different cultures were made for a reason, strength is just a positive attribute since there are no people or culture(s) superior. She believes it is the nature of life, or the will of God (Allah); thus in (*lines 279-280*) she says that “life made them take this”. As a community builder, Aliya is enacting an interpersonal stance with her peers, who recognize the virtue of hard work. Undoubtedly, we find that the above participants manage to enact their interpersonal stances as they engage in a religious related discourse. The professor constructed a “refereeing” role by drawing the “battle lines”; that is, the students who think it would work, and the other(s) who think(s) it would not. This serves as an invitation to the other students to state their views and align with either of the two constructed positions. As shown in *Excerpt 6*, Beth enacts an interpersonal stance by illustrating the mismatch of the emotions in the commercial with her intercultural experience.

*Excerpt 6*

67 Beth: I think that the commercial is(0.4)really playing on  
68 emotions a lot. and I don't see:I you can really see what  
69 they are trying to do because really the car has nothing  
70 to do with being a farmer. it's two different things. you  
71 don't need to have the car to be a farmer and it doesn't  
72 necessarily have to be a farmer who has this car. but  
73 ((pause))it works and then, yeah they there're trying to  
74 speak to the eh religious, self-conscious, hard-working, eh  
75 American people. but I just think it's way out of  
76 proportion ((laughs))that they are really putting so much  
77 attention to your emotions or a car.

From her response, even though Beth understands the value of hard work and other principles, which are beneficial in society, she strongly champions modality, especially in issues where emotions are involved. By mentioning that the commercial attempts to speak to religious, conscious, hardworking Americans, (*Excerpt 6, lines 74-75*), Beth is exhibiting her negotiation of intercultural meaning, thus enacting an epistemic stance with both the students and the professor. While religion in the Middle East is integrated into social practices such as work, Denmark and other European countries (as also argued by the professor) regard religion as a separate entity. Speaking publicly about such private subjects could be embarrassing. Her ability to negotiate meaning while referencing the culture of the others helps to recreate the religious identity discussed previously. As we noted in *Excerpt 1*, her peers from the Middle East supported the religious discourse as it did not reveal negative stereotyping but is rather an example of an intercultural difference and perhaps an indicator of the need to embrace the aspect of “othering.” The Excerpt below denotes how society (community) expects its members to align with each other and, accordingly, how Beth is supporting her stance on the commercial “*God Made a Farmer.*”

*Excerpt 7*

132 Professor: okay, I was just wondering if the name makes a  
133 difference. You know what I...okay? †interesting, okay so  
134       you think it would work and you say it would not.  
135 Beth: no, I think first because the commercial that if you  
136       mention God in Denmark people laugh at people laugh at  
137       you. So you wouldn't do that but then again uh no one  
138       would like buy so big cars in Denmark.

Beth's argument in (*Excerpt 7, lines 136-137*) above, of how religion is not spoken about

in her country, offers an intercultural comparison between American society and her own society. Two reasons can be attributed to her ideas. First, she obviously knows her professor is an American, and she could be inviting her to give a personal opinion if the commercial could be applicable American society. Second, she is creatively trying to align with a different culture rather than her own to enact an interpersonal stance with the professor. With such participation initiation from the students in an ESL classroom, learning is co-constructed as being negotiated by both the students and the professor.

Though different cultures are represented in this classroom, a few student participants manage to enact an epistemic stance with their fellow students and their professor during the classroom activity. By mentioning the two reasons why she thinks the commercial cannot work in Denmark in a listing manner (“first” and “then”), Beth creates a persona of being well-organized and confident in her arguments. She wants to ensure that her peers and the professor get the point concisely, hence enacting an epistemic stance. Beth, for instance, seems quite aware that, in her country, farmers could not necessarily purchase a car; but if they could they would not usually purchase a truck. This is the same case of lifestyle with Japan as mentioned by Eichi in *Excerpt 8*.

*Excerpt 8*

151 Professor: yeah this is not a car to drive around in. this a  
152 utility vehicle. in the United States it's a car that  
153 people drive around in, right? what about umm..let's hear  
154 from Asia. Japan. would this commercial work in Japan?  
155 Eichi: I don't sink so.°°  
156 Professor: you don't think so. you are typically going for  
157 the smaller vehicles as well. for the same reasons as

158 Denmark. but what about the commercial itself? the  
159 emotions in the commercial? would that be appealing?  
160 Eichi: No.

An analysis confirms that ability to engage in intercultural meaning negotiation can indeed be a significant contributor in a language classroom discourse. As we discussed previously in this study, the two students from Oman, Aliya and Kazim in *Excerpt 1* respond and agree that the truck displayed in the commercial signifies the lifestyle of hard working farmers. Through the discussions, Beth's identity is constructed as that of a co-participant, and she maximizes every chance to factually represent the information about her society.

In the parody "*God Made a Factory Farmer*", Jack alludes that the degree of "truth" is one of the reasons he does not like the commercial. He seems to sympathize with the way factory farming and the government system is satirized in the parody. He further enacts an interpersonal stance by revealing how the commercial affected him emotionally. He argues that he was upset because of the tone of the voice the commercial presented. Throughout his discourse, the professor assisted Jack to negotiate meaning by giving him options; as an example, (*line 193*).

#### *Excerpt 9*

192 Professor: what do you think? what do you think about the  
193 parody? was it funny? or was it upsetting to you?  
194 Jack: a little bit upset.°°  
195 Professor: a little bit upset. why?  
196 Jack: actually they made this parody to umm (0.8) blind the  
197 world. I don't understand one hundred percent of this  
198 parody but I felt little bit upset°°  
199 Professor: okay. do you know which parts of it made you

200                   upset, though.

201 Jack: just his voice tone.

202 Professor: his voice tone? you didn't like the way he was

203        talking or you didn't like what he was saying? °°

204 Jack: he saying.

205 Professor: you don't like it because, you think he is being

206 mean? Or you don't like it because, it's too close to the

207        truth.

208 Jack: because of ((pause)) it's close to the truth.

209 Professor: the truth and the truth is hard, okay.alright, um

210        how about um let's see, Adam what do you think about

211        it?

The above strings of questions (*lines 192-193, 202-203*) act as a cue to the student of what he is expected to convey in his response. The professor uses different forms to ask the same question, in order to avoid misinterpretation, thereby showing her understanding of the Others (ESL students whose proficiency level and capacity to handle tasks and interpret concepts differ in class). While responding to the first string of questions, Jack says in a low tone; “a little bit upset” (*line 194*), not as an indication that he is uncertain or lacks confidence, but as a way of explaining, how the commercial affected his feelings. Jack blames the radio presenter's tone of voice, thereby revealing that comedy that comedy as an art is an industry where the humor is most relevant to the comedian's culture. Differing from the pattern of discourse displayed by the other student participants, Jack does not fully engage in the discourse and shows more concern for the form than the content. Therefore, the interpersonal stance is not enacted in this specific discourse; rather the epistemic stance is created by Jack's understanding of the question form.

Since every learner's contribution is significant, the professor supports him by stating; “the truth and the truth is hard, okay...” (*line 209*) and in addition she calls upon another student to give a second view. The professor intends to create more chances for stances enactments and negotiation of intercultural meaning through giving a turn to any of the students willing to contribute to the topic.

Since language cannot be practiced in a vacuum, most of the student participants investigated in this study used their own cultures as a way of supporting their ideas. From the two commercials, we find out how they manage to create their identities, and about the different sociocultural aspects of their societies. Even without necessarily making direct intercultural comparisons with those cultures they are familiar with and that are represented in this class, the stances taken by students during the discussion show their beliefs, feelings, and understanding; and most importantly, their stance choices show how they align and disalign with each other.

*Excerpt 10*

437 Beth: I think if they had done it in another way it would be  
438 okay in Denmark, if maybe they show that that woman who  
439 has a family with kids, so and they show she died but  
440 then her kids were able to get an education or whatever  
441           anyways (0.2) ↑then (0.2) you don't have this, motive of  
442           (0.2) so...

Even though it is only in the last commercial, “*The Thai Commercial*” comedy, where most of the participants believe that the content portrayed would work in their respective countries, their different stances as to whether the other two commercials are internationally marketable did not affect the negotiated meaning. They continually constructed their social identity as they engaged in the classroom discourse. As an example, in (*Excerpt 10*) above, Beth



has some reservations but instead she uses hesitations “I think” ( *line 437*) and “maybe” (*line 438*) when offering an alternative way the commercial could be presented to make it culturally meaningful in Denmark. As a business major, Beth seems to be trying to enact an epistemic stance with the professor by proposing a better scenario that could be more applicable in Denmark. Additionally, her choice of words in this scenario indexes how she values education. Creating such an identity could enable enactment of stance, especially with her ESL professor.

### C. Revisiting Stance

Having conducted a classroom discourse study, and examined instances of stance enactment and how they relate to the sociocultural theory approach, it is paramount to revisit the notion of stance in the language classroom. I endeavor to find out how the classroom environment was affected by stance enactment strategies. As explained in Hall (1996), identities are constructed within, not outside discourse and therefore this study reveals how the discussion of commercials took a sociocultural dimension affecting the classroom environment and re-defining an interactional space. In our attempt to clearly convey the construct of stance in this analysis, we investigated how classroom activities can create chances in which students can align with each other and with the teacher, “with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field” (Du Bois, 2007: 163). We accomplished this investigation by analyzing how participants in this specific community of learners constructed their social identity through portraying the true image of the culture, beliefs, and feelings of their respective countries in connection to the commercial being discussed. Though community building is traditionally envisioned as a collaborative activity, we closely investigated how the student participants and their professor selectively and creatively managed to enact their stances while discussing the commercials. The

students examined their peers' responses, and the reaction of their professor before making utterances, in order to reaffirm statements made in class, support the meaning being negotiated, or validate their stances. This classroom activity reconstructs the cultural relevance of specific commercials and is structured as discursive rather than formulaic. In this activity, students are required to explain whether or not these commercials are internationally marketable. Our analysis of these activities revealed similar results to those achieved in (Ochs, 1993; Schilling-Estes, 2004; Bulcholtz & Hall, 2005; and Johnstone, 2007), in which participants constructed their identities as they engaged in discursive activities. In this ESL classroom discussion, we analyzed how students enacted epistemic and interpersonal stances with each other and with their professor.

In the excerpts above, we have analyzed how the negotiating intercultural meaning created classroom opportunities of stance enactments, and also allowed alignments and construction of desired personas (Bucholtz 2009). The strong-willed persona is evident in the various discursive practices in which Aliya engaged. Cautious of her professor's language use, she keenly worked to emulate it. As an example, in (*Excerpt 1, lines 43-44*) when the professor asked, "what do you think about this commercial?" her response began, "I think..." Her choice of words shows her willingness to negotiate meaning with the professor without worrying about the correctness of her responses. Aliya's response defines her efforts in building a participatory classroom community. Unlike the phrases, "I believe" or "I know," her use of "I think" serves as an invitation for other students to freely present their views, hence creating opportunities to practice the language.

When the professor calls upon Kazim, "Okay we'll go with Kazim then Beth. first Kazim." (*Excerpt 1 line 58*), she is reacting to his perceived interest to contribute to the

discussion. Understanding the role of the teacher as a facilitator in building a community of interactants, Kazim and Beth respond and successfully enact their interpersonal stances by using hesitations, “I think”. Similarly, in two instances, (*Excerpt 1, lines 45 and 82*) Aliya uses the same hesitation, which reveals a significant discursive strategy in classroom discourse. As argued in Gallas' (1995) science classroom study, hesitations are used by students to enact an epistemic stance, hence helping to construct successful discussions. In this study, we would posit that by beginning their responses with “I think”, the students are inviting other participants to express their opinions. They therefore recognize the contributions of the “Other(s)” as equally important as their own. Additionally, the students’ efforts to deconstruct the classroom environment as a forum where learners' utterances create chances of negotiating meaning leading to more discussion progression cannot be ignored. Most importantly, the hesitations of the students could have contributed to classroom solidarity by allowing students to position themselves with each other and not assume their opinions as truths or try to impose them on the others, rather, their positions would be presented as arguments that could be challenged.

Immediately following the hesitation; “I think”, Beth's response indexed her true identity by her use of the word “really” (*Excerpt 6, lines, 67, 68, 69 and 76*). She enacted an epistemic stance with the professor and the students by her lexical choice. She used the word “really” as a way of authenticating her ideas, consequently making them incontestable facts. Previously, we found that Beth aligned with Aliya and Kazim by using hesitation “I think”; and for that reason, not presenting her argument as a fact but in this case, Beth found it necessary to confirm to her professor that she indeed knew exactly what the commercial implied.

In the above analysis, the language used by the students to express their thoughts about the commercial indicates that they are enacting three stances; that of “Othering”; of being from

countries stereotyped as religious or non-religious; and of togetherness (being members of the learning community). I have examined those stances by discussing how the students I selected constructed a sense of the Othering and negotiating intercultural meaning. They achieve this sense by selecting words designed to build solidarity amongst themselves, clarify anticipated misunderstanding, and index uncontested facts or proofs. We discovered an intriguing scenario that supports Du Bois' (2002) framework of analysis, a framework in which he alludes that speakers evaluate, position, and align/misalign with each other for the purpose of enacting their stances. In *Excerpt 6*, Beth indexes her identity as knowledgeable and one with authority to explain the commercial "*God Made a Farmer*" by stressing the words "farmer" and "two different things" as shown below. "... has nothing to do with being a farmer. it's two different things" (*lines 70-71*). Beth is trying to enact an epistemic stance of "Othering" with the professor and her classmates by introducing a different perspective from Aliya and Kazim's. Emphasizing the word "farmers", acts as both a sign of confidence and a response to Aliya, who had linked the commercial, "*God Made a Farmer*", with farmers by praising them and as a sign of confidence in her utterances. While Beth's utterance is not aligned with Aliya's stance on the farming industry, Beth successfully showcases her knowledge of the commercial by mentioning two different reasons why she believes the commercial is playing on the emotions of viewers, thus providing evidence to support her claim.

## CHAPTER V

In this chapter, I will present a conclusion of my findings and their implications. Additionally, I will discuss limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and end with concluding remarks.

### Conclusion

The goal of my study was to explore the intersections between sociocultural knowledge, classroom discourse, and stance. As the focus of language teaching shifts towards the communicative approach, it is paramount to ensure that learning activities are enjoyed through an all-inclusive learning community. The class in my study demonstrates how the students negotiated intercultural meaning through stancetaking as they discussed the commercials. We have also examined how the sense of othering allowed the students to construct and reconstruct their social identity.

There are two basic findings in this study. First, the students' engagement in various sociocultural discursive practices created opportunities for stance enactment. Conclusions from my analysis of commercial discussions supports the findings of many researchers, who have previously discovered effective classroom discourse can create opportunities for interpersonal and epistemic stance enactment. The six students examined show that in a learning community desire to maintain and create relationships could be achieved alongside knowledge gained. Interpersonal and epistemic stances are therefore envisioned as compliment to the existing identities of the participants. For instance, students who exemplify friendly personas in their

discourse are more cautious to enact interpersonal stances with their peers and the professor; whereas those who illustrate hardworking personality are concerned with validating it by enacting epistemic stances. This strategy is remarkable in the students' responses when reacting to the professor's question(s).

The second finding is that stancetaking is an effective method in examining negotiation of meaning in the ESL classrooms. Based on our study, as students engaged in the classroom activities, they aligned themselves to the professor, to each other, and to their home countries. Undoubtedly, through their discussion of the commercials, students clarified their earlier responses, hence deconstructing their previous stance(s). The desire to ensure interpersonal relationships are streamlined according to the interests of the participants, thereby making them collaborate with each other as they negotiate meaning.

The study investigates the class as a community of learners not only interested in gaining knowledge in the English language but who are also keen to strengthen their relationships with each other and with the professor. During several discussions of the commercials, the students' discourse revealed an interesting participation structure, which encourages involvement of many participants (though sometimes with fewer in-depth discussions) and formulaic responses.

The present study demonstrates how classroom discourse can benefit from the inclusion of sociocultural knowledge, as participants could view each instance as an opportunity to enact their stances. The analysis indicated that design of the participants' structure in a language classroom is an ongoing process. The students closely monitored the reactions of their peers and/or their professor as the lesson unfolds, and they align/dis-align with them according to the stances they wish to enact at different stages. Therefore, depending on the proficiency level of the learners, the professor could invite the willing students to the discourse, hence allowing more

chances of owning the lesson (being part of the learning community). As ESL teachers, we should be cognizant of the contribution our students would bring to the knowledge of the class, and encourage their growth by creating a chance for the students to enact their desired stances. Distribution of turns minding multiculturalism in some ESL classes, especially those in developed countries, could strengthen cross-cultural comparisons hence not only making learning more enjoyable but also creating more opportunities for spontaneous speaking. Therefore, the effect professor's distribution of turns could have on interpersonal stances cannot be ignored, hence the need not only to try to uphold distributive justice but also consider individual personas of his/her students. ESL teachers are tasked to investigate the contribution that each individual participant brings to the learning community.

### Implications

Individuals and groups interacting in different environments use language creatively and selectively to accomplish their desired goals. Stance enactments, being a very important aspect in human interactions, participants engaging in discourse use language as a tool to reveal their identities. It is therefore important for instructors to apply this knowledge when choosing classroom activities and designing lesson plans in language teaching, so as to ensure that the feelings, emotions, and beliefs are put into consideration. Even though improvement of knowledge is the main objective of education, classroom discourse reveals the impact that participants' alignments can have on their learning community. Students who feel supported by their peers and their professor would participate more in classroom discussions. This study recommends that ESL teachers can create a more enjoyable learning environment through supporting their students' stance enactments. A number of advantages can be attributed to the

activities in which stances are created. First, classroom activities act as channels through which students can engage in discourse eventually leading to language proficiency. Second, as teachers lead class discussions, they build closer relationships with their students by making them feel a part of the learning community.

This study found two major contributions concerning stance enactment in discourse analysis. First, language learners are co-participants and can use their sociocultural knowledge to construct and deconstruct their identity as they engage in classroom activities. Second, success in building a community of learners requires the support of both participants and the other(s) in our societies. With such understanding, the process of meaning negotiation in ESL classes and stance enactments within our societies can be easily realized. While cultural diversity may cause a difference in participants' approach in discourse, creating favorable opportunities for cross-cultural comparisons could lead to the creation of strong relationships, multicultural understanding, and spontaneous language learning.

### Limitations and Future Studies

While stance enactment by the students was analyzed by examining how they negotiated intercultural meaning and constructed a sense of the “othering”, this study did not examine any task-based experience, as the participation structure does not allow it. Though learners were given a task at the beginning of the lesson, it was a test to be taken individually. Hence, during the first ten minutes of this study, meaning was not negotiated through discourse as the students were engaged in accomplishing the given task. More responses especially on the theme of negotiating intercultural meaning could have been witnessed if the students were given a task



and asked to discuss it with their peers and present their findings in class their role in building a community of learners could have also been reinforced.

The sociocultural framework presented in this study reveals the significance of collaboration as a strategy of enacting stances during the activity discussions rather than in a task-solving strategy. To investigate the impact of collaboration in negotiation of meaning in language classrooms, researchers understand the need to adjust teaching and learning activities according to the stances being enacted at various stages of the lesson.

A major limitation of the current study is the participation structures, which I believe affected alignments of some students. Though there were fifteen students present in class, only six actively participated during the discussion of the commercials. The examination shows that two of them (Aliya and Beth) dominated the discourse, even though the professor tried to distribute opportunities fairly, by offering turns to the rest of the students. If the students had been divided into groups or pairs or allowed to work independently, with the professor only availing herself only when the students needed her, the passive students might have contributed to the activities. The fourth participation structure, as discussed in Phillips (1972), where learners work in groups with the teacher distant, supervision was not possible during this particular lesson as the students had looked at the class blog a few days before coming to class, and the professor had consequently made online comments about those activities. The professor did not group students, but alleged them to choose which commercials to watch, and their awareness on those commercials could have affected their participation level during the class. It is also worth mentioning that since the classroom discussions were recorded in a one-day lesson it could have proven daunting for the professor to incorporate different participation structures.

Even though this study incorporates a rigorous theoretical background explaining how

collaborative activities (tasks) results in increased proficiency in the use of L2, we could not examine its effect on stance enactments due to lack of empirical data showing such paired or grouped interactions. Thus, future study calls for finding more collaborative interactions, such as; investigations of the identities of the participants and how they influence stance enactment. Studies aimed at conducting further investigation in how sociocultural aspects intersect with stance in classroom discourse could affect teaching methodologies. Through finding major sociocultural factors that instructors in ESL classes would consider, reinforcement of scaffolding could be facilitated, which could lead to more stance enactment opportunities.

Lastly, investigation of the multicultural activities in classroom teaching and their effect on students' stance enactments could inform both ESL language teaching and socialization of learners studying in institutions where the dominant culture(s) differ from theirs. Despite the aforementioned limitations, this study makes major contributions to language use in ESL classes, and explains how it could influence participants' identities, their cultures, and stance enactments. If the recommendations made in this study implemented in language classrooms, learning activities designed according to sociocultural knowledge would create more opportunities of stance enactment and identity construction, hence leading to better language learning experiences and higher students' performance.

## Concluding remarks

The results of this study will contribute to language classrooms in a variety of ways. Conclusions within this study allow us to envision how a favorable learning environment can be created. Learners seeking to demonstrate a level of knowledge in their fields, benefit by aligning with other participants. Undoubtedly, students' effort to reconstruct their identity by recognizing the input of others in society is an intriguing aspect of classroom discourse analysis, with potential applications to critical discourse analysis. This study shows how participants create and maintain stances from the onset of classroom discourse, and how the design of specific activities affects their participation patterns. Discussions investigated in this study showcase the effect of integrating culture in language classrooms with an intercultural negotiation of meaning, with an emphasis on the effects on advanced level classes. This full analysis of participants' interactions enhances our understanding of classrooms, allowing us to see them as more than simply brick and stone where students gather to learn. They are also the building blocks of a high institution, and within their walls are housed communities where students learn together to enact personal stances, and grow to become both products and producers of that learning community.

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