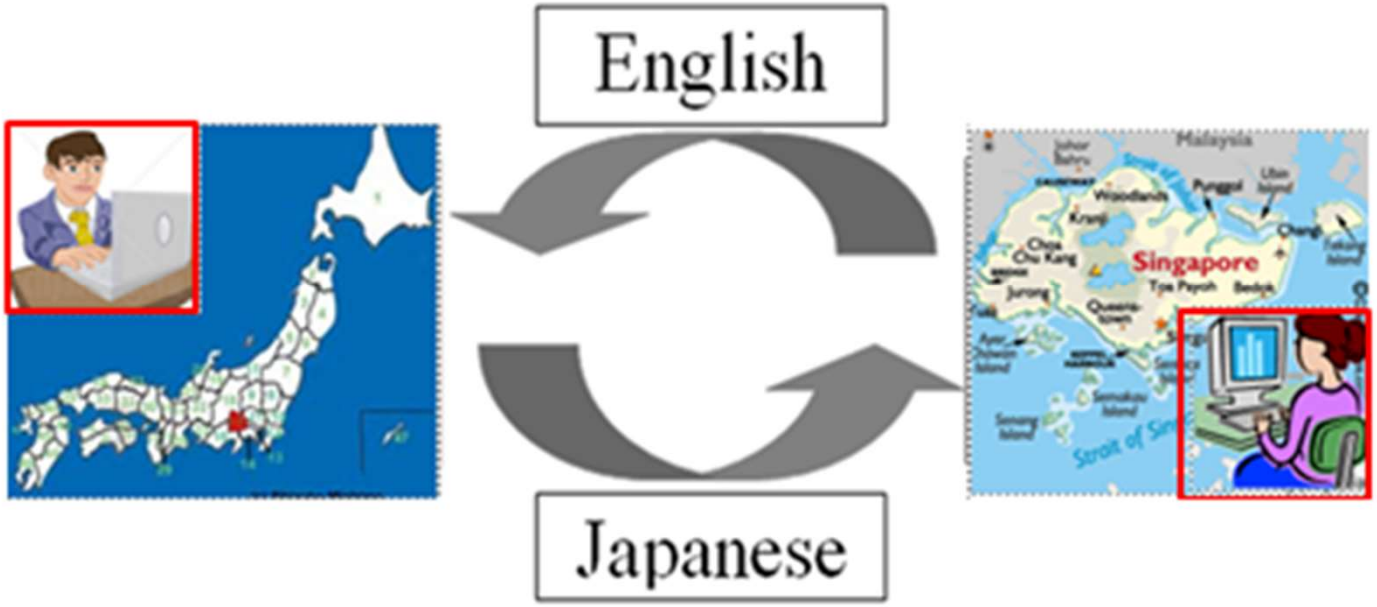

A Study of Internet-based Mutual Foreign Language Learning (MFLL) Between Learners at a Distance

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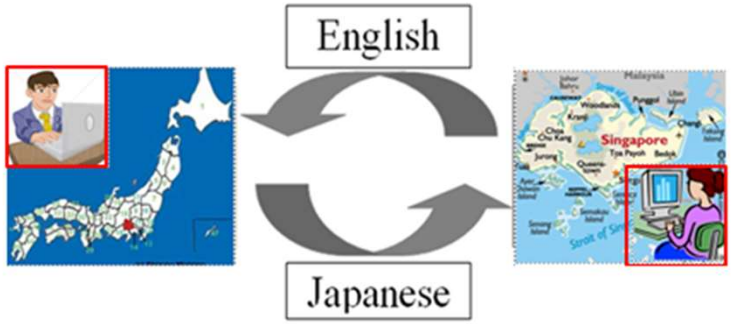
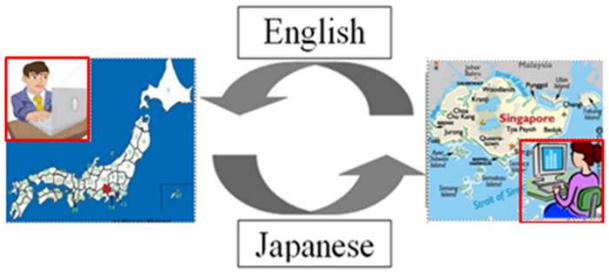
5/29/2010
Kyoto Sangyo University
JALTCALL 2010, Kyoto



Result of the Study

A pair of college students has created this website by participating at a distance in the mutual foreign language learning (MFLL) activities:

Must-see Places in Uenohara, Japan

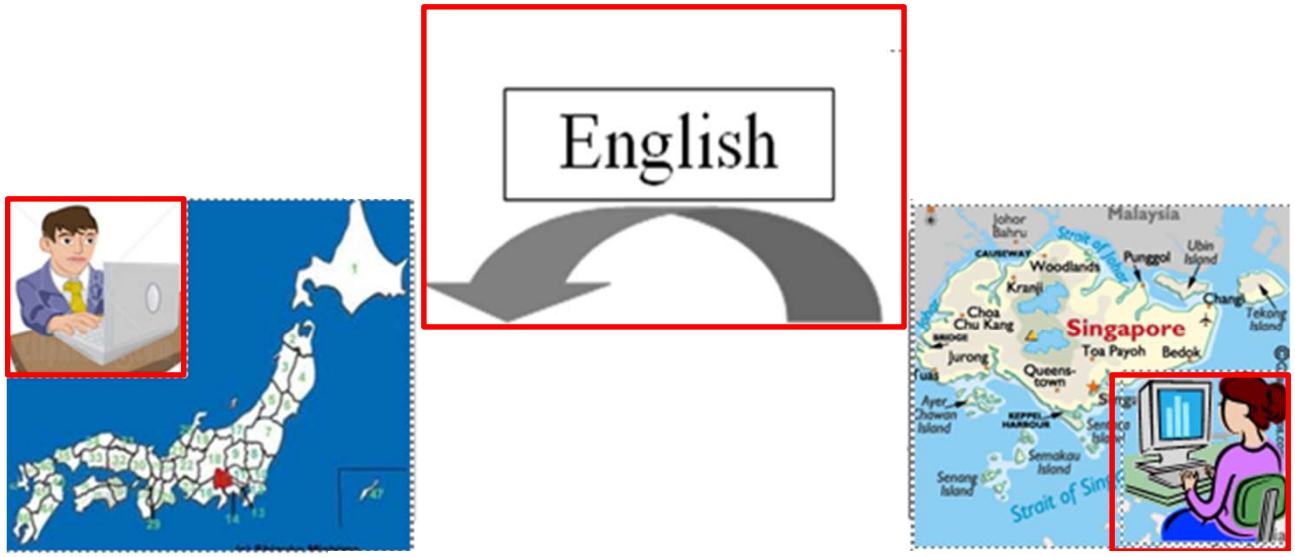


Overview

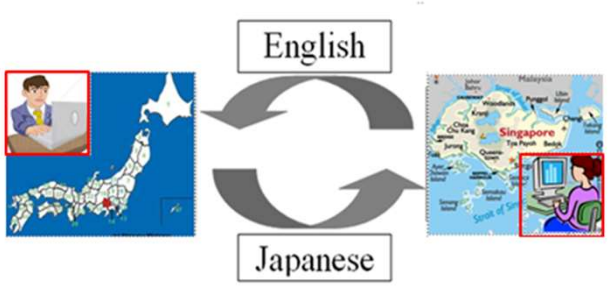
- What is this study?
- Why?
- What have I done?
  - Literature review
  - Research question
  - Methodology
    - Participants
  - Analysis
  - Issues
  - Findings
- What's next?

What is this study?

Mutual Foreign Language Learning (MFLL)



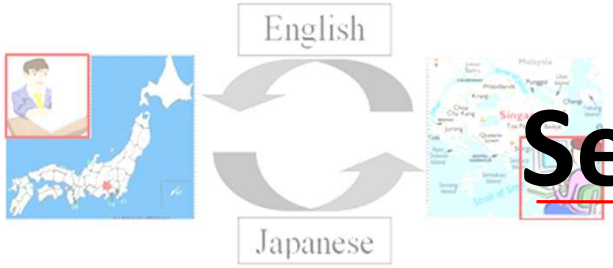
What is this study?



Qualitative Study

- Case Study
- Emergent Design
- Service-learning

What is this study?



Service-learning

providing a guide

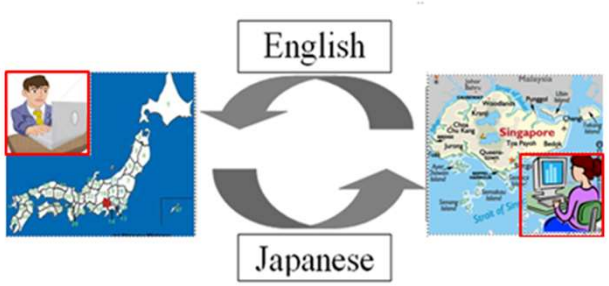
learning English

Kenji's town

Kenji

English-speaking partner

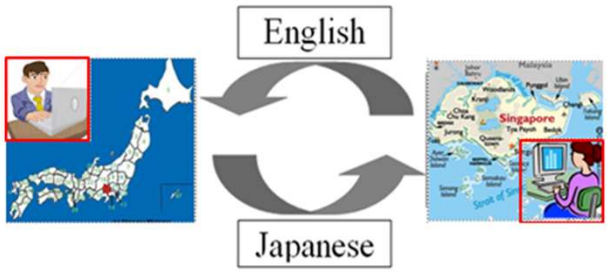
Facilitating their collaboration



Literature Review 1

- Major Principles of MFLL: Mutuality and autonomy (Little, Ushioda, Appel, Moran, O'Rourke, & Schwienhorst, 1999).

What have I done?

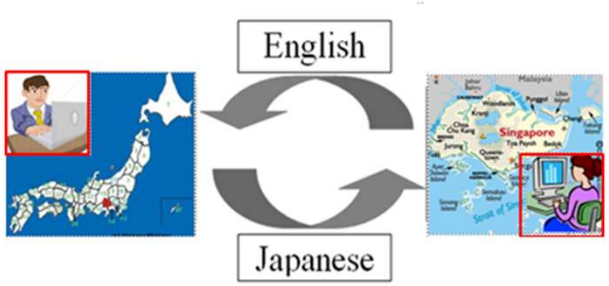


Literature Review 2

- A sociocognitive view:

Language is constructed in mind and in the world ***interactively*** (Atkinson, 2002).

Conversation participants are mutually adaptive.



Literature review 3

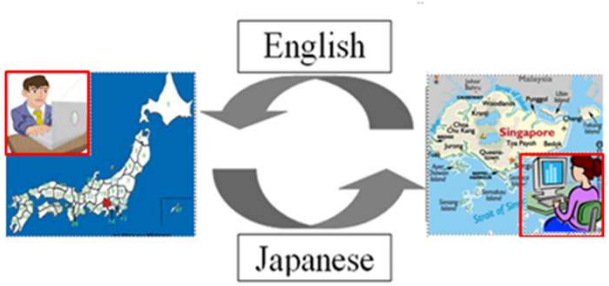
- Atkinson, Churchill, Nishino, & Okada (2007) presented a piece of evidence for mutually-adaptive behaviors in an face-to-face environment between a learner of English and her private tutor.

Literature Review 4

Example of a mutually-adaptive interaction from Smith and Gorsuch's (2004) conversational analysis of an computer-mediated communication:

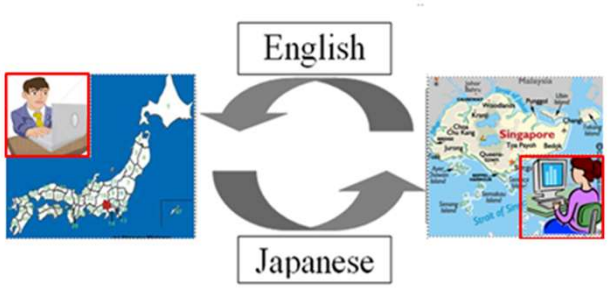
Chatscript printout:	**Process of construction (typing, pausing, deleting):**
J: Can we buy papaya here?	
(A few utterances have been deleted for connvenience sake.)	
T: from wallmart	
	T: but, the problem is we need [long pause] the utensil for this dish
T: but, the problem is we need the utensil for this dish	
J: utensil?	T: ~~and it is I never see in~~ to cook
T: to cook	
T: I don't know the exact word sorry	

"utensil to cook"
→J's and T's collaboratively/socially constructed phrase
→Mutually-adapting interaction



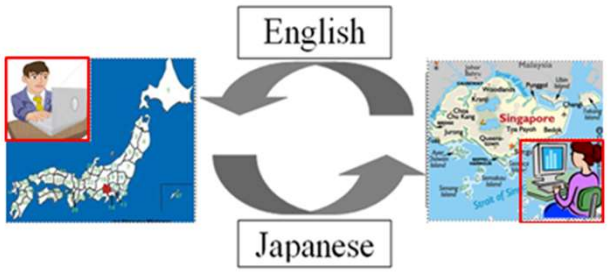
Research Question

What evidence for mutually-adapting interactions is found in participants' Internet-based MFLL activities?



Participants 1

- Native speakers of English (Learners of Japanese) and Native speakers of Japanese(Learners of English)
- College students
- Proficiency levels:
  - Participants A, X, Y, Z → Advanced-level
  - Participant B → Beginning/Intermediate-level



Length of the study

	Native Speakers of English	Native Speakers of Japanese	Length of the study
Pilot	Participant A (American student)	Participant X (Japanese student)	1 hour x 1 session
Study 1	Participant A	Participant Y (Japanese)	1 hour x 3 sessions, 2 weeks
Study 2	Participant B	Participant Y	1 hour x 4 sessions, 3 weeks
Study 3	Participant B (Singaporean majoring Japanese)	Participant Z (Japanese student majoring English)	1 hour x 4 sessions, 4 weeks
Study 4	Participant B	Participant Z	1 hour x 34 sessions, 8 months

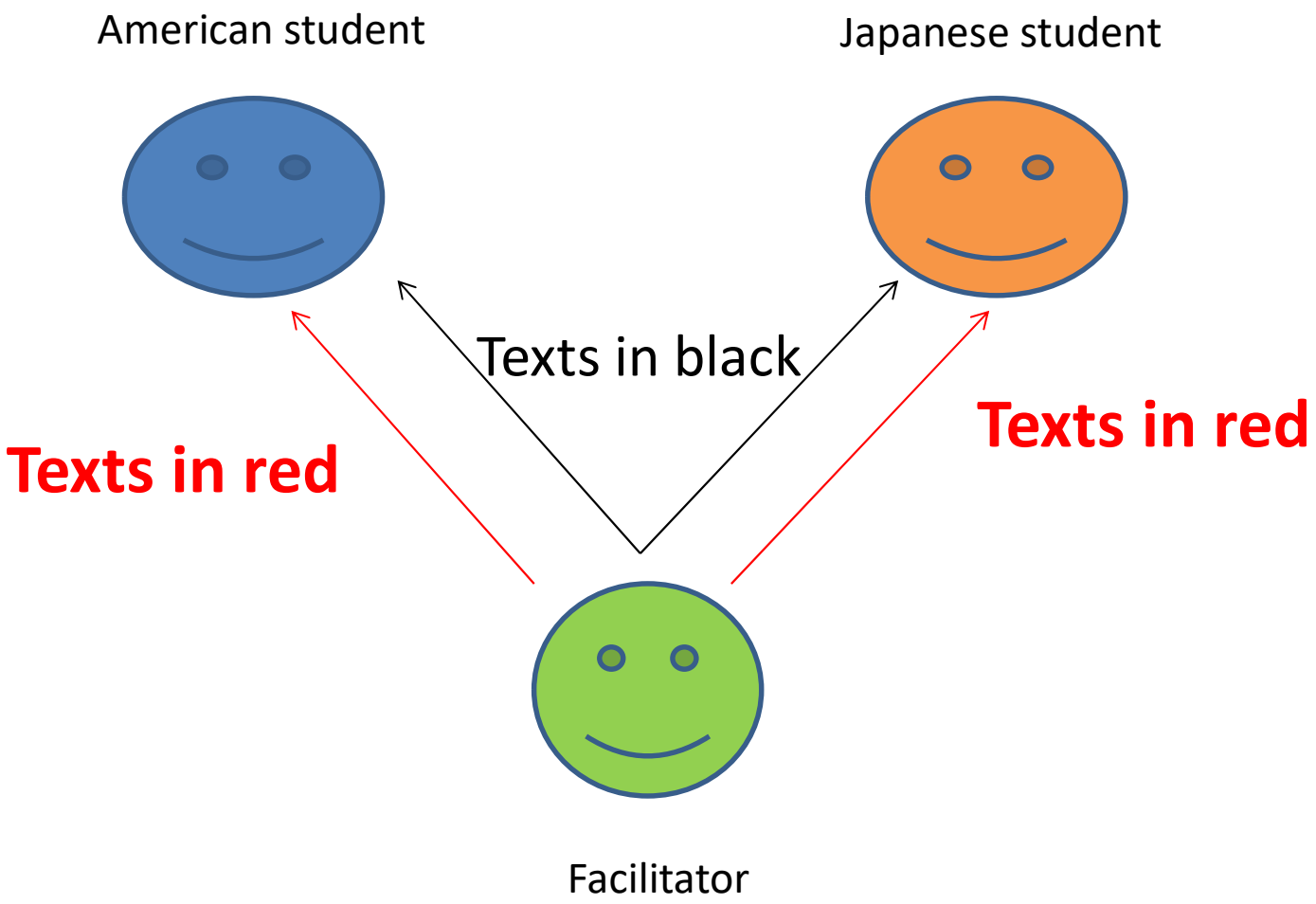
Methodology 1

- Synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) Tools:
  - Adobe Acrobat Connect
  - Instant Messengers (Skype and MSN)
- Three types of SCMC
  - Textual SCMC
    - Two simultaneous channels of SCMC:
      - Group conversation
      - Private conversation

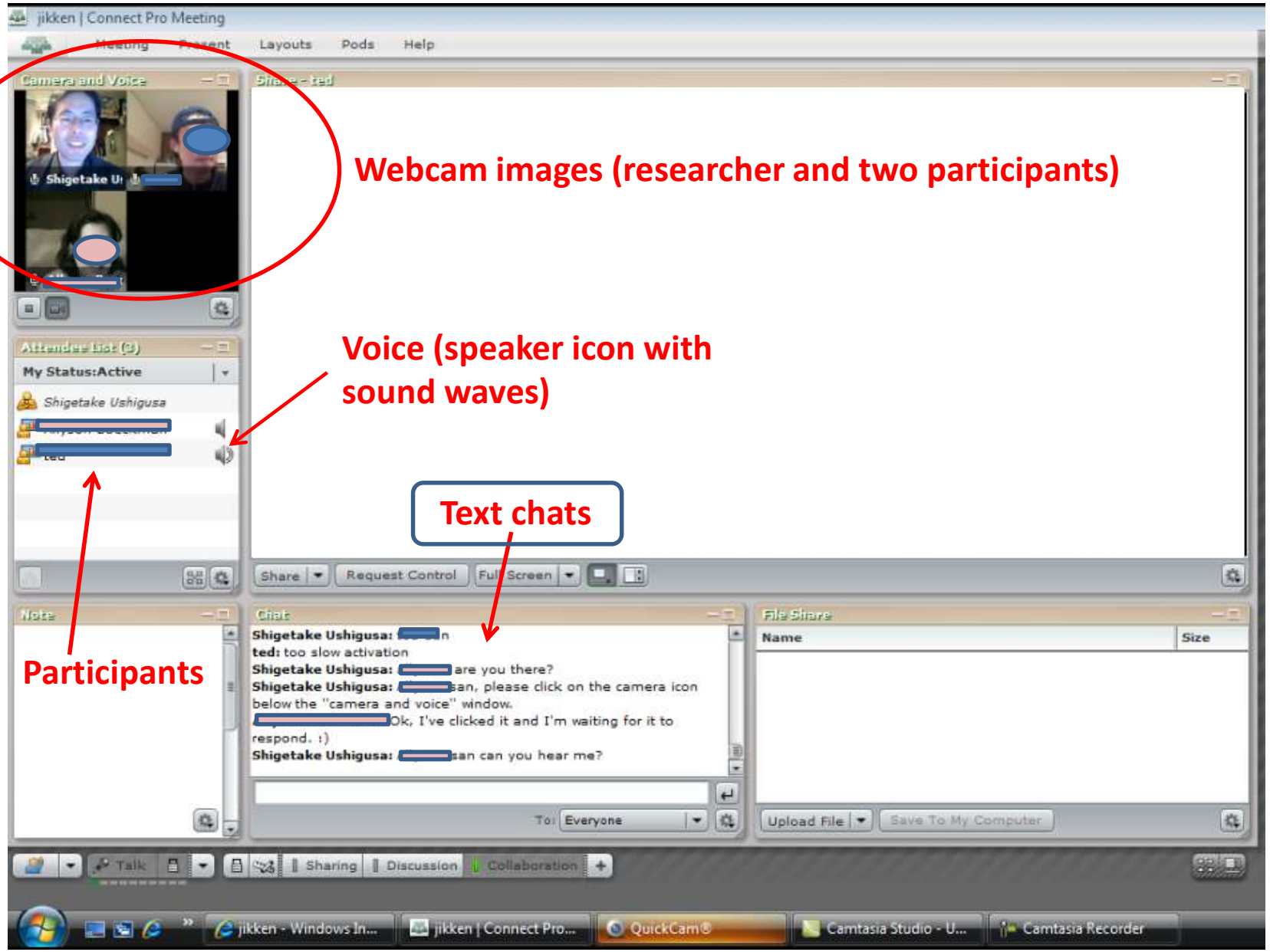
  - Voice SCMC

  - Video SCMC

“Private” text message to one student



Adobe Acrobat Connect

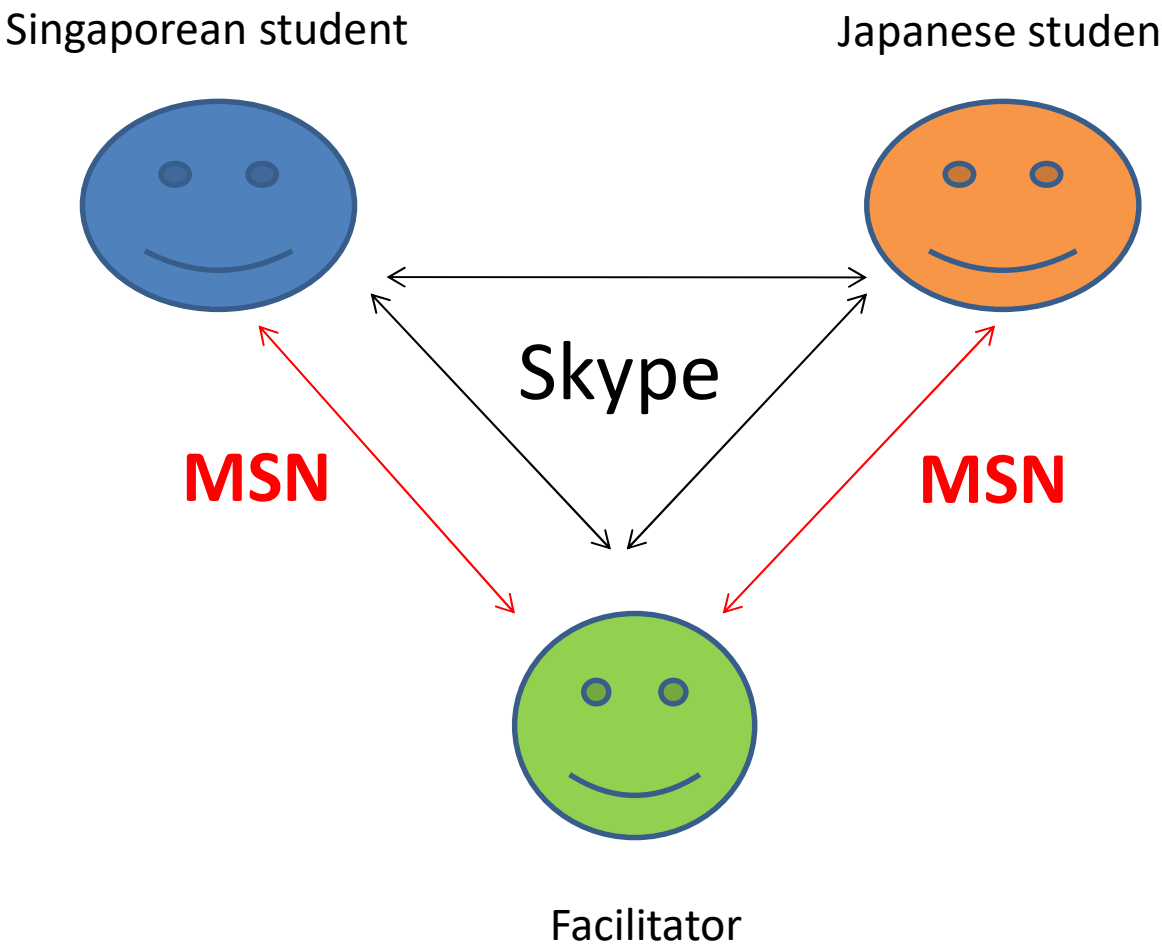


Video captures

- Pictionary:
  - American student draws a picture and Japanese student guesses what it is.
- Self-introduction:
  - Japanese student self-introduces himself and American student asks him questions.

    (voice → text)

“Private chats” on MSN “ and Three-way chats on Skype



Two types of communication channels

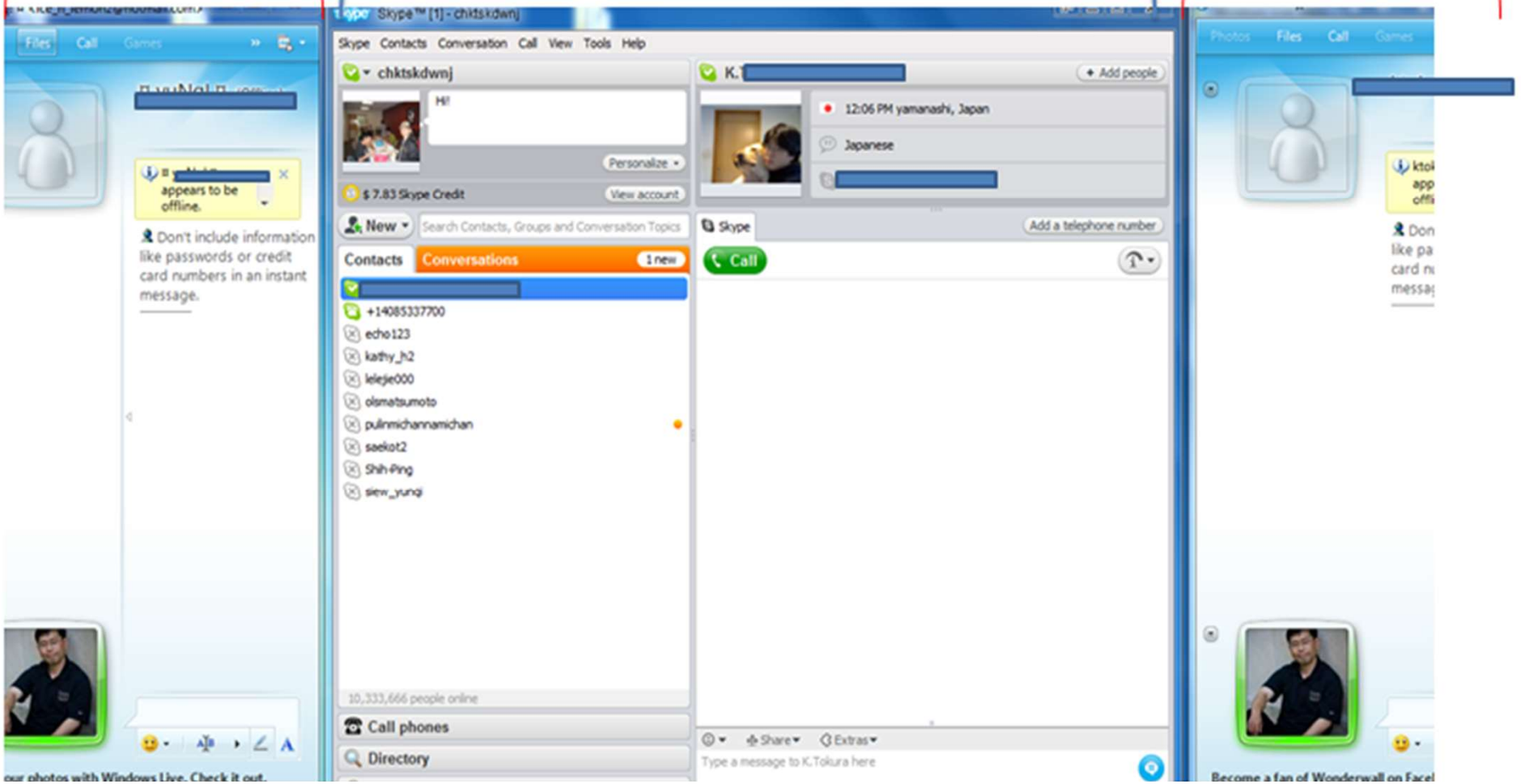
Chat with participant J

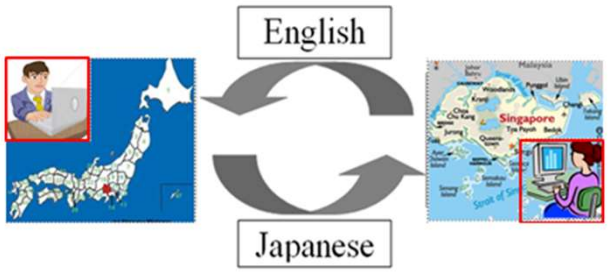
Private

Chats with both participants

Chat with participant S

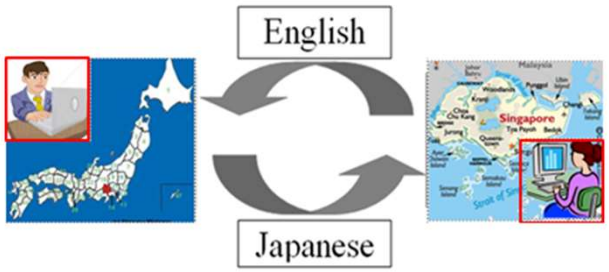
Private





Video captures

- (Data is not available due to a technical reason)

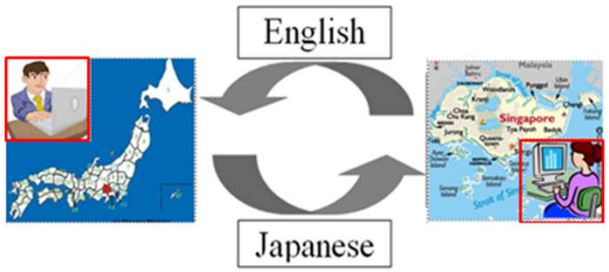


Analysis

- Conversational analysis
- Interviews

Analysis: Text chat

American student (A.): Have you ever been to a baseball game?
Japanese student (J.): Yes, I do. I have been to Yankee stadium!
A: Do you like to read?
J: Yeah, I often read books.
Facilitator: (A's name), could you try asking him a difficult question using a difficult English word? I would like to see him ask you back a clarification question.
J: I prefer comics to fictions. Especially the books related to business.
A: What sort of company do you want to start? Does it have something to do with information technology, or perhaps finance or something like that?
J: Actually I would like to start a consulting company because I need a lot of business experience.
A: What sort of things do consulting companies do? I don't have very much information about business.
Facilitator: Good job, (A's name).

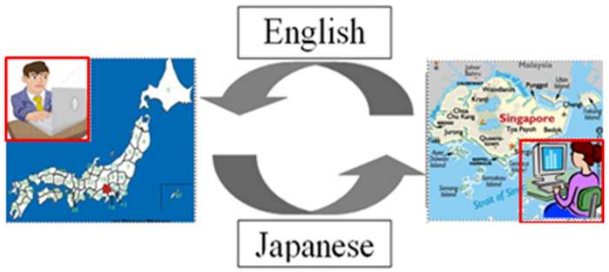


Analysis: Interviews 1

- Japanese participant's adaptive behavior:

  The Japanese participant was trying his best to produce sentences that are both "casual" (*uchitoketa*) and "grammatically correct ."

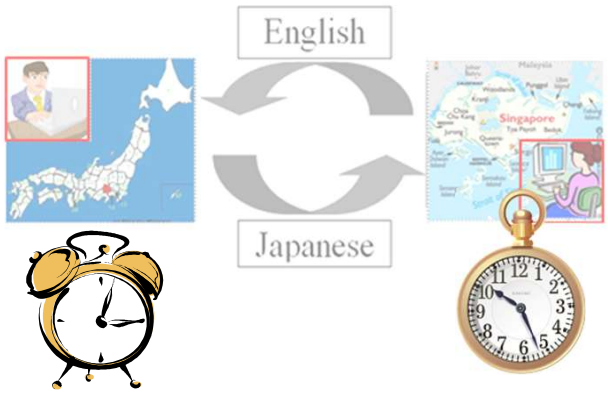
  He wanted to use such sentences by trying to "emulate" (minarau) his learning partner.



Analysis: Interviews 2

- Adaptation in dilemma:

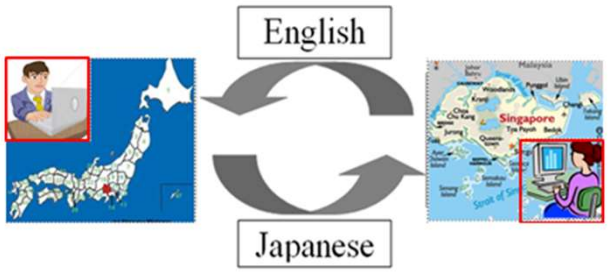
  The Japanese participant was non-adaptive by spending “much time” (*nagai aida*) saying something grammatically correct while being “impolite” (*shitsurei*) by making her wait for his messages “for a long time” (*nagaku*).



Issues

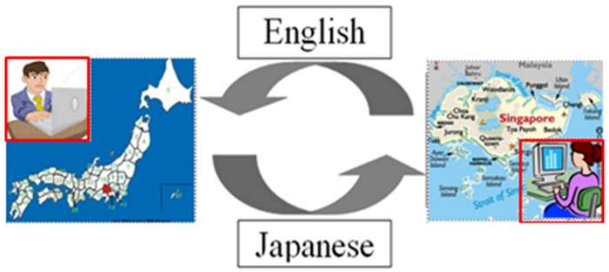
- Reduced pad prolonged articipation
  - Busy student schedule
  - Limited common available time (due to time difference)
- Limited availability of technology tools (including the bandwidth)
  - Video files are too large to send electronically.

    → This issue posed limitations to the conversational analysis.



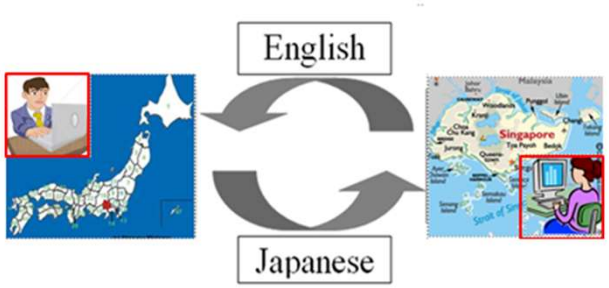
Findings

1. Adaptive behaviors are observed in the Japanese participant's linguistic productions.
2. Heightened autonomy:
   - His "quantity of learning" (*gakushuuryoo*) increased "80%" (reading), " 50%" (writing), "70%" (speaking), and "80%" (listening) during the seven months of taking MFLL lessons.



Conclusion

- SCMC is an additional learning environment in which unique adaptive behaviors are exhibited by a conversation participant in the environment.



A future direction

- The researcher will transcribe and analyze the recorded data (about 10 hours) to further explore the participants mutually-adapting interactions.
- Patterns of non-adaptive behaviors and adaptive behaviors might be an interesting topic to explore further.

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