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Learning to Understand in Interethnic Communication

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This is a cross-linguistic and longitudinal study of language acquisition in adult migrant workers who acquire a new language without any formal instruction. These learners are in the seemingly paradoxical situation of learning to communicate in order to learn. The aim is to investigate the ways in which adult second language learners use interactions with target language speakers to learn to understand. Evidence of non-understanding - the ways it is marked and the manner of its resolution - is used to shed light on 1) the way in which the interlocutors achieve a joint resolution of understanding problems and 2) the effect on the process of acquiring the second language. The findings can be usefully applied both in language learning classrooms and in training and support for those people who are routinely involved in inter-ethnic communications.
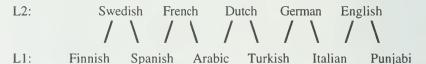
COMMUNICATING TO LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

The relatively young but fast growing tradition of research on second language acquisition in adults exhibits three remarkable biases:

(1)   a rather heavy Anglo-Saxon diet in which English is most commonly the source or target language (cf. Ellis, 1985: 74);
(2)   an almost exclusive focus on studies with a cross-sectional design (cf. Klein & Perdue, 1988: 5);
(3)   most commonly the subjects who provide data are students with relatively high schooling and with formal second language instruction in the context of the classroom (cf. Bremer, Broeder, Roberts, Simonot & Vasseur, 1993: 158).

This study takes a different perspective. This is a cross-linguistic and longitudinal study of the language acquisition of adult migrant workers who acquired a new language without any formal instruction. Their acquisition processes were followed in a larger project initiated by the European Science Foundation (ESF, based in Strasbourg). The ESF project was carried out from 1982 to 1987 in Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, France and Sweden. A detailed description of the aims and design of the project is given in Perdue (1984; 1993a + b).

The cross-linguistic dimension of the ESF project is expressed in the study of five different target languages (L2) learned by speakers of six different source languages (L1). The corresponding L1/L2 pairs were combined in the following way:

L2:	Swedish	French	Dutch	German	English
	/ \	/ \	/ \	/ \	/ \
L1:	Finnish	Spanish	Arabic	Turkish	Italian	Punjabi

The longitudinal dimension of the ESF project involved monthly audio and video recordings of four informants per L1/L2 pair for a period of two-and-a-half years.

The ESF project focussed on the "synthesis" and "analysis" tasks language learners are confronted with (cf. Klein, 1986: 63-109). Synthesis tasks consist of turning meaningful units (sounds, words, etc.) which have been learned into understandable speech: e.g., locating the objects, person or events the learners want to talk about. Analysis tasks consist of segmenting the available input into meaningful units and bringing the resulting information in line with the situational context of the utterance. A summary of the analysis and findings carried out in the ESF project can be found in Perdue (1993b).

The present study builds on the work included in the ESF project by Bremer et al. (1988; 1993). The aim is to investigate the ways in which adult migrant workers use interactions with Target Language Speakers (TLS) to help them learn to understand the second language (L2). They are in the seemingly paradoxical situation of learning to communicate in order to learn. In particular, evidence of Non-Understanding (NU), the ways it is marked and the manner of its resolution, is used to shed light on (1) the way in

which understanding is achieved in interaction, and (2) the effect of this interaction on the process of acquiring the second language.

The focus in this study is on two Turkish and two Moroccan migrant workers acquiring Dutch who were asked three times (with an interval of one year) to participate in a role play task in which they had to apply for housing accommodation during the first three years of their stay in the Netherlands. For each of these four learners an analysis will be presented of three roleplays. The analysis deals with the way in which instances of non-understanding are marked within the interaction and solved (or not).

The structure of this study is as follows. First, the method of analysis will be presented: i.e., a specification of the research questions, a description of the data base, and an explanation of the theoretical framework by Bremer et al. (1988; 1993). Second, case studies are presented of the Dutch learners mentioned above. Third, these case studies are related to the cross-linguistic findings reported by Bremer et al. (1988; 1993). This analysis results in a number of generalizations regarding the issue of understanding in a second language and its relationship with interaction and acquisition.

METHOD

Research Questions

The research questions can be formulated as follows: 1) How are problems of understanding marked in interethnic communications between a non-native speaker and a native speaker of the target language? 2) What are the interactional procedures used by the interlocutors to achieve a joint resolution of understanding problems? 3) What are the interactional procedures that facilitate (or inhibit) second language acquisition?

Subjects

The subjects in this study are two Turkish adults, Ergün and Mahmut, and two Moroccan adults, Fatima and Mohamed. When they began participating in the ESF project, they had been living in the Netherlands for about ten months. Their ages ranged from 17 to 25. None had a Dutch speaking spouse or children of school age.

They had received little education in Turkey or Morocco. At the start of the project, their language proficiency in Dutch was very low. During their participation in the project they learned Dutch as a second language spontaneously, that is, without formal tuition. Basic sociobiographical characteristics of the informants are given in Table 1 (see Broeder, 1991: 14-17 for their detailed profiles).

Table 1: Basic sociobiographical informant characteristics*

	Ergün	Mahmut	Fatima	Mohamed
Sex	male	male	female	male
Year of birth	1964	1962	1956	1961
Place of birth	Ankara	Temürlü	Kenitra	Casablanca
Abode in SC	Ankara	Temürlü	Kenitra	Casablanca
Schooling in Sc: type # of years	primary 5	primary 5	primary 2	secondary 2
Employment in SC	motor mechanic	motor mechanic	seamstress	none
Arrival in TC	Oct. 1981	Dec. 1981	Sept. 1981	Feb. 1982
Temporary Schooling in TC	Education Center	none	Comm. Center	none
Temporary Employment in TC	factory worker	factory worker	kitchen maid	factory worker
Civil Status	single	married	married	single
Living with	Turkish family	wife	husband	parents
Date of Session 1	21-09-82	20-09-82	05-10-82	18-10-82
Estimated L2 Level at Session 1	very limited	almost zero	almost zero	almost zero
Other Languages	none	none	none	some French

* SC = Source Country: Turkey or Morocco; TC = Target Country: the Netherlands

Language Activities

The database for this particular study has been selected to reflect everyday encounters in which "learning through interaction"

might take place. In addition, the selected language activity should maintain some degree of comparability across the individual migrant workers and the specific sessions.

Applying for housing accommodation: The selected language activity is a semi-authentic roleplay with a male official associated with the municipal department of the housing office, which is chiefly visited by ethnic minorities. The subjects are given the following instructions in their first language (Turkish or Arabic):

> Take the role of a fiancé(e) who lives with a partner in the home of the parents. You have been registered with the housing agency for over one year, but still are not eligible for a house. Try to convince the official that the present living conditions are desperate because of continual parental quarrels and an intended marriage within three months. Something has to be done.

For each informant the roleplay is repeated three times: approximately one, two and three years after his/her arrival in the Netherlands.   The roleplays are video recorded, which the participants are informed of beforehand.

      In session 2 and session 3 the housing official is a professional playing "his own role." In session 1, the role of the housing official is played by a non-professional: a social worker well-acquainted with the local housing situation of ethnic minorities. He is given the details about the role to be fulfilled by a housing official. This information was provided to the researchers by the professional who participated in the 2nd and 3rd sessions. The housing official, using a real application form from the housing office, discusses all topics relevant to filling in this form with the applicants (e.g., present living conditions, special circumstances, and urgencies).

Self-confrontation: An additional source of information is provided by self-confrontation sessions which took place one month after each of the roleplays. In the self-confrontation session the selected passages are then played back to the learner. First the subject is given time to react spontaneously after which the Turkish/Moroccan researcher asks more specific questions. The self-confrontation sessions are predominantly held in

Turkish/Arabic. The length and content of these sessions varies considerably depending on the encounter and/or the subject, nevertheless, these sessions afford a wealth of information (see Bremer et al., 1988: 22-51 for more details). These sessions were prepared by the Turkish/Moroccan researcher and the Dutch researcher. They jointly went through the video recording of the roleplay in order to locate and mark those places which are suitable for self-confrontation. The focus is on those passages which are unclear or where there are contradictions, and open or suspected understanding problems.[1]

MARKERS OF NON-UNDERSTANDING

In the theoretical framework provided by Bremer et al. (1988; 1993), the process of understanding is viewed as mutually constructed in the course of inferencing by the interlocutors. The conditions shift as either participant makes an adjustment to meaning. It is a dynamic process which is highly dependent on the context of the interaction. Claiming understanding in a specific interaction is justified if the interlocutor "acts creatively according to his interpretation of the interactional context" (Taylor, 1986). In detecting instances of non-understanding one faces the difficulty of distinguishing between lack of understanding and misunderstanding. Lack of understanding varies on a continuum from the (unlikely) possibility of absolutely nothing being understood to the interlocutors' belief that the degree of understanding is sufficient and satisfactory enough for the interaction to continue. Misunderstanding occurs when there is an illusion of understanding (cf. de Hérédia, 1986). Both sides act as if there is adequate understanding; incoming information is connected with already stored information, however incorrectly, in the terms of the interlocutor.

Understanding and non-understanding are displayed in the interaction through the "responsive treatment" of the "prior turn's talk." This implies that in analyzing the interaction "sequential implicativeness" is relied upon (cf. Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, 1987). Analyses have to be based upon sequences and turns within sequences. Learner behavior which may typically mark understanding problems includes five phenomena which will

be discussed in turn below (cf. Broeder & Roberts, 1988; Bremer et al., 1993).

Metalinguistic comments: These can be regarded as the most explicit indicators of non-understanding. The learner reflects upon the trouble source and gives a signal. These are either general requests (*Kun je 't nog een keer zeggen?* 'Could you repeat that please?') or refer to specific items in the previous talk (*Wat betekent X?* 'What does X mean?')

Reprises: Reprises are defined as taking up the other's word(s) through various kinds of repetition and reformulation (cf. Broeder, 1992). What is taken up varies greatly. It can constitute the learner's whole utterance or be part of it. Reprises may, with varying degrees of explicitness, deal with the trouble source. It can be centered on the part of the TLS' utterance which has been understood (i.e., the "keyword strategy") or on the part which has not been understood.

Minimal queries: These are conventionalized markers of understanding problems that most commonly are not sensitive to the specific linguistic context: for example, *sorry* ('sorry'), *wat?* ('what'), *welk?* ('which'), *ik?* ('me') and, *hoezo* ('why') in Dutch.

Minimal feedback: These are *ja* ('yes'), *nee* ('no'), and equivalents of "yes" such as *uh, huh, mm, yeah.* Indirect markers of non-understanding occur most frequently with simple positive feedback. These signals typically occur in linear phases (cf. Vion & Mittner, 1986), which may constitute evidence of non-understanding. Linear phases involve long stretches where the learner participates minimally and the TLS initiates topics and takes longer speaker turns. In contrast, parallel phases are characterized by full collaboration of the interlocutors.

Lack-of-uptake: This may be non-verbal: shoulder shrugging, various facial expressions, or "verbal" silence: laughter, coughing, or fillers such as *er, mm, you see.* The interpretation of these markers is highly context-dependent. After a direct question, lack-of-uptake is more likely to reveal non-understanding than occurring after, for example, declarative statements by the interlocutor. Only

post-hoc confrontation can clarify whether a lack-of-uptake signals disagreement rather than non-understanding.

In some self-confrontation sessions the subjects pointed out that they were frequently aware that they could not make sense out of what they heard. They preferred not to give a clear indicator of non-understanding for a number of reasons. Sometimes they wanted to keep the conversation going. The learners were faced with the problem of dealing with non-understanding in as efficient a way as possible without jeopardizing the interaction with continuous interruptions and off-topic metalinguistic side-sequences. Sometimes they wanted to save face, that is, protect their own "negative face" (cf. Brown & Levinson, 1978), in the sense that they did not want to be imposed upon by the TLS or expose themselves to the TLS. Sometimes they preferred the "wait-and-see" strategy (cf. Voionmaa, 1984). They waited for more input from the TLS in the hope that it would provide clues that would help decode the TLS-message.

Even though the learner might not wish to mark the understanding problem, the TLS may respond to learner behavior as if there is non-understanding. Therefore a distinction is to be made between two analytical categories: indicators of non-understanding (NU-indicators), and symptoms of non-understanding problems (NU-symptoms).

Indicators of Non-Understanding

NU-indicators are clear direct signs given by the learner that s/he is having difficulty understanding the TLS. An example of a metalinguistic comment which is used as an NU-indicator is given in sequence (1).

(1)
TLS: So you divorced twice?
Learner: *I do not understand, could you say that again, please?*
TLS: First married to one woman, then to another woman, now without woman?

Symptoms of Non-Understanding

Symptoms of non-understanding are of two types: either the learner conveys indirectly that s/he has an understanding problem,

or the TLS infers from the learner's response that there is a non-understanding. The focus is on the former, but it is often not possible to detect the difference between these two types of symptoms.

In sequence (2) the NU-symptom is a reprise and the TLS responds in accordance with the hypothesized intention of the learner.

(2)
TLS:	So you divorced twice?
Learner:	*Divorced twice?*
TLS:	First married to one woman, then to another woman, now without woman?

In sequence (3) the NU-symptom is a minimal feedback item. The learner's behavior is most likely interpreted by the TLS as if the learner has not fully understood and therefore the TLS reformulates the assumed "trouble source."

(3)
TLS:	So you divorced twice
Learner:	*Yes*
TLS:	First married to one woman, than to another woman, now without woman?

As "conversation analysts" we will never be sure whether the learner is having difficulty understanding in sequences (2) and (3). The learner may, in fact, have understood, may think s/he has understood, or may be in a total state of uncertainty about whether s/he has understood (or not). Nevertheless, in these cases, the markers of non-understanding are not part of learner strategy but instead trigger side-sequences because of perceptions and reactions by the TLS. Therefore, an interactional perspective in the analysis is crucial. This implies that evidence of understanding problems of the learner is based on the contributions of both the learner and the TLS.

FOUR CASE STUDIES

In this section the developing capacity of learning to understand in interactions with target language speakers is illustrated for two Moroccan and two Turkish adults acquiring Dutch as a second language. Those sequences are analyzed in which there is some "trouble" in the interaction, that is, where the stable and orderly properties are disrupted in some way. Either the learner or the TLS show by their verbal and/or non-verbal behavior that the learner might have an understanding problem. In addition evidence for non-understanding is based on post-session self-confrontations and by the interpretation of the data by the analyst. The learner behavior is described in terms of NU-indicators and NU-symptoms. The discussion in the previous section has indicated that this is not a watertight distinction, but it will be made for the sake of analytical clarity.

Fatima

Table 2 presents the absolute number of NU-indicators and NU-symptoms that were noted in the sessions with Fatima. The length of the session is measured in the total number of turns by the TLS and Fatima.

Table 2: Repertoire of NU-Markers used by Fatima

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Number of turns	182	383	388
NU-indicators			
•metalinguistic comments	-	-	-
•minimal query	-	-	-
•reprise	1	2	1
•lack-of-uptake	-	-	-
NU-symptoms			
•reprise	-	-	-
•lack-of-uptake	5	24	20
•minimal feedback	8	10	4

Session 1: In the post-session self-confrontation Fatima explicitly stated that she understood almost nothing in this session. However, only one NU-indicator (a partial reprise as an implicit question) was observed. Fatima simply did not indicate understanding problems but kept reacting with minimal feedback. The result are long linear phases. Several times Fatima's minimal responses were so illogical that the TLS probably had to assume that Fatima did not understand him. An example of a typical linear phase is given in sequence (4).

(4)

TLS:	Kun je niet zolang bij je vriend gaan wonen?	You cannot live with your friend for a while?
Fatima:	Ja^	Yes^
TLS:	Bij jouw vader en moeder?	With your father and mother?
Fatima:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Fatima:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Kun je daar niet zolang blijven?	You cannot stay there for a while?
Fatima:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Totdat er 'n huis is	Until there is a house
Fatima:	Nee	No
TLS:	Waarom?	Why?
Fatima:	Ik wil mijn huis	I want my house
TLS:	Waarom? Waarom kun je niet naar je ouders?	Why? Why can you not go to your parents?
Fatima:	Daarom	That's why
TLS:	Ah dat is/ nee/ dat is geen mooi antwoord + Waarom niet?	Ah that is/ no/ that is not a nice answer + Why not?
Fatima:	+ Ik uh wil uh + vlug trouwt	+ I er want er soon marry
TLS:	Jij wil vlug trouwen?	You want to marry soon?
Fatima:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Waarom?	Why?
Fatima:	Daarom <lacht>	That's why <laughs>
TLS:	++ En jouw vriend wat vindt die d'r van?	++ And your friend what does he think about it?
Fatima:	Met vader en moeder	With father and mother

In sequence (4) Fatima uses the positive minimal feedback item *ja* ("yes") four times before he goes on and asks explicitly for some arguments. Fatima cannot provide the housing official with strong arguments which satisfy him. She even opts for formulaic answers to the difficult "why-question": *daarom* ("that's why").

Session 2: In the second session (one year later) the housing official takes up a much easier position. In accordance with his role he tries to gain a thorough insight into the urgency of Fatima's need for housing accommodation. This results again in some rather long passages, in which the TLS is persistent in trying to solve the non-understanding. In these passages Fatima is not very explicit. She keeps reacting with minimal positive feedback and also some lack-of-uptakes can be observed. The housing official considers her reactions as NU-symptoms. Fatima hardly ever uses NU-indicators; when she does, they occur at the end of long sequences filled with understanding difficulties. More use of some explicit NU-indicators might help make the interaction less strained and more efficient. Also, an explicit indication that she has understood the TLS could have been helpful in reducing the number of long useless NU-passages. Sequence (5) is an example extracted from such an NU-passage.

(5)

TLS:	Heeft u nog vragen of niet?	Do you want to ask anything or not?
Fatima:	Ja goed	Yes good
TLS:	Heb je nog vragen?	Do you want to ask anything?
Fatima:	+	+
TLS:	Wilt u nog wat vragen of niet?	Do you want to ask something or not?
Fatima:	++	++
TLS:	Wilt u nog wat vragen?	Do you want to ask anything?

From the interaction itself it remains unclear what exactly causes the understanding problem. The TLS asks the same question several times, but Fatima's responses are not illuminating. However, the self-confrontation in Arabic (see sequence 6) reveals that Fatima misinterprets *vragen* ("asking") as *zeggen* ("saying").

(6)

Fatima:	*Gali wash candek matgoeli*	*He asked whether I have something to say*
SLS	*La* "hebt u nog vragen?"	*No* "do you want to ask something?"
Fatima:	*Wash bagga gadzidi dwi?*	*Do you want to keep on talking?*
SLS:	*La "wash candek shi asila?"*	*No "do you want to ask me a question?"*

Session 3: The third session with the same housing official (which took place one year later) is comparable with session 2. Again a dominance of instances of lack-of-uptake can be observed. However, session 3 differs from session 2 in that Fatima does not use laughing anymore as a means to handle non-understanding. Sequence (7) is a typical example from session 3.

(7)

TLS:	Drie jaar wonen + je hebt 'n man + en 'n zoon + ja?	Three year live + you have a husband + and a son + yes?
Fatima:	+	+
TLS:	En je wil graag verhuizen. Je wil graag ergens anders naartoe. Wat wil je dan?	And you would like to move. You would to go somewhere else. What do you want?
Fatima:	++ Die huis	++ That house
TLS:	Je woont nu op de flat	You live now in the apartment
Fatima:	Nee	No
TLS:	Nu op de flat vind je `t niet leuk	Now in the apartment you do not like it
Fatima:	Nee	No
TLS:	Je wil iets anders	You want something else
Fatima:	Ja die ander	Yes that other
TLS:	Wat is dat?	What is that?
Fatima:	+	+
TLS:	Wat wil je dan?	What do you want?
Fatima:	++	++
TLS:	'n tent	a shelter
Fatima:	+	+
TLS:	of 'n caravan?	or a caravan?
Fatima:	Die + stad	That + city
TLS:	Wat wil je? ja	What do you want? yes
Fatima:	+ Misschien uh naast die centrum	+ Maybe er next to that center
TLS:	In `t centrum	In the center
Fatima:	Ja beter voor mij	Yes better for me

Conclusion Fatima: All three sessions are unbalanced in terms of speaker distribution. Fatima contributes very little and there are long, linear phases in which Fatima reacts with minimal feedback and lack-of-uptake. These reactions are frequently interpreted by the housing official as NU-symptoms. Occasionally Fatima uses reprises to indicate non-understanding. The professional TLS in sessions 2 and 3 is more persistent in his attempts to make himself understood than the non-professional TLS in session 1.

Mohamed

Table 3 presents the absolute number of NU-indicators and NU-symptoms observed in the sessions with Mohamed.

Table 3: Repertoire of NU-Markers used by Mohamed

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Number of turns	302	372	242
NU-indicators			
•metalinguistic comments	-	2	2
•minimal query	14	7	7
•reprise	1	4	4
•lack-of-uptake	-	-	-
NU-symptoms			
•reprise	-	1	4
•lack-of-uptake	6	4	6
•minimal feedback	-	-	-

Session 1: Although Mohamed excuses himself *ah sorry, ik spreek uh geen Nederlands* ("ah sorry, I don't speak er Dutch"), he manages to interact collaborately with the housing official. Mohamed mostly indicates NU-problems through minimal queries: *wat* ("what"), *hm?* ("eh"), and *ik?* ("me?"). Reprises as NU-indicators concern the understood keywords. An example of his keyword strategy is given in sequence (8). Mohamed repeats the keyword *flat* ("apartment"). There seems to be partial understanding of the TLS.

(8)
TLS:	Waar wil je [wonen?]	Where do you want [to live?]
Mohamed:	[Als uh/] hm?	[If er/] eh?
TLS:	Waar wil je ergens wonen?	Where do you want to live somewhere?
Mohamed:	Uh ik woon in uh ++ Akkerstraat	Er I live in er ++ Akkerstreet?
TLS:	Ja daar woon je nu	Yes you live there now
Mohamed:	+	+
TLS:	Waar moet die flat staan?	Where should that apartment be?

Mohamed:	++ Flat?	++ Apartment?
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mohamed:	+	+
TLS:	Waar wil je gaan wonen + straks als je getrouwd bent?	Where do you want to live + later when you are married?
Mohamed:	+++ Bij de + centrum	+++ By the + center

Sequence (8) also illustrates how Mohamed seems to rely on the wait-and-see strategy. Several instances of lack-of-uptake can be found where he seems to wait for a further delivery of the housing official. This sometimes results in sequences with long pauses.

At the end of session 1, Mohamed interrupts the interaction by using a formulaic "discourse stopper", *eventjes kijken* ("let's have a look"). Subsequently, he tries to recapitulate the outcome of the interaction in his own words. This is an effective strategy to check whether the general outcome of the interaction has been understood correctly (see sequence 9).

(9)

Mohamed:	Eventjes kijken ++ Als ik uh/ er/ ik kom uh + volgende maand ++/ ik moet over uh/ ik moet over uh/ over uh + anderhalf uh maand of uh zes weken	Let's have a look ++ When I come er + next month ++/ I have to er/ I have to er/ about er + one and a half er + month or er six weeks
TLS:	Over zes weken ja	About six weeks yes
Mohamed:	Ik uh ++ moet uh/ ik moet 'n huis hebben	I er ++ have to er/ I need a house

Session 2: In the second session Mohamed is less cooperative than in the first session. Mohamed is surprised by the TLS's interrogation. After the roleplay he indeed wonders whether the housing official had the right to ask such detailed personal questions. Mohamed hardly ever takes the initiative for a new topic and is more cautious about giving appropriate contributions. Sequence (10) illustrates his typical responses.

(10)

TLS:	Heb je al 'n meisje?	Do you have a girl yet?
Mohamed:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Ja hoe heet ze?	Yes what is her name?
Mohamed:	++ Petra	++ Petra

TLS:	Petra ja. Ken je ze allang?	Petra yes. Have you known her long?
Mohamed:	Hm? ja	Eh? yes
TLS:	Ja hoe lang?	Yes how long?
Mohamed:	+ Ah een jaar	+ Ah one year

After a question he waits a moment or reacts almost automatically with a minimal query: *hm?* ("eh?"). It is unlikely that he does not understand the TLS, and indeed, he proceeds with a cohesive response. Also Mohameds' use of reprises and metalinguistic comments as NU-indicators exhibits that he interacts less spontaneously and more thoughtfully. The reprises are reformulations of TLS-utterances or specific clarification requests in order to prevent inappropriate reactions. Sequence (11) shows how these reprises result in a kind of response-preparing behavior.

(11)
TLS:	En je woont bij je ouders? Wonen d'r nog veel mensen thuis of niet?	Are you living with your parents? There still live many people home or not?
Mohamed:	+ Waar? Bij mij ouder?	+ Where? with my parents?
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mohamed:	Ja mij broers en mij zusjes	Yes my brothers and my sisters

Some lack-of-uptake's occur as NU-symptoms in this session. Also one reprise of the interlocutor's words is interpreted as a NU-symptom.

Session 3: During this session Mohamed is uninterested. He dislikes participating because he is irritated by the detailed personal questions of the official. He considers this interrogating as irrelevant for the present interaction, and he deliberately changes the topic. Consider sequence (12):

(12)
TLS:	Is je vader allang in Nederland?	Has your father lived in the Netherlands for a long time?
Mohamed:	Hm?	Eh?
TLS:	Je vader	Your father
Mohamed:	Ja mij vader vijftien jaar	Yes my father fifteen years
TLS:	Vijftien jaar + hm? Werkt ie nog?	Fifteen years + Eh? Is he still working?
Mohamed:	<knikt>	<nods>

TLS:	Ja + ja	Yes + yes
Mohamed:	Nou	Now
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mohamed:	Met de flat	With the apartment

The interaction progresses slowly and consists of several linear phases. Mohamed pauses remarkably often before responding. NU-symptoms can be found at moments where it is unreasonable to suppose that he has some understanding difficulties, as in sequences (12)-(13), where an NU-symptom is followed by a complete cohesive response when the official explicitly asks whether there are any difficulties.

(13)

TLS:	En waar wil je in Tilburg wonen?	And where do you want to live in Tilburg?
Mohamed:	+++	+++
TLS:	Snap je wat ik bedoel?	Do you understand what I mean?
Mohamed:	Ja Stokhasselt	Yes Stokhasselt

Reprises that are used as NU-indicators can be interpreted in the same way as in the second session, i.e., as detail-directed response-preparing behavior where there is already some understanding (see sequence 14).

(14)

TLS:	Ben je alleen thuis of niet?	Are you alone at home or not?
Mohamed:	Nou?	Now?
TLS:	Ja [nog]	Yes [still]
Mohamed:	[nee]	[no]
TLS:	meer kinderen thuis of niet?	more children at home or not?
Mohamed:	+ Waar?	+ Where?
TLS:	Bij je vader?	With your father?
Mohamed:	Ja wij uh zeven	Yes we er seven

Conclusion Mohamed: In the case of Mohamed, understanding problems are mainly indicated by less explicit NU-markers. In the first session, some negotiation of meaning can be observed. In later sessions Mohamed is taking care of his "face." He is careful not to respond inappropriately. This picture of Mohamed is confirmed by the post-session self-confrontations, which he experienced as attempts to discuss the mistakes that he made.

Mahmut

Compared with the two Moroccan informants, Mahmut takes a very active part in the conversation in all three sessions. The number of NU-markers used by Mahmut is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Repertoire of NU-Markers used by Mahmut

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Number of turns	265	289	278
NU-indicators			
•metalinguistic comments	3	-	-
•minimal query	3	3	2
•reprise	13	2	-
•lack-of-uptake	-	-	-
NU-symptoms			
•reprise	2	-	-
•lack-of-uptake	-	-	-
•minimal feedback	2	3	-

Session 1: This session consists of parallel phases in which Mahmut and the housing official collaborate in making the interaction proceed. As a result NU-indicators hardly have a face-threatening effect for Mahmut. NU-symptoms that can be found include some reprises and minimal feedback items (*ja* "yes"). Sequence (15) shows how Mahmut overrides the TLS. Mahmut does not attend to the TLS-input and tries to continue with the topic he has introduced (i.e., "the rent of the house").

(15)

Mahmut:	Ander thuis + die normaal huis	Other home + that normal house
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Die hoeveel kosten een maand?	That cost how much a month?
TLS:	Ja dat doet er niet toe maar daar kom je niet voor in aan-merking. Je hebt pas een kindje.	Yes that is not important but for that you will not be considered. You have had a baby for a short time.
Mahmut:	Oh een kindje + ja	Oh a baby + yes
TLS:	Alleen mensen met twee kindjes krijgen een huis	Only people with two kids get a house

Mahmut:	+	+
TLS:	En dan moeten ze nog drie jaar wachten	And then they have to wait for another three years
Mahmut:	+ twee kindje + ja + ik eenduizend gulden he die uh	+ two kids + yes + I one thousand guilders he that er
TLS:	Jij	You
Mahmut:	een duizend uh die betalen beetje	one thousand er they do not pay much

The NU-indicators used by Mahmut are most commonly reprises of the interlocutor's words. Several times his strategy is to focus on keywords.

(16)

TLS:	Heb je 'n huis?	Do you have a house?
Mahmut:	Heb je?	Do you?
TLS:	Of kom je hier voor 'n nieuw huis?	Or are you here for a new house?
Mahmut:	Nieuwe?	New?
TLS:	Kom je hier voor 'n huis?	Are you here for a house?
Mahmut:	Hier wonen?	Live here?

Apart from reprises Mahmut only uses the formulaic metalinguistic comment *Wat is dat?* ("what is that?") and the minimal query *ik* ("me") as NU-indicators.

(17)

TLS:	Is moeilijk he?	Difficult isn't it?
Mahmut:	Moeilijk ++	Difficult ++
TLS:	Wat ga je nou doen?	What are you going to do now?
	Wat ga jij nou doen?	What are you going to do now?
Mahmut:	Wat is dat?	What is that?
TLS:	Wat ga jij nou doen?	What are you going to do now?
Mahmut:	Ik?	Me?
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	++ Ik uh volgende week terug komen	++ I er come back next week

Session 2: This session is structured very regularly by the professional housing official. For example, he says *ik zal even wat vragen voor de duidelijkheid* ("I'll ask a question for the sake of clarity") or he/she explicitly introduces a new topic and invites Mahmut to continue by saying *vertel 'ns* ("tell me"). The TLS tries

to get an accurate picture of the urgency of Mahmut's housing needs. Sometimes he asks Mahmut specific questions. However, he mostly leaves room for Mahmut's inclination to start monologues in which Mahmut provides abundant information about living conditions. In these linear phases the official is a cooperative and alert listener. Almost every propositional information provided by Mahmut is checked in detail by the TLS, mainly by means of reprises, as shown in the following sequence.

(18)

Mahmut:	Ja die daar pension	Yes there guest-house
TLS:	Ja Akkerstraat	Yes Akkerstreet
Mahmut:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Vierenveertig	Forty four
Mahmut:	Zesenveertig	Forty six
TLS:	Ja daar woont u	Yes there you live
Mahmut:	Ja ik daar wonen eerst	Yes I was living there earlier
TLS:	Pension	Guest-house
Mahmut:	Eerst pension he	First guest-house he
TLS:	Eerst 'n pension	First a guest-house
Mahmut:	Ja eerst 'n pension	Yes first a guest-house
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Tv-kamer dunner maken	Tv-room make thinner
TLS:	Ja kleiner	Yes smaller
Mahmut:	Ja kleiner maken	Yes make smaller
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	En dan in de he^ zo <gebaart>	And then in the eh^ so <gestures>
Mahmut:	/ in he	/ in eh
TLS:	doordemidden	in two
Mahmut:	Lange he of twee stukken maken twee kamer maken	Long eh or make two pieces make two room
TLS:	Ja doordemidden ja	Yes in two yes
Mahmut:	Twee kamer maken of dunne gedaan.	Make two room or done thin

Mahmut hardly uses any NU-indicators: only two reprises and two minimal queries (*ik* `me') occur. Also few NU-symptoms are observed.

Session 3: In this session as well, the TLS shows cooperative behavior. Even more than in session 2, the interaction consists of mainly linear phases. With his long monologues, Mahmut controls

the interaction completely. The official is overwhelmed with a torrent of information. However, Mahmut takes into account what is brought up by the official; the TLS's contributions are incorporated and dealt with appropriately. There are few difficulties with understanding. The opening sequence (19) of session 3 nicely shows the abundant contribution of Mahmut.

(19)

TLS:	Hallo	Hello
Mahmut:	Hallo	Hello
TLS:	+ Hoe is `t?	How are you doing?
Mahmut:	Goed. Ja bijna goed	Fine. Yes almost fine
TLS:	Bijna goed	Almost fine
Mahmut:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Beetje goed. Nog niet helemaal goed?	Little fine. Not yet completely good?
Mahmut:	Nee niet helemaal. Uh mijn uh die huis uh probleem	No not completely. Er my er that house er problem
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Niet probleem^ wel goed alles	Not problem^ yes fine everything
TLS:	Dan is wel alles goed?	Then everything is fine?
Mahmut:	Ja	Yes
TLS:	Hm. En wat voor een probleem was dat ook al weer?	Ehm. And what kind of problem did you have?
Mahmut:	Ja ik huis he. Die vele smalle die kamer he^	Yes I house eh. That very small that room eh^
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Brede kamer	Wide room
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Alles die slechte mensen wonen. En naast die disco he^	All that bad people live. And next to that disco eh^
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Disco + hard muziek. Hard praten	Disco + loud music. Loud talk
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Mahmut:	Alles niet goed slapen	Everything not good sleep

Conclusion Mahmut: Mahmut turns out to be a good communicator. Even in the early stages, he is a talkative person in spite of the limited target language resources at his disposal. In the first few sessions, some NU-indicators and NU-symptoms were detected. In later sessions, he preferred to talk even more and relied on keeping in control of the interaction to reduce the non-understanding possibilities. This might explain why relatively few

traces of non-understanding could be found in sessions two and three. He frequently overrides the TLS by introducing a new topic and provides all necessary information beforehand, so that understanding problems on his part do not hinder the interaction. As a good communicator, Mahmut explicitly indicates understanding problems if he considers this interactionally appropriate. This strategic use of marking non-understanding is also confirmed by Mahmut's metalinguistic reflections in the post-session self-confrontations (see sequence 20).

(20)

SLS:	*Sen bir kimseyi iyi analamadıysan*	*Suppose you don't understand someone well?*
Mahmut:	*Tekrarlatırdım*	*I would make him repeat it*
SLS:	*Peki, o aynı kelimeyi kullanırsa?*	*Okay, and if he uses the same word?*
Mahmut:	*O zaman "bilmiyom" * diyecegim	*Then I will say "I do not know"*

Ergün

The number of NU-indicators and NU-symptoms used by Ergün is given in Table 5.

Table 5: Repertoire of NU-Markers used by Ergün

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
Number of turns	180	394	360
NU-indicators			
•metalinguistic comments	3	3	1
•minimal query	9	5	4
•reprise	5	10	8
•lack-of-uptake	-	-	-
NU-symptoms			
•reprise	1	2	-
•lack-of-uptake	2	2	4
•minimal feedback	3	8	3

Session 1: In this session Ergün apparently prefers to be on record rather than leaving understanding difficulties implicit. He uses a variety of NU-indicators, ranging from less explicit minimal queries to general metalinguistic requests. The order of NU-markers within a sequence is that first less specific NU-indicators occur. If these NU-indicators are not effective, Ergün opts as a last resort for explicit metalinguistic comments.

(21)

TLS:	Wat voor/ wat voor huis wil je hebben?	What kind of/ kind of house do you want?
Ergün:	He?	Eh?
TLS:	Wat voor huis wil je hebben?	What kind of house do you want?
Ergün:	Wat voor huis wil je hebben?	What kind of house do you want?
TLS:	Ja?	Yes?
Ergün:	+ Ik begrijp niet naam	+ I do not understand name

A typical example is the way Ergün re-uses the TLS's utterance; he tries to reconstruct the utterance. His reconstructions consist of (mostly partial) reprises that leave the structure and the prosodic features of the TLS's utterance intact. The reconstructions clearly help Ergün to process the information and help the TLS to negotiate understanding. Ergün's inclination to indicate understanding problems also affects the degree the TLS adapts. Some of Ergün's minimal feedback items and lack-of-uptakes might have been NU-symptoms. However, these are not considered as such by the TLS. It seems as if the TLS relies on Ergün's ways of indicating when NU's occur. In line with this, understanding problems are always accompanied by an NU-indicator.

Session 2: The TLS in session 2 is more willing to help Ergün than the one in session 1. This leads the TLS to react more often to his minimal feedback as NU-symptoms. As in the previous session, Ergün uses a variety of NU-indicators although less frequently than in session 1. It is remarkable that his interactional behavior has more face-saving features (that is, face-saving for Ergün). Ergün seems to compensate for the face-threatening explicit NU-indicators by stating that he understands the TLS and rejecting further clarifications offered by the TLS. For example he uses the general metalinguistic comments *ja snap ik wel* ("yes I understand"), and *ja dat begrijp ik wel* ("yes I understand that").

Another way in which Ergün shows his face-saving behavior is the way he "re-uses" the TLS's utterances. In session 1, the reprises of the preceding TLS-utterances were most commonly repetitions, almost imitations. In this session, re-using is done through well-considered repetitions and reformulations. In contrast with the first session, Ergün seems to check whether his understanding is complete. He highlights the keywords of the preceding TLS's utterance. It is a response-preparing strategy which provides him with a stronger guarantee of giving an appropriate answer.

(22)

TLS:	Is dat al bekend wie dat meisje is?	Is it already known who that girl is?
Ergün:	Meisje?	Girl?
TLS:	Dat meisje ja waar je mee wil gaan trouwen en gaat samenwonen	That girl yes whom you want to marry and live together
Ergün:	Ja trouwen ja ja trouw	Yes marry yes yes marry
TLS:	Ja wie/ wie is dat?	Yes who/ who is it?
Ergün:	Naam?	Name?
TLS:	Ja	Yes
Ergün:	Die is Hatice <lacht>	It is Hatice <laughs>
TLS:	Hatice	Hatice
Ergün:	Ja Hatice <spelt de naam>	Yes Hatice <spells name>
TLS:	Nog meer?	Anything else?
Ergün:	Nee achternaam?	No surname?

Session 3: In this session Ergün continues to use a variety of NU-markers but relatively less often than in earlier sessions. The same holds for metalinguistic comments and for response-preparing procedures. Instead, the reprises are now more integrated into the interaction. In these cases Ergün probably has some understanding and re-uses TLS's utterances to fill in the gaps.

Ergün regularly counters what has been brought up by the TLS. He succeeds in saddling the TLS with the burden of continuing if a breakdown threatens to occur. It is remarkable that Ergün regularly uses formulaic phrases through which he responds and continues the turn-taking. For example, he says *nou wat moet ik nou?* ("well what should I do now?") and, *dat is moeilijk* ("that is difficult"). As a result this session is more balanced compared with the two previous ones (where the TLS asked the questions and

Ergün gave the answers). Moreover, his face-saving behavior is more covert. A remarkable difference from the previous sessions, which clearly shows Ergün's developing face policy is his use of minimal queries. The form *welk?* ("which") has disappeared and instead Ergün now uses *hoezo?* ("why"). The latter form is also commonly and frequently used by TLS's. *Hoezo* is a more powerful and more productive means of resolving instances of non-understanding. It challenges the preceding utterance and can also be used in an elliptic phrase. Certainly for a non-target-language-speaker the use of *hoezo?* ("why") in stead of *welk?* ("which") has less face-threatening aspects when used as an NU-indicator.

(23)

TLS:	Mensen die op 'n kamertje wonen moeten daar ook eten	People who live in one room also have to eat there
Ergün:	+	+
TLS:	en verder wonen en slapen op een kamertje	and also live and sleep in one room
Ergün:	Een kamertje?	One room?
TLS:	Op een kamer + die zijn er wel die mensen	In one room + there are such people
Ergün:	Alleen een kamer?	Only one room?
TLS:	Ja die zijn er	Yes there are
Ergün:	Hoezo?	Why?
TLS:	Nou buitenlandse mensen die in 't pension wonen	Well foreign people who live in the guest-house

In the self-confrontation one month later Ergün comments on this sequence in Turkish. And he explicitly states why he uses *hoezo?* ("why") as an NU-indicator.

(24)

SLS:	*Ne dedin orada?*	*What were you saying there?*
Ergün:	"Hoezo" *dedim Bu demektir ki "nasıl birsey" veya "anlamadım." Ben bunu çok kullanıyorum. Yani karsımdakımı anlamasam* "hoezo" *derim, ve karsımdaki daha kolay laflardan anlatmaya çalısır*	*I said* "hoezo" "Hoezo" *here means "what kind of" or "I do not understand." I use it very often. That is, if I don't understand my interlocutor* I say* "hoezo" *Then my interlocutor will try to explain it in easier words.*

SLS: *Yani anlamadıg'ında*,   *So you say* "hoezo" *if you
            "hoezo" *dersin o da daha   don't understand something for
            fazla açlklasin?*   him to offer extra explanations
Ergün: *He*   *Yes*

Ergün's sequential development of *welk?* ("which") and *hoezo?* ("why") is confirmed by an analysis based on all 27 recorded activities during the data-collection period of three years (see Broeder & Roberts, 1988: 83). Whereas *welk?* ("which") is used from the beginning in the first sessions, *hoezo?* ("why") only appears for the first time in two years.

Conclusion Ergün: In the first session, Ergün appears satisfied with global understanding. Instances of non-understanding are not negotiated at length. NU-indicators include: minimal queries, reprises, and formulaic comments. In the second session, Ergün begins to aim at more detailed understanding of the TLS. Minimal NU-indicators are used less often, metalinguistic NU-indicators lose their formulaic features, and reprises are used in an elaborate way. The interactional behavior of Ergün, that is coping with NU-problems by most commonly signaling his difficulty, implies that he is more at risk in terms of face-saving. In the second and third sessions, Ergün seems to compensate for this by explicit statements like *Yes I know*, but also by modifying his repertoire of NU-indicators towards more effective and less face-threatening devices.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the analysis of the housing office roleplays, a number of similarities and differences emerge among the four subjects and their native interlocutors. We return now to the research questions that were formulated in the beginning of this paper. These questions focus upon: (I) the repertoire of NU-indicators/symptoms; (II) the interactional procedures used to achieve understanding; and (III) the interactional procedures used to acquire a second language.

*I How are problems of understanding marked in
interethnic communications between a non-native
speaker and a native speaker of the target language?*

The four adult second language learners of Dutch differ in
the degree to which NU-markers could be found in their interaction.
This is affected by their target language proficiency and also by their
willingness to go "on record" and their "face policy."

The Moroccan learners of Dutch: Fatima has a very limited
repertoire of NU-indicators and almost exclusively relies on lack-of-
uptake and minimal feedback, which are interpreted as NU-
symptoms by the TLS. Her responses often seem to ignore the
TLS's input. The overriding helps to surface understanding
difficulties but there is no evidence that Fatima can use these
opportunities to develop her capacity to understand. She has little
choice and is probably not yet capable of producing explicit NU-
indicators or reproducing parts of the TLS's utterance. Mohamed
seems to favor off-record behavior. Rather than negotiating his
understanding problems explicitly, he opts for minimal queries and
lack-of-uptake as NU-indicators.
For the two Arabic adults a diffuse developmental pattern
emerges. There is no clear decrease in the use of NU-markers.

The Turkish learners of Dutch: Ergün and Mahmut are both
collaborative communicators. Especially in the interactions of
Ergün, explicit NU-indicators (i.e., reprises and minimal queries)
and NU-symptoms occur relatively more often.
For the two Turkish adults a decrease of NU-markers can
be noted over time. In later sessions, Mahmut tends to keep on
talking, as a result of which fewer NU-markers can be traced. In
Ergün's case, we see a learner who uses a variety of NU-indicators
in all sessions. The development of a face-policy suggests a
modification of his repertoire of NU-indicators. In later stages
metalinguistic comments are less formulaic and *welk?* ('which') is
replaced by the more powerful *hoezo?* ('why').

II What are the interactional procedures used by the interlocutors to achieve a joint resolution of understanding problems?

The informants' strategic use of NU-indicators, their indirect means of suggesting non-understanding and their later combining of direct and indirect means points to an increasing level of understanding. In other words, those informants who vary strategies according to the context usually manage to resolve NU's successfully and maintain a good interactional climate.

The wait-and-see strategy: Fatima and Mohamed rely on the wait-and-see strategy. Fatima very rarely uses NU-indicators and her minimal level of participation throughout suggests that she does not have the means to use her very limited target language resources in a strategic way. She is probably not yet capable of producing explicit NU-indicators or reproducing parts of the TLS's utterances. The result is often that the interaction is an unpleasant experience for Fatima. Mohamed's use of the wait-and-see strategy seems to be more effective. He makes strategic use of it because he has explicit NU-indicators at hand at the right moments. In particular, he uses reprises of the interlocutor's words. Ergün and Mahmut do not "wait-and-see." Mahmut is cooperative. He talks all the time, but he does take in the contributions of his interlocutor. The most distinct strategist in handling non-understanding is Ergün. He uses more explicit NU-indicators in combination with a well-chosen face-policy.

Reprises and the keyword strategy: Except for Fatima, the informants tend to use reprises to indicate a general problem of non-understanding. They either use the keyword strategy or they simply repeat the final item in the TLS's utterance. This usually causes some confusion as the TLS may respond as if the learner confirms the understanding/acceptance of the reprised part of the utterance.

Reprises and response-preparing: In later stages, reprises are more direct, well-considered NU-indicators. The reprises tend to be more integrated into the learners' utterances and to be used to achieve an understanding of detail. Ergün's specific re-use of the trouble source is striking. It seems as if during the first stage Ergün wants to reconstruct the preceding utterance by means of re-using

parts of the TLS's utterance. There is almost no understanding. By re-using (repeating/reformulating) the preceding TLS's utterance bit by bit he tries to get at least some understanding of it. In later stages even more functions can be assigned to this re-using procedure. He seems to want to improve or to check his (partial) understanding. So the relevant TLS's utterance is already understood to some extent. Ergün uses this reconstruction procedure as a response-preparing device. It provides him with a stronger guarantee that his next response will be appropriate. For Mohamed we also find response-preparing as part of face-saving behavior. He uses reprises of the interlocutor's words but also minimal queries as NU-indicators.

III What are the interactional procedures that facilitate (or inhibit) second language acquisition?

The analysis presented in this study is based on only 24 interactional settings of four subjects with two native speakers of Dutch. In the ESF project similar studies were done by Broeder & Roberts (1988) (see Bremer et al., 1993: 169-184 for a summary). They applied the analytical distinctions of NU-markers for all of the source to target language pairs in the ESF project.

The case studies in the present study illustrate a number of general assumptions about the relation between learner behavior and the success in understanding the target language during acquisition processes. Interactional strategies of learners which seem to promote the development of understanding include the following (cf. Broeder & Roberts, 1988).

In all stages the learner should try:
- to participate actively in the joint exchange of meaning, not to rely on the wait-and-see strategy by only using solely minimal responses (e.g., minimal feedback/queries).
- to make use of discourse sequence changes where the interactional context allows: e.g., *let's have a look*, *to summarize . . . .*

In early stages the learner should try:
- to signal understanding difficulties clearly by using explicit NU-indicators such as metalinguistic comments,
- to use the keyword strategy to highlight essential or understood items.

In later stages the learner should try:
- to maintain the balance between problem-solving and progress of the interaction,
- to make a strategic and context-sensitive use of reprises and markers of NU: e.g., opt for minimal feedback to progress a difficult interaction and then go "on record" with a metalinguistic comment,
- to combine negotiation of meaning with showing awareness of face issues; e.g., Ergün uses a direct indicator *hoezo?* ("why") instead of the simple *welk?* ("which"), which rather than making him feel dependent, adds powers to his position,
- to integrate NU-indicators in the interactional context; e.g., use comprehension checks with indirect signals of understanding difficulties,
- to take the initiative in establishing topics of conversation in order to forestall potential understanding difficulties.

This study highlighted four adult language learners, specifically their developing capacity to understand in the process of acquiring the second language. By presenting these four case studies as four unique adult second language learners, the learner-specific findings (i.e., questions I and II) and the more general findings (i.e., question III) can be usefully applied both in language learning classrooms and in training and support for TLS who are routinely involved in interethnic communications. In other words, the case studies should be seen as four unique instantiations of the general theme "learning to understand in interaction."

Those learners who can manage the tension between negotiating understanding on the one hand, and achieving a smooth interaction on the other, are likely to be good learners. They show an awareness of how to interact successfully which, in turn, builds up their experience of interethnic communication positively affecting motivation. While maintaining a smooth interactional climate, they note more or less explicitly specific problems of understanding and

raise these as problems where strategically appropriate: "those who notice most learn most" (cf. Schmidt & Frota, 1986).

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NOTES

[1] *Transcriptions:*   In the sequences capitals are only used to mark beginning of utterances. In addition, simplified, i.e. more readable versions of the transcription conventions in the ESF project are used:

'+'	indicates unfilled pause
'*'	non-target language words are put between asterisks: *word*
'""'	quoted speech is indicated by "quote"
'/'	indicates a speaker's self-interruption or self-repair
'\'	indicates the interruption of one speaker by another
'^'	indicates notable intonation rise
'_'	indicates notable intonation fall
'< >'	comments on the situation, the interlocutors, etc.
'<..>'	indicates that some parts of the sequence are not given
'[ ]'	simultaneous speech, one pair of brackets corresponds with another pair in the speech of another speaker

English transliteration: For clarification purposes the transliteration of Dutch is a combination of word-for-word transliteration and standard English. Dutch minimal feedback items are rendered as follows:

agreement;	*hm* = 'um', *hmhm* = 'uh-huh'
filler;	*uh* = 'er', *hm* = 'erm'
tag-like question;	*he?* = 'eh?', 'right?'

Non-target language words are translated and put between asterisks: *turkish word*. The orthographic representation of Moroccan Arabic is derived from Harrell (1962).

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