Novices from Various Language Backgrounds in an ESL Class: Contribution from the Community of learners

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Abstract: This study investigates aspects of classroom practices in ESL environment. The main research questions are worded as follows: How do learners grapple with difficulties that arise during the accomplishment of the task? What are the means they use to solve those problems? How do individual participants relate to each other during the task? On the whole I intend to scrutinize ways and means employed by participants - learners - to tackle the task requiring them to explain English proverbs. It turned out that despite some acute limitations in terms of linguistic and cultural knowledge, learners' contribution was way beyond expectations, in terms of interactive actions towards the execution of the task. L2 supplemented by a variety of paralinguistic features of language mediated interactions among participants, something that reasserts the power of language to dissolve and recreate the world, so to say. Language in its multi-faceted quality remains the most pervasive and central psychological and symbolic tool men use to mediate social intercourses.

Instruction in the context of ESL/EFL has come some way, ever since educators and scholars have made a point linking up theory and practice. Over the past twenty years endeavors have been centered on much more meaningful and hands-on activities, such as tasks. Among the practitioners and scholars who have shown a keen interest in issues relating to tasks in the classroom, some name stand out, i.e., Long (1985), Prabhu (1987), Rost (1990), Swales (1990), Nunan (1989 & 1993), Swain (1997, 1999, & 2000), and Segolowitz, (2000). Pica, Kanagy, & Folodun (1993) contend that a task entails a built-in goal whose attainment is made possible by the actual and active participation of learners in an activity directed toward the realization of the task. They proceed on to explain that the enthusiasm about tasks may be justified by the fact they lead to better learning.

For some time tasks have been commanding attention in SLA, because as learners truly engage in them, they likewise live a first hand experience of interpersonal exchange and relationship central in the development of the individual (e.g., Minick & Forman, 1993, quoted by Daniels, 1996, and Lynch and Maclean, 2000). In the same order of things, Plough and Gass (1993) posit that tasks are more than useful in the classroom, because they allow for productive and meaningful use of language, which facilitates the

processing of linguistic forms, including syntax. Likewise Brooks and Donato (1994), and White (1998), among others, extol the virtues of tasks in formal instruction; they contend that they seem instrumental in forwarding language development. In a certain sense the control over the task that pays off in term of linguistic awareness and noticing (Adams, 2003; Hanaoka, 2007; and Izumi, 2000)

Further, a number of scholars have acknowledged that tasks are prized in ESL/EFL on account that they allow for breaking the encapsulation of classrooms from the society at large (Crookes & Gass, 1993; Zeigarnik, 1999; Willis & Willis, 2007).

The task movement that has been steadily building up in SLA, where interactionists are its relentless advocates, is even more prominent in the camp of Sociocultural Theory, thanks to such things as newer approaches to language instruction, i.e., Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Peer mediation, a spin-off effect of CLT has shed some light on important aspects of learning and development in ESL/EFL classes, something stressed by a number of educators (e.g., Swain, 1999 and 2005).

Language, according to socioculturalists is molded in social interactions from the interpersonal to the intramental level. From this, language is the sum of experience of the world of a given speech community in its genetic, historical and ontogenetic development (Vygotsky, 1978; Van Lier, 2000; and Lantolf, 2002). Language grows from social intercourses, as alluded to above. It is also the major mediating means during social interactions (Daniels, 1996; Wertsch and Tulviste, 1996). Indeed, not only is it used to regulate oneself but also other people and objects (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Lantolf, 2000). It is the most tangible thing for testing our developmental pattern on the interlanguage continuum and it is also a metacognitive means (Swain, 1997) allowing for bridging intersubjectivities (Brooks and Donato, 1994; Dicamilla & Anton, 1997).

The task at hand consisted in explaining American proverbs; something essentially culture specific. I am interested in observing the types and categories of means learners use as they are engaged in the task. My own experience with proverbs as an instructional task has been to translate them right away from French, the medium of instruction, into English, vice versa, as learners in my home teaching situation have access to the same language in formal education that I do. But in the present context that presents a kaleidoscope of language backgrounds one would be hard put to deal with

things in the same fashion. So, I found the whole thing very appealing. In fact, I became very much interested in observing the prevailing schemes of partnership and the quality of assistance during the realization of the task. In other words, I want to scrutinize not only the type of interactional patterns that will prevail but also the means learners have to fight their way out successfully.

Methodology

The videotaping session for this study took place at the International Students Center, the Florida State University. The course called English Conversation Class is generally concerned with conversations on themes centered on the American culture. But this class on proverbs was introduced as an innovation, for the obvious reason that proverbs hold a central place in languages. And this would be to further the culture through another peephole. The English Conversation Class, organized for international students and their spouses, offers free attendance.

Participants

Participants consist of 13 learners and 2 floaters (aides to the regular teacher), and the regular instructor. The instructor and floaters were graduate students from the school of education. They all have a few-year teaching experience as ESL tutors in formal as well as informal contexts. The learners (participants in this study) include international students, generally F1 visas holders, Post docs and visiting professors, and espouses of JI visas Students. Though they all have had some basic courses in English in their home countries, they all had a limited Knowledge of English. Mostly, they were beginners – low through high.

Procedure

After dealing out handouts among participants, the main teacher informed them that the tasks consisted in explaining some English proverbs (10 of them). Then she tried to explain what a proverb is. After that the class was broken up into smaller groups of four members (2 groups) and one group of 5 people. The teacher instructed them to work together toward explaining the proverbs in their own words. Smaller groups worked for about 50 minutes and then came together for the feedback in a plenary session for about 30 minutes.

Data

The whole session was videotaped (about ninety minutes). The camera was fixed because I thought moving around would make learners nervous. Also, in any case the morphology of the room could not allow for easy movements around. And this had some serious impact on the quality of the tape. The whole situation brought about some technical issues worth raising at the outset of the study.

Zooming was hard to achieve mainly because the camera range was short. And when perfect zooming was achieved there was still a problem of sound. In fact, because every sound was captured, it was hard to perceived utterances clearly. Pronunciation difficulties compounded the problems, and so to such an extent that some parts had to be reviewed over and over again, even over several days before I could make out what was said.

The data transcribed were organized into 2 parts with several episodes each. Part I includes Teacher introductory speech and group work. An episode was dedicated to each proverb and group. The main criteria for selecting proverbs to include in the study were clarity of sound and images on one hand, and partial or a full treatment of a given proverb, on the other. Also, groups closest to the camera were the privileged ones. Interestingly enough they turned out to be the most active.

Transcription conventions

S: student; Ss: students; Su: unidentified student (during the larger group session); t: teacher aide; T: regular teacher; [xxx]: inaudible; […]: silence; [+++]: long silence; {…}: hesitation/looking for words; { }: transcriber comments.

Findings

Table 1: Proverbs constructed during smaller group work, as a result of learner-learner or teacher-learners interactions.

Agency / Proverbs	Learner-learner	Teacher-learner
1	√	
2		
3		
4	√	
5		
6		√
7	√	
8		√
9		
10	√	

Table 2: total number of proverbs dealt with during smaller group work and plenary session.

Session / Proverbs	Learner-learner	Teacher-learner
1	√	
2	√	
3		√
4	√	
5		√
6		√
7	√	
8	√	
9		√
10	√	

Table 1 shows that out of the six proverbs fully dealt with, four (66%) were the result of learners' collaboration with each other against two (33%) constructed with support from the teacher. And table 2 shows that only six out of the ten proverbs were

dealt with during smaller group work, which is a yield 60% of the whole task. The extent of the accomplishment of learners as revealed in both tables would tend to evidence their high level of involvement which was materialized by fact that learners have been more involved in the task than were the teachers, in terms of actual interactive, collective efforts towards the execution of the task. The main concern in this section will be to offer instances of mutual support as learners set out to complete the tasks they were asked to do.

Learners (from group 1) were first pictured trying to make sense of the tasks by reflecting upon them in terms of their extent and the means they had to execute them.

001 S1: We have 10 proverbs
002 S2: Oh yes, a lot of work {laughs}
003 S1: Do you know this proverb? (pointing to the first in the list)
004 S3: [XXX] {shakes head and throw out hands} I don't know. I think you have to guess.
005 S2: Guess!
006 {silence}

As it can be clearly noticed, the verbal interactions here are not concerned with the resolution of the task, strictly speaking. Yet, this talk, which has a metacognition function, is central to the execution of the task as it allowed learners to have control over the task and themselves (Brooks and Donato, 1994). It allowed learners not only to contextualize the task but also to arm themselves psychologically and cognitively in order to carry the task out. As such it would seem the preliminary step towards achieving cooperation and engagement in the task. As a matter of fact this talk also referred to as metatalk (Brooks and Donato, 1994) sets favorable ground for the intersubjectivities to come into a synergy-like fashion, a sin qua none for triggering mutual support with respect to the ultimate goal. Even though S2 seems a bit stunned in line 005 (Guess!), the silence that follows in line 006 show consent of the group: they will have to guess, because there seems no other option. So this short verbal exchange is a decisive step toward understanding and apprehending the duty at hand. As a matter of fact, everything will depart from there. Researchers and practitioners Brooks and Donato (1994), Brooks, Donato and Mc Glone (1997) and Roebuck (2000), among others contend that metacognitive talks about tasks grant learners ultimate means to complete the task and eventually achieve learning. Swain (2001) reasserts the fact that verbalizing strategies to

solve problems in task-based instruction is an effective cognitive tool in collaborative dialogue.

Now, let us turn to some episodes in which learners made a show of significant cooperation as they helped each other puddle through the task. The following seems a good example (participants from group 1):

013 S1: Do you know any of this?
014 S4: What is kettle?
015 S1: I know XXX] {draws a pot and a kettle while other members of group watch}. This is pot and this is kettle. Kettle is used to boil water. In old times [xxx] electricity [XXX] people used it. It gets dirty, if you cook with fire [XXX]
016 S3: {smiles and nods} Yes, wood [xxx]
017 S2: Yes {nods to show understanding}
018 S1: Yeah! So both of them are dirty. Both of them are black, but one […….] {as a late comer entered the room she was interrupted}. But pot call kettle dirty [xxx]. Both are dirty […], both of them are black, but one claims the other black. You see. Do you understand?
019 S3: {laughs and nods}[…] it is mocking […] in the same situation.
020 S2: {grins}
021 S4: yes, yes.

In line 014, S4 sought help, which was provided by S1, who first contributed visual aids (drawings) in line 015 and proceeded to explaining why they are black. Even though S1 did not carry her thought through entirely, eventually, S4 was able to figure out that it is the use of firewood that makes them black. On the other hand, S3 contributed the lexical items 'wood' needed to further disentangle the skein whose elucidation S1 started in turn 015. The timely assistance of S3 in line 016 paves the way for S1 who proceeded on further elaborating on her mediation. Thus, her explanation in line 018 crowned everything and brought everyone to full understanding as shown in lines 019, 020 and 021.

The learners demonstrated their agency in attending to each other's speech, interpreting and judiciously contributing to the realization of the task. This instance of dialogic activity is thought to be an efficient way of activating the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (De Guerrero and Vallamil, 2000; Tharp, 1993). According to Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is the point at which someone in the process of development needs assistance in order to do things by themselves on a future date. In other words,

from the example of a more knowledgeable, the novice will be able to develop the ability to do things by himself or herself.

Furthermore, the following conversational interactions among participants (from group 3) are going to hold my attention because of their significance in terms of supportive endeavors among the community of novices.

022 S3: What is a stitch?
023 S2: {shaking heads} I don't know.
024 S1: It is [+++]{Paused and looked around for a clue that could help her. Knocked the desk out frustration}. Do you know? {That was to S4}
025 S4: {shakes head}
026 S3: This? {Showing stitches on her left sleeve}
027 S1: These are stitch!

Everything began with the questioning of S3 in line 022, which resulted in reactions from all members. If anything, this would tend to show that they were actively taking part in the task, in one way or another, as shown in the data. In Line 024, S1 seems stuck in her endeavor to visualize the word 'stitch'. She felt somewhat frustrated and lost because she was unable to pass her thought across to others. But at that precise moment S3, unexpectedly, stepped in. She said 'This' pointing to actual 'stitches' on her sleeves. This intervention at a very crucial time in the resolution of the puzzle relieved S1 from a psychological block, something that transpires in the exclamation in line 027.

S3 is a very quiet girl who had been very silent. So her significant contribution shows that despite her silence she was engaged in the task. Thus, the linguistic activity that was in process brought members together around both the content and form, from the interpsychological to the intramental levels. So, exchanges among learners lead to some being able to outperform their present competence level. This clearly demonstrates that beyond the negotiation for meaning what is actually aimed at is learning with respect to L2.

Then, in various instances throughout the data, learners are pictured in an active participation, devising means and ways to tackle the task.

007 S2: Appearance is like, her…when […] {he was trying to explain the word} So good-looking cake tastes better [xxx]. Appearance is opposite
013 S1: Do you know any of this?
014 S4: What is kettle?

022 S3: What is a stitch?

In the above lines they try to make sense of proverbs by breaking them down into key words. Elsewhere, at times, speakers proceeded to more illustrations and redundancies, when faced with misunderstanding of peers, as in the following line:

> 019 (Both are dirty, both are black. But pot calls kettle dirty…but one claims the other black) and also line 034: '(S1): A molehill is a small amount. A mountain is a big amount. So it takes a long time to make a mountain out of a molehill', and 036: '(S1): It takes a long time to make a mountain out a molehill properly …'

In line 019, S3 who had not been very talkative so far said, '…it is mocking … in the same situation.' And this shows the learner has come to understanding the gist of the proverb with some help from others, especially S1. Likewise, the description of the molehill and mountain followed by the visual aid (drawing) in line 032 on one hand, and the juxtaposition of 'small' and 'big' and the repetition of *'... it takes a long time, a long* time to make a mountain out of a molehill...' (turn 034), on the other seem to have impacted on peers as it is made evident in the linguistic behaviors of S2 in line 033 ' *(S3):* It takes a long time …', and S2 in line 035: *'(S2):* {Nods and adds} It takes a long time …'

Actually, the explanation of S1 in line 034 is not quite right. However, it triggered a collaboration process among members of the group, which resulted in a consensus. By dint of explanation, adjustment and modification of their speeches, learners helped each other move along. For, having developed some sensitivity to each other's speeches and moves, they benefited from mutual guidance toward the construction of the meaning, despite their limited language. Novices have shown their capacity to use prolepsis in a strategically effective way as they engage in the accomplishment of the task (Ohta, 2001). Overall, by dint of explanation, adjustment and modification of their speeches, learners helped each other move along.

Beside verbal production there was a wide range of gestures. Though they are assumed time and space specific, therefore culturally biased (Mc Cafferty and Ahmed, 2000), gestures can help achieve effective communication, when used in combination with linguistic items. This is illustrated in turn 024. The gesture (sewing) of S1 in line 024 was made understandable in conjunction with 'tailor' and the context. This is

corroborated by the reaction of S3 in line 026, '(S3): This!' The gesture contributed both understanding and awareness of the form 'stitch'.

Gestures, much like speech, are thoughts externalized to mediate meaning. As such they can prove very effective tools in tuning and bridging psychological realities and lead thus to effective communication (McCaffery and Ahmed, 2000; McNeil, 1992). So, can other communicative means learners made ample use of, such as visual aids, for instance drawings as evidenced in lines 015, ' (S1): I know [xxx] {draws a pot and a kettle while other members of group watch},'and 032, ' (S1): It is her…like {…} {Gestures to describe a molehill, then draws one while Ss watch}.'

On the whole, these learners strived to come to grips with their somewhat taxing task, taking advantage of whatever means they could access, the foremost of which being language. Novices engaged in this dialogic activity have patiently attended to each other's ZPDs as Ohta (2001) would contend, which allowed them to derive and access new forms instrumental to realizing the task. The obvious development noted above reasserts the overriding nature of language in its pluridimensional quality. It is clear and to the point that it conditions human beings and influences significantly the way social intercourses and artifacts are organized.

Discussion

The social milieu in sociocultural theory is prevalent as it is the foreground on which social rituals, routinized practices that bear essence of life unfold (Thorne, 2000). It buttresses the historical and ontological human development. Social partners by engaging in true and forthright collaboration mutually support each other celebrate social life, which would otherwise, seems impossible. Thus, it appears that social life draws its substance from the supportive social milieu in which shared knowledge is an essential ingredient (Artigal, 1992).

The task of concern entails finding the explication of English proverbs that best suits native understanding. Therefore, it would seem that there is only one outcome. On the other hand, none of the participants seems to have the monopoly of information to realize the task. In other words, each was expected to bring in his or her bit according to his or her ability in order to arrive at a solution. For the preceding reasons I would think the present task would fit in the category of problem-solving tasks.

As participants set out to tackle the tasks they were asked to complete, they took advantage of a wide range of semiotic devices to assist each other. Among other things, they resorted to L2 during dialogic activities to understand key words or central metaphors in proverbs. Further, they also used synonyms, antonyms, analogies, descriptions beside paralinguistic features of language such as gestures, visual aids (i.e. drawings), all of which contributed to sustaining group activities and keep the construction of the task going.

The ongoing linguistic activity allowed for an awareness of particular connection between some referents and symbols, and by the same token meanings and forms. Swain (1995, 1997) insists that such awareness she calls 'noticing' results in internalization, therefore learning. From a qualitative point of view, S3's thinking out aloud in line 064 'Don't judge by appearance' points to the fact. S3 seems to have been raised beyond his potential level of competence. And this is a proof of enrichment if anything else.

Learner language, in the last resort, is the foremost ontological tool that helps achieve language foremost function: the representation and the meaning of the world. This is in step with socioculturalists take on language and language learning/acquisition. In this camp of SLA, learner interlanguage is his grammar at any given time in the process of language learning/acquisition (Lantolf, 2001). In this regard, learners have proved very effective in mediating their dialogic activity as they set out to explain American proverbs.

Conclusion

With respect to my prime concern in this study as to how the problems that arise during the execution of the task are resolved, a few things are worth mentioning with emphasis added. The first is that, unexpectedly, learners were genuinely supportive of each other and prone to tackle the task, engaging in it whatever means they had at their disposal. They made a show of strong motive as attested by their various efforts to overcome difficulties and proceed further in spite of their limited capacities in English.

Development, the controlling theme in sociocultural theory is prominently a human development, understood as a holistic growth of human beings. In this line of thinking this task, now part of the experience of learners, represent a form of development in many respects.

It is often the case that proverbs are culture specific as hinted at earlier on, as the experience of the world in terms of activities and social interactions differs from one culture to another. Thus proverbs are a genetic treatment of common knowledge in light of local color. Therefore, proverbs offer an insight into a new culture, which is ultimately a personal build-up. Then, from this experience, explaining proverbs as an event has now a genesis that constitutes a shared knowledge in a way or another among the class. From the above I may venture to say that a form of development has ensued from the activities. Thus, aside from the linguistic enrichment, learners have a wider scope as to how proverbs as cultural phenomena operate. On the whole, they would seem to have achieved both conceptual and linguistic developments through true and forthright engagement in the construction of the task.

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Appendix A

List of Proverbs

1. Don't judge a book by its cover;
2. A bird in hand is worth two in the bush;
3. A stitch in time saves time saves nine;
4. The pot calls the kettle black;
5. A penny saved is a penny earned;
6. When the cat is away the mouse will play;
7. To make a mountain out of a molehill;
8. A picture can speak a thousand words;
9. The best laid plans of mice and men go oft' astray; and
10. Actions speak louder than words.

Appendix B
Data

Transcription conventions:
S: student; Ss: students; Su: unidentified student; T: teacher (main instructor); [xxx]: inaudible; […]: silence; […….]: long silence; {…}: hesitation/looking for words…; { }: transcriber comments; her...: schwas

Data A (Introduction)
Episode 1 - Explaining what a proverb is

.01 T: The handout here is about English proverbs. Does everybody know what a proverb is? What is a proverb?

.02 S: [xxx] tell you something….what you have to do.

.03 T: A direction her…these are good answers. Then her… I say people use proverbs [xxx] and talk about popular idea…{T goes on to explain what she thinks a proverb is.}

Episode 2 - Instructions:

.04 T: Here we have a list of some popular English proverbs. Let us try and get what they mean. See if there are any proverbs in your language which say the same thing

.05 T: Split up in smaller groups. And with your small group look at these and talk about them, and we will come together to talk about them.

Data B

Episode 1

Group I

001 S1: We have 10 proverbs
002 S2: Oh yes, a lot of work {laughs}
003 S1: Do you know this proverb? (Pointing to the first in the list)
004 S3: [xxxx] {shakes head and throw out hands} I don't know. I think you have to guess
005 S2: Guess?
006 {silence}

Episode 2: Don't judge a book by its color

007 S2: Appearance is like, her…when {…} {he was trying to explain the word}
008 S1: [xxxx] you know nice cake. So good looking cake tastes better [xxx]. Appearance is opposite
009 S2: Yeah!
010 S4: {nods and smiles}
011 S1: Do you have this in Japanese? {S3, a Japanese girl is very quite. So, S1 is trying to pull her in}
012 S3: Uh {laughs and nods}

Episode 3: the pot calls the kettle black

013 S1: Do you know any of this?
014 S4: What is kettle?
015 S1: I know [xxx] {draws a pot and a kettle while other members of group watch}. This is pot and this is kettle. Kettle is used to boil water. In old times [xxx] electricity [xxx] people used it. It gets dirty, if you cook with fire [xxx]
016 S3: {smiles and nods} Yes, wood [xxx]
017 S2: Yes {nods to show understanding}
018 S1: Yeah! So both of them are dirty. Both of them are black, but one […..] {As a later comer was getting inside the room she was interrupted}. But pot call kettle dirty [xxx]. Both are dirty {…}, both of them are black, but one claims the other black. You see. Do you understand?
019 S3: {laughs and nods} […] it is mocking […] in the same situation.
020 S2: {grins}
021 S4: yes, yes!

Episode 4: A stitch in time saves nine

022 S3: What is a stitch?
023 S2: {shaking heads} I don't know.
024 S1: It is {gesture of sewing with her finger} . . . Tailor […..]{Paused and looked around for a clue that could help her. Knocked the desk out frustration}. Do you know? {That was to S4}
025 S4: {shakes head}
026 S3: This? {Showing stitches on her left sleeve}
027 S1: these are stitch
028 S4: What [xxx] mean a stitch save nine?
029 T: {Draws near} [xxx]
030 S1: One final clothing complete the whole work.
031 T : Does everybody talks together? Tell me what you did. Did everybody talk to each other [xxx]. Was that helpful? [xxx] But it is also about things in general.

Episode 5: to make a mountain out a molehill.

Group II
032 S1: It is her…like {…} {Gestures to describe a molehill, then draws one while SS watch}
033 S3: It takes a long time
034 S1: A molehill is a small amount. A mountain is a big amount. So it takes a long time to make a mountain out of a molehill.
035 S2: {Nods and adds} It takes a long time
036 S1: It takes a long time to make a mountain out a molehill properly.
037 SS: {Laughs}
038 T : {who has been observing for a while says} He is making a mountain in his mind.

039 SS: {laughs}
040 T : [xxxx] { draws a molehill and a mountain on the sheet S1 has in front of him}. We are gonna get together and talk about that.
041 S1: What is to make out of?
042 T : Let us suppose that I have some potatoes and I want to make some French fries. I cut potatoes {gesture: hatching potatoes}, and I fry them in the oil. I take them out[xxx]. I have just made French fries out of potatoes.
043 S2: So, you make mountain with a molehill?
044 T : Does that helps? Does it make sense?
045 SS: {the whole group burst out laughing}

Data C: Plenary session

Episode 1: Don't judge a book by its cover

046 S: Don't judge a book her...by its appearance her... and design.
047 T: Does everybody [xxx] did you think that right?
048 SS: {choral} Yes! {Still some seemed lost}
049 T: So we have this book {showing a book}. Does it look interesting?
050 SS: {choral} No!
051 SS: {General laugh}
052 T: [xxx] it does not look important. As a matter of fact it is important [laughs}
053 SS: {long laughs}
054 T: May be it will be very interesting, right?
055 S: {S1 from group 1} we have the same in Korea.
056 T: Yes!
057 S: {S1 Gp1} you know, nice looking cake tastes better
058 T: Right [xxx] sometimes you can judge something by its appearances
059 Ss: {laughs}
060 T: So you see somebody and you see the way they look, you cannot judge who they are, right? What kind of person they are. Sometimes you cannot.
061 Ss: {laughs}
062 S: (S3 from group 4) We have the same expression in Chinese.
063 T: Right, how does it say?
064 Su: A man cannot be judge by his appearance
065 T: Right, right! Don't judge by appearances.
066 Su: What does it mean. Let us get to know each other or {...}?
067 T: What [xxx]
068 Su: {Showing that he does not understand}
069 T: No, what it is saying {...}yes, get to know each other better [xxx] talking about people; but we are also talking about situations [xxx]. May be something looks good. You need to know it better. Something you don't really know, you need to find more information before you make a decision, right?
070 S3: {group 4- to herself} don't judge by appearance.

Episode 2: The pot calls the kettle black

071 S: The pot calls the kettle black {laughs}
072 T: This seems kind of difficult, right? {She goes to the board and draws} Upon the board you have got a pot; you have got a kettle. Nowadays, the pot and the kettle usually are made of silver, like {...} not silver, but like silver color, marble, sometimes clay. But in the old days they used to be made out of iron. And when it was made out of iron, it would be black. They would both be over fire {she draws some fire under a pot and a kettle on the board}. And smoke from the fire would be all over the kettle and the pot. So this

{pointing to the kettle} would be black. And this {pointing to pot} would be black from the smoke. Does it help?

073 S1: {from group 1} Yeah!
074 T: So what did you decide?
075 S1: {group 1} Both of them are black, but one of them call the other black

076 Ss: {laughs}
077 T: Right
078 S1: {group1} Both of them are dirty, but {...}
079 Su: {from group 3} It makes fun of the other
080 S2: {from group 3}It is the same situation.

081 T: Right. They make fun of [xxx] teasing. Right, they are in the same situation, ok?

Episode 3*:* A stitch in time saves nine

082 T: # 3, group 3.
083 S3: Group 3, #3!
084 Ss: {laughs}
085 S3: A stitch in time saves nine. We talked about this proverb [xxx] it may express this meaning her ... when you can do it do it. If you postpone you can do it.
086 T: May be if you postpone it will be [interrupted]
087 Ss: {chiming in} More and more.
088 S2: {from group 3} if you don not do now, may be tomorrow it is going to be worse.
089 T: Right!
090 S2: {from group 3} You have no idea.
091 T: Right, so if my clothes are about to tear, there is almost a hole, right? Right, one little stitch will fix it.
092 SS: {joined in to show they understood}
093 T: But if I wait till it tears [xxx]
094 Ss: You will have a lot do. {Many thanked the teacher}
095 T: Was that hard to figure out?
096 Su: Yes [xxx] is in time
097 T: Yes, in time was [xxx] important. I think one stitch …{T was interrupted}
098 Su: Her…please […]
099 T: Go ahead
100 S3: {from group 2}What is the conclusion then?
101 T: What conclusion do you have?
102 S3: {from group 2}Do it while it is correctly
103 T: It is also [xxx]. You can also say if you do it one time and it is right, may be you will not have to do it many more times over again. Right, do it right the first time. That is another to look at it.
104 S1: {group 1} Yeah! We have this […] [xxx]. One final stitch complete the whole work
105 T: hum…I think it is about doing it right… {Interrupted}
106 S1: {group 1} The reason I put it this way is that we have this kind of proverb.
107 T: Yeah, how is it?
108 S1: {group 1} There is a magic painter. He draws all dragon; and last he draws the dragon's eye and the dragon is her…{gesture indicating ascending movement} and dragon is alive and goes to the sky. So one final stitch can complete the whole work.
109 T: That's good. That's good.
110 Ss: {laughs}

111 T: But it is not the same as this.
112 Ss: {nods and laughs}

Episode 4*:* To make a mountain out of a molehill
113 S2: {group1} A small problem her… comes a big problem, her…{throw out hands} yes!
114 Ss: {laughs}
115 T: Ok, right! I am going to draw the picture you should draw, because it looks good [xxx], ok? Here is the ground {T draws the ground}. There is a little mole in here {T draws the mole.}
116 Ss: {reaction showing they do not grasp}
117 T: {trying to refine the drawing} Anyway it is a mole. And there is a hole. But in order to make the hole he has to push the dirt out. So, there is a little hill, a little molehill. And here is the man {T draws a very tall man} right? He is so big we cannot see his head, ok? There is the man. {Now facing SS and pointing to the molehill} and the molehill very small. But when he comes across the molehill, he goes {playing out}' Oh no, how would I get across?'
118 Ss: {laughs}

119 T: He is making a mountain out of a molehill in his brain. He has a very small problem but he is making a big problem. You hear this sometimes when someone is upset, very stressed about a very small problem. You tell them you are making a mountain out of a molehill. It is not that big deal.
120 S4: {group 2- a Russian girl} We have her…In Russian we have expression, ' don't make elephant from fly'.
121 Ss: {laughs
122 T: Yes! {Nods and smiles}. Right, don't take a little deal to make big. {Pointing to herself} It is my attitude, right!
123 S3: {group 2} Does it mean 'don't worry about it?'
124 T: Yeah! Don't worry about little things.