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Type: **In-person interactive poster session**

Becoming and Being Oneself: Learners Weaving Agency in L+ Discussion

Saturday 17 May 2025 11:30 (1 minute)

TITLE

Becoming and Being Oneself: Learners Weaving Agency in L+ Discussion

RELEVANT SIG

College and University Educators (CUE)

FORMAT

In-person interactive poster session

Short English description

KEYWORDS

Japanese conversation style
Learner interaction
Multimodal analysis
Togetherness

ABSTRACT

One conceptualization of learner agency sees it as the feeling of ownership and sense of control one has over learning (Gao, 2021). Yet, how can the people in educational spaces exercise agency in the kinds of standardized, mandatory additional language (L+) courses that are mainstream in Japanese higher education? This poster session explores the evolution of agency across small-group dynamics during an L+ classroom discussion at a Japanese university. By employing multimodal (pictorial) transcription of a videorecording of non-language-major students' interactions, the poster evocatively captures how they move to express their agency via a verbal and embodied repertoire that collaboratively facilitates emotional togetherness in the group. Contrasting two sections of interaction from the same discussion, the poster draws attention to three primary mechanisms employed by students, as they (a) shift from English to Japanese conversational style, marked by shorter, mutually-elaborative turns and increased aizuchi (backchanneling); (b) instantiate mutual transportable identities in the form of shared knowledge of popular culture, and; (c) deploy laughter. While

these actions appear to play a key role in the emergent outcome, the presenters will argue the need for more contextualized, dynamic research into the localized emergence and functions of agency in L+ learning.

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