Achieving Multimodal Cohesion during Intercultural Conversations

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Abstract

How do English as a lingua franca (ELF) speakers achieve multimodal cohesion on the basis of their specific interests and cultural backgrounds? From a dialogic and collaborative view of communication, this study focuses on how verbal and nonverbal modes cohere together during intercultural conversations. The data include approximately 160-minute transcribed video recordings of ELF interactions with 4 groups of university students who engaged in the following two classroom tasks: responding to a film excerpt and a music video. The results showed that individual participants engaged in the processes of initiation and response to support or challenge one another using a range of communication strategies. The results further indicated that during the discursive activities, the small groups achieved multimodal cohesion by deploying specific embodied resources in four types of participation structure: (1) interlock, (2) unison, (3) plurality and (4) dominance. Future research may broaden our understanding of the embodied interaction that is involved in intercultural conversation.

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1. Introduction

As one of the major universities in Taiwan, my university has attracted an increasing number of exchange and international degree students, who provide opportunities for English-medium intercultural conversations. To understand how speakers of different linguistic and cultural experiences communicate, some researchers (e.g., Firth, 1990, 1996, 2009; House, 2009, 2013; Mauranen, 2006; Seidlhofer, 2001) have argued that there is a need to explore the pragmatic-interactional features of intercultural conversation. Other researchers (e.g., Björkman, 2014; Jamshidnejad, 2011; Kaur, 2010; Mauranen, 2006) have focused on examining how users who use English as a lingua franca (ELF) collaboratively employ communication strategies to address incoherent utterances, which appear to be a concern for intercultural conversations.

Coherence and cohesion are central concepts in Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 2001). During spoken conversations, these concepts are associated with the sequential and simultaneous dialogical exchange structure of a multimodal context (van Leeuwen, 2005). Although participants' engagement in the speech functions of initiation and response provides rich semiotic pragmatic meanings, other nonverbal actions (e.g., gaze, gesture, nods, and laughter) also act as cohesive devices for establishing social coordination (McCafferty, 2002; Mori, 2003; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Olsher, 2004, 2008). To date, research on intercultural conversations either highlights specific communicative strategies or emphasizes particular multimodal resources without showing participants' simultaneous reactions and cohesive relations in dialogic interactions.

Therefore, the aim of this study is first to develop a more comprehensive framework for presenting ELF participants' use of specific communicative and cohesive strategies in two classroom conversational tasks. This study then provides analyses of students' sequential and simultaneous deployment of multimodal resources for organizing the question and answer sequences during the conversational exchange.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Cohesion during Conversational Exchanges

Systemic functional linguists (e.g., Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 2001) describe meaning potential of text connectedness in terms of lexical cohesion (i.e., reiteration and collocation) and grammatical cohesion (i.e., reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction). Cohesion actually functions at the level of discourse organization that marks continuity and unity. According to Gumperz (1982), cohesion refers to conversational cooperation through which participants communicate to provide situated interpretations and make salient sequential connections. Whereas cohesion is primarily concerned with textual links, coherence refers to semantic-pragmatic relations based on a specific subject matter or world knowledge. Colby (1987) suggested that communicative coherence is a type of social cohesion that relates textual coherence to its context and audience. Colby (1987) noted that this broader coherence-building process involves the establishment and indication of continuity or sameness across the boundaries of sequences and the arrangements of topics.

Conversational cohesion can be viewed as the participants' collaborative construction of connections between utterances in a sequential organization (Schegloff, 1995, 1997). The connectedness of spoken conversations relates to the use of discourse markers, such as connectives (e.g., *because, so, however, but,* and *although*) (Schiffrin, 1982, 1985, 1987), and discourse structures, such as turn-taking and adjacency pairs of question-and-answer sequences (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). From a discourse-specific view of spoken communication, Gómez-González (2013) suggested lexical cohesion (i.e., repetition, synonym, opposition, inclusion, and associative cohesion) and the distance types (i.e., immediate, immediate-mediated, remote, and remote-mediated) are essential for establishing interpersonal relationships during turn-taking structure of initiation and response. While repetition emerges as the most recurrent lexical cohesive strategy across the turns (Gómez-González, 2013), it plays both cognitive and affective roles in signaling

involvement and effecting solidarity (Norrick, 1987; Tannen, 1984, 1985, 1989, 1990). Cohesion is sensitive to participant structure, and multi-party conversations require greater collaboration to create cohesive relations than the dialogic conversations (Gómez-González, 2013; Tanskanen, 2006). To maintain coherence, conversational participants need to use not only lexicogrammatical knowledge but also sociocultural resources, such as exophoric references and body language specific to a given situation, community, or context (Flowerdew, 2013).

According to sociocultural differences in language use, successful completion of conversational tasks depends on floor management strategies. The floor, which is a functional resource for organizing conversation, has been conceptualized as a psychological time/space (Edelsky, 1981), a cognitive and social network (Hayashi, 1996), and the discursive organization of an activity (Jones & Thornborrow, 2004; Jenks, 2007). Edelsky (1981) defined a turn as the on-record speech that includes referential and functional messages and the floor as the speaking turn, which consists of the following two types: (a) one-at-a-time floor and (b) collaboratively developed floor. Hayashi (1996) argued that the floor enables active participants to further their conversations and establish mutual bonds. Incorporating both speakership and listenership in the collaborative floor, Jones and Thornborrow (2004) and Jenks (2007) suggested that floor management styles differ according to activity types (e.g., meetings versus casual talk), participatory structures (e.g., one-way information gap versus two-way discussion), and individual differences (e.g., strangers versus friends and higher-proficiency versus lower-proficiency). The interactive features of floor management enable us to see how students use communicative strategies to complete tasks (Jenks, 2007). Although the concept of the floor provides a method for exploring participants' organization of conversation and participation during a collaborative activity, how nonverbal responses, such as silence, pauses, nods, smiles, laughs, and variations in volume and pitch, serve as turn-tying and cohesion strategies also deserves further investigation.

2.2. Multimodal Communication during Intercultural Conversations

In recent years, second language (L2) researchers (Firth, 1990, 1996, 2009; Mauranen, 2006; House, 2006, 2009, 2013; Seidlhofer, 2001) have posited a participant-based account of ELF negotiations based on empirical analyses of the pragmatic-interactional features of intercultural conversations. As previously discussed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) scholars (e.g., Halliday & Hasan, 1976), participants in ELF interactions express their stances through discourse markers (e.g., *yes, so, ok, I think, I mean*, and *you know*) and conjunctive links (e.g., *but* and *because*) to support mutual engagement and shared resources during lingua franca communications (Baumgarten & House, 2010; House, 2009, 2013). In intercultural conversations, pragmatic expressions which are connected to linguistic structure, such as placeholders (*stuff, someone*, and *something*), approximators (*about, around*, and *a lot*), and downtoners and hedges (*a bit, like*, and *kind of*), also serve interpersonal functions (Lin, 2013). The results are fluid and dynamic interactions that negotiate shared cultural values rather than fixed linguistic connections.

To better understand the dynamics of intercultural conversation, researchers (e.g., Björkman, 2014; Jamshidnejad, 2011; Kaur, 2010; Mauranen, 2006) have focused on examining how ELF users collaboratively employ communication strategies, such as repetition, paraphrase, or summary, to clarify meaning, elicit confirmation, check understanding, request for help, and invite others to continue in social interactions. These studies have shown that ELF speakers employ numerous sets of communication strategies based on different types of interactions (e.g., interactional socialization versus transactional achievement), which are the result of varying types of asymmetries (e.g., knowledge and experiences). For example, Björkman (2014) showed that comprehension checks, confirmation checks, and clarification requests are frequently used communication strategies during high-stakes academic conversational tasks.

In addition to the amount of participation, another line of research (e.g., Hosoda, 2006;

Mori, 2003; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Park, 2007) has adopted conversation analysis (CA) to qualitatively investigate participants' discursive constructions of intercultural conversations. Mori (2003) noted that participants make relevant social categories in an intercultural conversation by shifting gaze, used gesture, and switched their styles of speech to show their alignment. Although the relevance of cultural and language differences emerges during question-and-answer sequences between unacquainted participants due to the lack of interpersonal familiarity (Mori, 2003), acquainted participants negotiate social identities and avoid being categorized by (not) aligning with co-participants through multiple semiotic resources, such as linguistic asymmetries and nonverbal cues (i.e., gaze, gesture, nods, and smiles) (Park, 2007).

Through the synchrony of nonverbal actions (i.e., gestures, mutual gaze, head nods, and other body behaviors) with verbal overlaps, conversation participants can establish social coordination (Mori, 2003; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; McCafferty, 2002; Olsher, 2004, 2008). Working within a sociocultural theory, McCafferty (2002) showed that an L2 speaker's use of gesture to reference artifacts created synchronic shared resources, refined linguistic expressions, and co-constructed connections. Both L1 and L2 speakers deploy hybrid interactional moves through embodied completion—i.e., partial speaking turns followed by embodied actions—to facilitate mutual understanding (Oshler, 2004; Mori & Hayashi, 2006).

Previous case studies have noted important interactional features of intercultural conversations. However, from a collaborative perspective, participants may engage in different embodied interactions to accomplish the same task during group activities (Hellermann & Pekarek-Doehler, 2010). Using a musical analogy, Van Leeuwen (2005) described four interactional patterns that showed cohesive relations in the sequential and simultaneous exchange structure of a collaborative task. These patterns are interlock, unison, plurality, and dominance. Interlock involves all of the participants in an activity independently; it could be in chaotic simultaneous talk or without playing together. Unison involves all of the participants who express a sense of being united by the blending of all of the voices. Plurality involves diverse participants who manage to incorporate different values into the whole group either in harmony or in conflict with each other. Dominance involves one voice that carries the most weight during an interaction. Although this etic framework may go against the CA's emic tradition, it can help the present different configurations of interactional resources and positions for achieving multimodal cohesion.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 13 university students between the ages of 20 and 30. Of all the 13 participants, four were male and the others were female (see Appendix A). The participants were divided into four groups of 3 students, with two local students and one international student in each group. The local students spoke Chinese as their first language (L1). The international students spoke a different L1. Each participant was assigned a code name (AN, RS, etc.). The students participated in two classroom tasks in which they responded to a film excerpt and a music video (Appendix B). The instructor provided the students with handouts detailing instructions. To complete the tasks, three students in each group had to organize the question and answer sequences during the conversational exchange.

3.2. Procedure

The data included approximately 160-minute transcribed video recordings, each of which was assigned a group and task number (T1G1, T1G2, T2G1, etc.). Video-recorded data were first transcribed by the students themselves and then checked by research assistants and the researcher. Specific vocal effects, paralinguistic features, and prosodic elements were also noted based on transcription symbols in Appendix C. It should be noted that although CA conventions were used in the transcripts, the data analyses adopted mixed methods: (a) a quantitative analysis of the frequency of speaking turns, communication strategies, and cohesive types; and (b) qualitative discourse analyses of pragmatic-interactional features.

To do the current study, the following procedures were adopted. First, to determine the extent to which the students participated in the two conversational tasks, the researcher analyzed their floor distributions and turn-taking patterns. The data were coded in terms of each student's amount of speaking time and number of turns. Based on the results, the researcher investigated whether the distributions and patterns were related to each participant's social categories (e.g., gender, proficiency, and nationality).

Second, to understand the communicative strategies used in their dialogues, the researcher analyzed the question-and-answer sequences. Specifically, participants' questions were also analyzed based on the following five strategies: (a) information requests (IR), (b) confirmation requests (CR), (c) clarification requests (RR), (d) comprehension checks (CC), and (e) others (O) (e.g., suggesting and offering). Their verbal responses were then categorized into the following four types of linguistic cohesion: (a) reference (RE), (b) substitution and ellipsis (SE), (c) conjunction (CO), and (d) lexical cohesion (LE). An excerpt from the data coding scheme is provided in Appendix D.

The following criteria were used to code cases of multiple questions and responses. Multiple questions could be from the same person (i.e., rhetorical questions) or from different individuals. Although rhetorical questions and thinking-aloud answers with stance expressions or repetitive ideas show the speakers' interpretative frameworks to enhance listener comprehension, they were not counted due to the lack of predictable formulas of exchange between participants. Furthermore, repetitions with false starts were not counted. Unlike responses, questions may elicit other questions, which potentially disrupt the ongoing construction of proper and cohesive messages. The researcher also noted that statements with paraphrasing or interpreting expressions (e.g., *you think, you say*, and *you mean*) and inferential connections (e.g., *so, then*, and *therefore*) could be used with requests for confirmation to clarify a speaker's

intended meaning. Repetitions can be interpreted as responses that manage an interaction or as questions with a rising intonation for initiating repairs, requesting information, or securing agreements. Reading of the discussion question on the handout was not counted as a question, although paraphrasing of the questions was counted.

Finally, the participation structure and interactional patterns within the small groups were distinguished according to van Leeuwen's (2005) four approaches to multimodal cohesion, i.e., interlock, unison, plurality, and dominance. The analyses of the selected excerpts using this framework aimed to discover multiple ways in which ELF speakers communicate their particular conversational positions and social roles. The researcher then examined the multimodal resources that contributed to speech and body synchrony within the small groups, for example, turn-taking, floor types, and the exchange moves of initiation and response.

4. Results

4.1. Question1: To What Extent do ELF Speakers Participate in Intercultural Conversations?

Table 1 presents the total speaking time across the groups and tasks. Regarding the speaking time, the four international students (i.e., AN, RS, CM, and RY), and specifically RY in T2G4, contributed more than each of the two local students in their groups. In this case, the older male international students (i.e., RS and RY) tended to make more turns and these turns tended to be longer. In general, turn-taking provides ELF participants in all groups with equal opportunities to achieve mutual understanding (cf. Kaur, 2010) and to support the continuation of the conversation as a task goal. However, turn length and frequency differences indicate that there were diverse interactional patterns and cohesive relations across the groups, for example, G1's conversation showed shorter turn lengths and more frequent speaking turns during the first task than the second task.

Table 1
Students' Speaking Times and Turns During the Two Tasks

	G1				G2				G3				G4			
T1	AN	JA	TR	Total	RS	AM	AD	Total	CH	PE	ST	Total	RY	EL	VI	Total
Video time				20m4s				24m39s				26m4s				23m9s
Speaking time	415	195	216	13m46s	358	227	254	13m59s	471	332	232	17m15s	383	136	358	14m37s
Speaking turns	60	43	43	146	66	67	45		48	56	28		55	24	55	
Average turn length	6.9	4.5	5		5.4	3.4	5.6		9.8	5.9	8.3		7	5.7	6.5	
T2	AN	JA	TR	Total	RS	AM	AD	Total	CH	ON	ST	Total	RY	EL	VI	Total
Video time				11m23s				20m33s				20m45s				21m
Speaking time	213	126	203	9m2s	468	222	280	16m10s	465	298	277	17m20s	667	133	154	15m54s
Speaking turns	6	2	7	15	77	71	55		42	50	41		54	30	40	
Average turn length	35	63	29		6.1	3.1	5.1		11.1	6	6.8		12.4	4.4	3.9	

4.2. Question 2: What are the Communicative Strategies Used in the Question-and-Answer Sequence?

Table 2 showed that the ELF participants frequently solicited responses by using communicative strategies, such as requesting information and clarifications. These strategies provide connections and resources for understanding intended meanings and restoring cohesive relations when participating in discursive activities related to intercultural communication (cf. Jones & Thornborrow, 2004; Jenks, 2007). It is also noted that the two older male international students in G2 and G4 initiated questions more frequently than the local students. Taking the role of more advanced ELF speakers, the international students actively led the conversation and used a range of questioning strategies to repair incoherent utterances.

Table 2
Students' Question Strategies in the Two Tasks

	G1				G2				G3				G4			
T1	AN	JA	TR	Total	RS	AM	AD	Total	CH	PE	ST	Total	RY	EL	VI	Total
IR	4	2	1	7	14	2	5	21	2	16	3	21	10	3	4	17
CR	2	2	3	7	18	4	3	25	1	11	3	15	4	1	3	8
RR	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
CC	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
O	4	1	2	7	2	1	0	3	2	0	1	3	7	0	3	10
Total	11	7	7	25	36	7	8	51	6	28	7	41	22	4	10	36
T2	AN	JA	TR	Total	RS	AM	AD	Total	CH	ON	ST	Total	RY	EL	VI	Total
IR	4	0	0	4	16	3	3	22	1	8	2	11	14	4	4	22
CR	0	0	1	1	9	4	1	14	2	3	3	8	11	2	4	17
RR	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	5	1	3	0	4	3	0	2	5
CC	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
O	0	0	0	0	7	4	1	12	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	4
Total	5	0	1	6	36	13	5	54	4	15	6	25	30	6	12	48

Table 3 shows that, across all of the verbal responses, substitution-ellipsis and lexical cohesive features were more frequently used than conjunctions and references. The prominent use of semantically linked expressions in the question-and-answer sequences may help clarify meaning and facilitate continuity. The use of grammatical devices, such as substitution and ellipsis, indicate the economic use of speech, which may be either replaced or followed by or embodied completion or other nonverbal performances for cohesive construction of mutual understanding in conversational exchanges (cf. McCafferty, 2002; Mori & Hayashi, 2006; Olsher, 2004, 2008).

Table 3
Cohesive Strategies in the Two Tasks

	G1				G2				G3				G4			
T1	AN	JA	TR	Total	RS	AM	AD	Total	CH	PE	ST	Total	RY	EL	VI	Total
Reference	3	2	0	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	1	1	0	2
Sub-Ellip	3	1	1	5	4	16	9	29	11	3	1	15	1	0	5	6
Conjunct	2	1	2	5	1	2	1	4	7	0	0	7	1	1	0	2
Lexical	4	3	2	9	4	9	7	20	5	3	4	12	7	4	10	21
Total	12	7	5	24	9	27	17	53	25	6	6	37	10	6	15	31
T2	AN	JA	TR	Total	RS	AM	AD	Total	CH	ON	ST	Total	RY	EL	VI	Total
Reference	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	4
Sub-Ellip	1	0	0	1	3	6	2	11	3	2	2	7	3	5	4	12
Conjunct	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	3	0	0	3	2	0	1	3
Lexical	0	0	2	2	2	13	13	28	2	2	7	11	8	5	5	18
Total	1	0	2	3	7	23	17	47	8	4	9	21	14	13	10	37

4.3. Question 3: How do Students Deploy Multimodal Resources to Build Conversational Cohesion?

Building upon van Leeuwen's (2005) framework regarding the four interactional patterns, the researcher provides detailed transcriptions of four extracts from the students' conversations with one snapshot corresponding to the underlined speech and body synchrony for each extract. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the interplay of the interactional resources and their contributions to multimodal cohesion. Furthermore, CA is adopted to understand how the participants' social identities are talked into being through intercultural conversations.

4.3.1. Example 1: Interlock--T2G1 (06:40-9:29)

In this conversation, participants in the same-sex group appear to propose their ideas independently or in an orderly manner, similar to a "one-at-a-time type of floor" (Edelsky, 1981, p. 384) or a "single person floor" (Hayashi, 1996, p. 71). This is evident in the lack of overlaps and interruptions, as the participants jointly orient to the questions on the handout through repetitions (lines 8 and 10). After AN reads and paraphrases the fifth questions and her own question, there is a 6-second pause. TR's referring back to the first scene does not seem to be in tune with AN. Following a clarification question from TR, AN repeats the questions and lyrics with the disclaimers *I don't know* and *I don't understand* as she paraphrases them with rhythmic hand movements (lines 13-14 and 16-17). As AN does not receive any floor-gaining responses, there is a silent pause (e.g., line 6) to provide space or the opportunity within the ongoing talk for the participants to formulate responses. Ill-formed coherence or alignment (cf. Park, 2007) is identified when the participants demonstrate their lack of knowledge about Hitchcock's films, yet cohesive ties indicate alignment in their synchronous use of talk and nonverbal response in the forms of nods, laughs, and repetitive words and sounds. For example, TR repeats the words *parano* and laughs with AN (lines 11 and 19), which becomes a cataphoric reference to her provision of the interpretation of *paranoia* (line 32). Similarly, JA nods at AN's expression of *the lyrics* (lines 13 and 15), which is turn-tied to the theme of her turn (line 33). The act of floor or turn allocation is displayed through nonverbal interactions. For example, in line 29, JA signals that she is preparing to take the floor through her gaze and by touching her chin, whereas AN shows no intention of talking by gazing down and twirling her hair.

	AN	JA	TR
1	◦ And why ◦ , why do you think she, (.) she, uh ◦ talk about ◦ like on		
2	the fifth question, she said, *I want you psycho/your vertigo stick, uh,		
3	want you in my rear window, baby you're sick*((reading questions on		
4	the handout). Like we just watched the: [the: ((gaze at TR))] the thriller		[((gaze at AN))]
5	of the movie [Vertigo], And I (.) Do you understand why it fits in the in		[((nod))]
6	the lyrics? ((gaze at JA and then TR)) (6.0)		
7			You mean the first scene?
8	No no. In the in the song:: and Gaga said, "I want your psycho/your		((pointing at the handout))
9	vertigo stick" [((gaze at TR))((nods))] And and she is *referring to*		[((nods))]
10	((pointing at the handout)) Alfred Hitchcock movies and *in these three*		
11	((gesture of three)) movies and they are about (.) un parano: [para-no-i-a	[((laugh))]	[para-no ((laugh))]
12	$paranoia$ ((laugh))] A::nd I don't really understand how they [< fit >↑]	[((nods))	
13	in the in the [lyrics] like she's she's saying that um *I want a romance. I	[((nods))	
14	want to be a friend* ((rhythmic hand movement)). Then she shows		
15	herself being tortured in the in the [in the lyrics].She says, I want to I	[((nod))]	
16	want to *I don't want to be a friend. I want to I want the (.) [romance]*	[romance]	
17	((rhythmic hand movement)). But in the video, she shows herself being		
18	tortured being forced to do things she doesn't want. And she she she is		
19	now talking about <u>parano: paranoia</u> uh [((touching her head))((laugh))]	[((laugh))]	
20	So how did the these three things by theme ((gaze at TR then at JA))? So		
21	do you think that her being um bei:ng tortured or ((gaze at TR)) forced to		[((laugh)) ((gaze at the handout))]
22	do things she doesn't want to? Is the paranoia or? $I don't know$. I don't		
23	really understand ((gaze at TR)).		
24			
25			Um There is scene ((gaze at AN,
26			touching nose)) there is a scene that
27			she is forced to *drink Vodka* ((
28			gesture of drinking)) A::nd a::nd also
29	[((gaze at TR))	[((gaze at TR,	uh when when *the camera uh go to
30	[((gaze at the handout, twirling her hair))	touching chin))	close up* ((making the shape of a
31			camera)) [((gaze at AN))] and we can
32			see uh she is crying. um [((laugh))
33		I think the lyrics	((gaze at JA))] so it may give us a
34		((several lines	sense of paranoia.
35		were removed))	

Figure 1
Multimodal Cohesion in Interlock

4.3.2. Example 2: Unison—T1G2 (08:10-09:45)

In the following conversation, the participants blend their voices by incorporating each other's utterances into harmonious speech. They ask the same questions (e.g., AD and AM in lines 11-12) and develop answers through overlapping speech (e.g., RS and AM in lines 18 and 31) and latching turns (e.g., AD and AM in lines 11-12 and 24-25). They achieve dialogic cohesion by repeating words (e.g., the immediate link of marriage in lines 23-25 and the remote-mediated link of *a long time* in lines 6 and 19 and *a long term* in line 31), paraphrasing ideas (e.g., *he was saying...* in line 20, *you expect* in lines 32-33, and *other said...*in line 31), using discourse markers (e.g., so, yes, and ok), epistemic markers (e.g., I guess and I think), eye gaze, and hand gesture (e.g., RS in lines 10, 31, and 32). The female student's (AM) use of a minimal response not only accepts and yields the main floor direction (lines 10, 14, and 33) but also signals that she is thinking (line 3). AD and AM's repetitions with rising tones (lines 24-25) provide space for participants to formulate their speech. RS's statement with a pointing gesture (line 10) makes this declarative sentence function like a question as it elicits a response, and his nonverbal expressions – i.e., his gaze at AD and pointing gestures toward AM (lines 31-32) – connect all of the participants in his simultaneous talk. This overlap does not disturb the ongoing flow of the conversation; rather, it provides a sense of a joint floor to achieve an ensemble (Hayashi, 1996).

RS	AM	AD
1 *So then you don't need the guys to tell you that I		
2 love you. You need to them to say that?* ((gaze at		
3 AM))		
4 Do you expect them to say "I love you" when they	Um ((nod, gaze down at the handout))	
5 propose? ((gaze at AM)		
6		
7	Yes yes ((nod)) for a long time. If I keep keep	
8	ac- acknowledge him for for mo- for more	
9	time um and I think >maybe< I WILL or he	
10 That will make you happy. ((gaze at M, pointing at	WILL say love me ((gaze at RS, laughs))	
11 M, smiling))		
12 .	*Yes ((gaze at AD then at RS, laughs))	How about you?=
13		((gaze at RS))
14 I guess I prepare having only one girl. ((gaze at AM))	=Yes. How about you? ((gaze at RS))	
15		
16 *hmm*((nods)) *So when I date, I'll look for	Yep uhun ((nod))	
17 someone that I ( ).*((gaze at AM))		
18 [Yep. Maybe someone] that I think I will stay with		
19 them for a long time.	Oh ((nod)). So you just choose the the most	
20 [Yeah]. Just like what he was saying, not to keep on	[girl you love.] ((gaze at RS))	
21 changing.		
22	[((nod))]	
23		
24	O:kay ((nod and smile)) (5.0) So are we are	
25	going to talk about marriage?	↑Marriage= ((gaze at AM))
26		
27	=↑<MARRIAGE>((gaze at RS then AD,	>Who wants to< get gain
28	laughing))	involve in marriage? Who
29		what who who who wants
30		to get marriage? [((gaze at
31 Like me since like [other said ((gaze at AD))((point		RS, smiling))]
32 at AM))] that a long term thing. So obviously you		
33 expect to get married with that person. ((gaze at AM	[in the future?]	
34 and AD))		
	un ((nod))	

Figure 2
Multimodal Cohesion in Unison

4.3.3. Example 3: Plurality—T1G3 (12:38-16:33)

In the following conversation, the participants treat the talk as being pluralistic rather than being intercultural (cf. Mori, 2003). Their voices and bodies reveal different attitudes and perspectives. CH's voice stands out through the repeated use of a high-pitched and loud "No" (lines 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9), which is accompanied by gestures such as head shaking and hand crossing, to show resistance to PE's question. In response to CH's interruptions, PE repeats the questions with key words (e.g., *relationship* in lines 2 and 5) and connects utterances through conjunctive words (e.g., *so* in lines 21 and 35). CH's frowning upon hearing the sensitive term *free sex* (lines 15-16) contrasts with PE's laughter when talking about the phrase *slept together* (line 24). In lines 60-67, after ST expresses his evaluation of CH's cultural values, CH first nods to accept ST's position but then points at ST while frowning and uses this gesture to dramatically construe the social context. Simultaneously, ST opens his arms while nodding to indicate that he is listening to and accepting CH's response. Although the simultaneous talk often caused interruptions and misunderstandings, their synchronous actions were coordinated through nods and hand gestures to negotiate toward a common ground.

CH	PE	ST
1	Can can <you>*have un (.) different (.)	
2 [↑NO::]	relationship [with another guy] before	
3	your marriage*((gesticulation))?	
4 ↑Oh:: it's ok. It's ok. [((nods))]	[((nods))]	
5	It's ok. Sex relationship also ok?	
6 ↑NO::		
7 No! [No!]	[No!] *Only after marriage you can have	
8 ((laugh))No!*$It's prohibit$*((crossing	sex*((gesticulation))?	
9 hands)) *No*((shaking head, gaze at ST))		
10	Ohoh:: ((hands on the table)) (3.0)	

#			
11	Yeah. uh for example, the virgin, because I am		
12	a girl, the virgin in our country is very		
13	important. I I am a girl, and:: I am not married		
14	yet [so yeah ((nod))	[You must be virgin. ((nods))	
15	Yeah. So we say, for example, *free sex*		
16	((frowning)) something like that just for fun.		
17	I love you. You love me. Make a <fun>		
18	((frowning)). Have a sex. *It's not*		
19	((shaking head)). It's prohibit [in our country*	[((nods))	
20	especially in our relationship.* ((nod)) ya		
21		So if you met a guy, he he loves you so	
22		much. And (.) before marry (.) YOU, and he	
23		asks you if can we have (.) >you know<	
24	[((laugh))]	[$slept together$, and] how will you do?	
25		And you love him (.) much (.) too	
26	Umm hmm ((head tilting)) [<sometime>	[((nods))	[((nods))]
27	people, not Muslim people in our country, but		
28	<maybe> sometime ((nod)) uh >the people in		
29	my country< have something like that [but, in	[((nods))	
30	mostly of people (.) always take in the rule		
31	that in the rule in the rule that you [have	[((nods))	
32	relation, you have to have their rule that you		
33	(.) keep (.) you keep in accurate way, in		
34	accurate road. Yes, we can take accurate		
35	person in your: lives. [((nods))	[((nods)) So only <after> marriage, you can	
36	Because in my country, it's mannerable. Yes		
37	for example, because (.) we have the we have		
38	the ◦east traditional culture◦.		
39			
40			
41			I want to ask a a private question of
42	Yes ((nod)), I have. I am Christian.		you. Do you have any religious belief?
43			
44	Uh mostly in Indonesia, *maybe* ((frowning))		Christian. But in Indonesia::
45	70% in Indonesia is [Muslim ((nod)), and		
46	*then 30-25% to Hindus and		
47	Christian*((counting)), [but uh	[um ((nods)) ◦you are a Christine◦ =	[◦Christine◦
48	=Yes, I am a Christine((nods))		
49	[Yes, most people are		
50			
51	[((nod))]		And most people are [Muslim]. So,
52			I want ask most people in your
53			[country are] influenced a lot by
54	*[NO, really.]*((shaking head))	[Uh huh ((nods))	the (.) concept of their religious
55			belief un including their values and
56			the thought about [their marriage.
57			So they can't have sexual
58	[*ya, yes*]((nod))		relationship.
59			
60			
61	Yes, [yeah ((nod)) *if you see* ((pointing at S		So it is all [because the]
62	and frowning))] if you look in the Arab, Saudi		I think it's too traditional.
63	Arabia, something [like in Macau] ((gaze at		
64	PE)), and then all of the people is the Muslim	[((nods))]	[yeah, so what do you ((palm up))]
65	that they have Hijab ((gaze at ST))[((gesture		[((nods))
66	of wearing Hijab)), *something like that:*		
67	((opening arms)) in my country [((nods)).		[((nods))]
			[((nods))

Figure 3
Multimodal Cohesion in Plurality

4.3.4. Example 4: Dominance—T2G4 (1:15-3:54)

In the following conversation, RY dominates the floor. As shown in lines 23-39, RY reads the discussion questions and thinks aloud. He pushes and punctuates his thoughts through the use of continuatives (e.g., *so, like, you know, I mean*, and *I think*) as floor-holding strategies. His native-like fluent speech makes the two female students become submissive. The contrasts between the dominant and subservient voices are also reflected in their use of nonverbal cues as a means of remediating their understanding (cf. McCafferty,

2002). In lines 11-13, VI exploits the interactional practice of embodied completion (cf. Olsher, 2004; Mori & Hayashi, 2006) while EL imitates VI's gesture before verbalizing the physical object. Moreover, they solicit help from each other through mutual gaze instead of engaging with the more advanced interlocutor RY (cf. Hosoda, 2006). Although RY attempts to further the conversation (lines 15-21) and requests clarification to understand their intended meaning (lines 42-46), VI and EL maintain the role of attendants through verbal echoing (*fighting* in line 8 and *bad romance* in line 28), nonverbal mimicry (lines 12-13 and 37-38), and laughter and smiling. To enhance the coherence among the participants, RY keeps the floor through continued gesticulation while the two female students capture the rhythms through mirroring coordination.

RY	EL	VI
1		*What what is (.) what (.) is bad
2		romance? Is $sexy$? ((gaze at
3 *Bad romance? *[((laughs)) You know like people you know when		EL))[((laugh))
4 you are romantic you know I am loving, I wanna like you know		
5 probably help each other ((gesticulation)) and forth, so I am loving is		
6 romantic, but bad romance I think would be like the opposite (.)		
7 ( ) obvious fighting or something like that.		
8	((laughs)) [fighting	[The last one
9 Ya		
10		There is one scene.((gaze at RY))
11		Gaga sleeps *with one* ((hands
12	((imitating VI's	showing the shape)) ((gaze at EL))
13	gesture)) ∘ what	
14	skull-skull ∘	
15 What? [skeleton?] ((gaze at EL)) skeleton?	[((laughs))]	[one bone.] ((gaze at RY)) ((laughs))
16 So skeleton right? ((gaze at EL and then VI))		
17	[Yap]	[((nods))]
18 yeah as I see in the movie show like (.) the person [((gaze at VI))]	[((nods))]	
19 she would like sleeping with a bone is dead you know, so bad		
20 relationship is like end up like ((gesticulation)) [*and somebody	[stretching out left	
21 killing each other that you know* (hand movement))	hands, palm up]	
22		((laugh))
23 So so *I said bad romance* the scene to me is like a weird		
24 relationship to a bad bad relationship. Is it the theme? So I		
25 think*((shrugs)) (.) ((gaze at VI)) *and is a (2.0) *what lyrics and		
26 image give you the impression:*((reading the question in the		= bad romance. ((gaze at RY))
27 handout)). Like something like will be a bad a bad romance=		
28 You know and then then are so cool, so *what is the setting and how		
29 does lady gaga present herself as the video opens*((reading the		
30 question on the handout)) ((gaze at EL and then at VI)) *She:: how		
31 do you see: herself by the beginning of the video? (3.0) Doesn't she		
32 look like crazy, right? *[((gaze at EL, right palm up, smiling))	[((smile))	[((smile))
33 she is mentally challenged. She is like you know *like like a crazy		
34 horse like she's like she's crazy.* ((gesticulation)) ((gaze at VI and		
35 then EL)) That's the way she present herself you know. Like she is		
36 *like you know ( ) wear like people have <mental problem> (.) they		
37 are they wish to dress: [<her hair>*((gesticulation)) you know.		[((laugh))
38 Ya, *so the setting presents that that that sense, you know, I mean	[mimicking R's	
39 bad romance.*((shrugs)) ((gaze at VI))	gesture	
40	Do you think she want	
41	to occupy someone: or	
42 *She want what?* ((chin thrust))		
43	occupy [someone	[occupy
44 occupy?		
45	∘ Yes. ∘	
46 Oh what do you mean?		
47	∘ Like she want to::	
48	own someone in	
49	((sighs)) ((gaze at VI))	
50 [((gaze at VI))	[(4.0) so strong. ∘	
51		You say: (.) her desire to have some
52	*[Yes yes* ((smile))	(.) [men someone some men.((smile))
53	yes yes She is very	
54	strong willing strong	
55	strong willing. (10.0)	
56 Oh. Ok. I am not sure. Ya (3.0)		

Figure 4
Multimodal Cohesion in Dominance

5. Discussion

The current study provided topics, tasks, and materials for L2 students to participate in intercultural conversational tasks. According to the proposed framework, the researcher developed a set of criteria for identifying the role of communicative and cohesive strategies in sequences of questions and responses. The results showed the following tendencies:

- International students tended to spend more time talking than local students.
- The older male international students were more likely to make requests for information and clarification.
- The mixed-sex groups were more likely to co-construct collaborative turn-exchanges and floor-shift behaviors through coordinated verbal and nonverbal interactions to foster social cohesion.

However, the case study of intercultural conversations among ELF speakers did not hold the tendencies for talk outside the data; instead it aimed to go deeper into the analyses of the participants' communicative and cohesive strategies in the particular classroom conversations. As the participants oriented to the instructions and guided questions through ELF (cf. Hellermann & Pekarek-Doehler, 2010), they also negotiated the tasks mediated by their embodied actions and unique cultures. In addition to individual interactional modifications, to achieve mutual understanding (cf. Björkman, 2014; Jamshidnejad, 2011; Kaur, 2010; Mauranen, 2006), the participants co-constructed cohesive and coherent messages by coordinating actions. The results of the current study revealed a range of synchronizing nonverbal communication strategies (e.g., gaze, laughter, and nods in example 1; synchrony of gaze and hand gestures in example 2; laughter, talk, and open arms in example 3; and mimicry in example 4) during intercultural conversations.

From a collaborative perspective of conversational interactions, the small group conversations, which involved three students per group in this study, were basically composed of a single conversational floor (cf. Hayashi, 1996). One group (G1) adopted a single person floor, whereas the other three groups constructed more interactive flooring activities with overlapping speech,

backchannels, and comments to support a collaborative floor. Thus, participants in small group conversations may be more likely to alternate floor holding although a speaker with more advanced expertise may take charge of managing the conversational interactions as a primary floor holder, as was evident in example 4. Example 2 shows a joint floor in which utterances are associated with all of the participants. By contrast, participants in example 3 produced more unexpected interruptions and comments to negotiate their differences during the conversations. Although there were fewer instances of an off-record playful meta-floor in the current study when compared to observations of small-group intracultural conversations with Taiwanese students who engaged in the same classroom tasks (Liang, 2015), the current analysis of intercultural conversations reveals the dynamic relations and connections regarding the turns and floors that participants engage in during real conversational flows, which may not be evident when manipulating participatory structures (e.g., uneven or shared information in Jenks, 2007).

Given the interactive practices involved in L2 conversational interactions with international students, the analyses suggest that the ELF participants' different linguistic and cultural backgrounds may result in diverse interpretations about certain linguistic expressions (e.g., *occupy* in example 4, line 44) and sociocultural traditions (e.g., *sex relationship* in example 2). An active or advanced speaker during the question-and-response sequences can serve as a director or guide to lead co-participants to collaboratively manage the floor in the development of new and multiple perspectives that result in a cohesive ensemble. In example 2, AM supported the main floor by accepting a commenting request with minimal responses, whereas in example 3, CH rejected the lead-in questions with minimal responses to challenge the floor. In example 4, the students negotiated repairs by paraphrasing and providing explanations to manage the floor direction. These instances represent real intercultural conversations.

Furthermore, ELF speakers who differ in language expertise can exploit and attend to the nonverbal resources (e.g., eye gaze, silent pauses, discourse markers, and embodied

completions) to accomplish specific turn-shift or floor-claim work. To better coordinate turn exchanges and floor shifts, ELF users should pause longer (e.g., example 1) and use listener responses and hesitation devices (e.g., example 4) to provide time and space to understand each other's intentions and formulate speech actions.

To summarize, the current study examined ELF speakers' dynamic verbal and nonverbal interactions during conversational activities with the goal of achieving multiple-level cohesion. Detailed investigations into the communicative functions of intercultural conversation should focus on peer responses that are triggered by a lack of coherence. Future research should also examine whether various interactional patterns emerge according to differing compositions of students engaged in intercultural conversations.

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Appendix A
Participant Profiles

Student	Gender	Age	Nationality	Mother Language	Other Languages	Major
AN	Female	25	Haitian	Creole/French	English/Spanish/Chinese	Finance
JA	Female	22	Taiwanese	Chinese	English	English
TR	Female	23	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English/Japanese	English
RS	Male	26	Swazi	Siswati	English	Environmental Development
AM	Female	21	Taiwanese	Chinese	English/Taiwanese	English
AD	Male	20	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English	English
CH	Female	25	Indonesian	Indonesian	English/Javanese	Civil Engineering
PE	Female	21	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English/Korean	English
ST	Male	20	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English/Japanese	English
ON	Female	20	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English	English
RY	Male	30	Belizean	English	Spanish	Environmental Development
EL	Female	20	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English	English
VI	Female	20	Taiwanese	Chinese/Taiwanese	English	English

Appendix B
Two Tasks

Activity 1: reaching out across cultures
Objectives: Students will be able to:
- Exchange opinions about the concepts of "dating," "love," and "marriage."
- Express self and others as instantiated in diverse cultures/language communities.

Materials:
- DVD of "Four Weddings and A Funeral"
- Handout with a film review

Procedures:
1. Class views the scenes of an experienced woman and declaration of love (10 mins)
2. In groups, students discuss the two scenes and re-create the conversation for 1-minute spoken performance (20 mins)

Activity 2: never judge a person by her appearance
Objectives: Students will be able to:
- Analyze the messages on the music video.
- Evaluate and respond to media influences.

Materials:
- Music video of Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance"
- Handout with group discussion questions

Procedures:
1. Students watch Lady Gaga's music video "Bad Romance" with lyrics on screen (5 mins)
2. Students discuss the scenes based on the guided questions (20 mins)

Appendix C
Transcription Conventions

1. (.) micro pause
2. (2.0) pause in seconds
3. ↑↓ pitch rise or fall
4. ( ) unclear word
5. (words) a guess of unclear word

6. WORD louder in value
7. 。word。 quiet in value
8. >word< pacing faster
9. <word> pacing slower
10. wo:rd or wo::rd lengthening sound
11. [   ] overlapping utterances
12. = latched utterances
13. word . sentence-final falling intonation
14. word ? yes/no question rising intonation
15. word , phrase-final intonation (more to come)
16. word ! animated tone
17. $word$ smile voice
18. - abrupt cutting off of sound
19. ((laugh)) author comments

Appendix D
An Example of the Coding of QA Sequences (T1AJT)

Questions		Responses	
A: $Do you get what **I** mean?$	CC	J: Yep, um, **you** have a good outline 。 for our story. 。	RE
T: So, so you mean that David encourage (.) Charles to confess his **idea**?	CR	A: His **feelings** (.)	LE
J: Uh, uh, at the end, (.) she would accept?	IR	A: She might or she might not.	SE
A: Would you accept?	IR	J: Charles' feeling. T: $May, maybe not$.	LE SE
T: But at first David, **David** didn't know (.) that Charles like Carrie, right?	CR	A: ↑**He** knows.	RE
T: He knows?	RR	A: ↑Yeah.	
T: [How, how about this?	O	J: [((nod))	
A: So you mean we would have two ↑scenes?	CR	T: **And, and then, and then**: $yeah$	CO