

**PAIR INTERACTION AMONG ADULT EFL  
LEARNERS: A SOUTH KOREAN CASE STUDY**

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## DECLARATION

I, Youn Hee KIM, hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

The current study aims to investigate how pair work influences language learning in EFL lessons, in particular in a South Korean college. Specifically, the study addresses: (i) how learners interact with their partner in language learning activities, (ii) how they perceive their peer interaction, and (iii) how the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relates to language learning opportunities. Therefore, the study plan was to explore the type of peer interaction, learners' perception of the interaction, and the relationship between the interaction and language learning opportunities.

This study was classroom-based. Research was conducted in three EFL classroom settings in a Korean college where my own English courses were held for a period of seven weeks. Twelve learners (i.e. six pairs) participated in the study. Seven different activities related to the course syllabus were used as the main data collection instrument to record the processes of peer interaction undergone by learners while accomplishing the activities. Data for the study came from transcripts of audio-recorded pair talk as the participants completed seven different activities, from observation notes, and from a series of interviews such as individual post-activity interviews including stimulated recall and final interviews.

What the findings of this study suggest is that learners need to have a willingness to collaboratively engage with their partner because language development seen as the internalisation of socially co-constructed or mutually accepted knowledge has more opportunities to occur in pair interaction with a collaborative orientation such as *collaborative type* and *expert/novice type*. Therefore, the important element that influences language learning is not pair work per se but engaging with a partner in *collaborative type* and *expert/novice types* of pair interaction that embody a collaborative orientation. These are more likely to lead to the development of socially co-constructed and mutually accepted language knowledge.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

The focus of this study is to ascertain how learners can improve and enhance their language learning in an English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom context. Over the past 30 years, second language acquisition (SLA) research has increasingly focused on peer interaction and its important role in the language learning process. In order to maximise opportunities for foreign and second language learning through peer interaction, SLA researchers have investigated the use of group and pair work.

Although previous studies have found that certain types of peer interaction are more conducive to language learning than others (e.g., Kowal and Swain, 1994, 1997; Leeser, 2004; Storch, 2002a, 2002b, 2004; Watanabe, 2008; Watanabe and Swain, 2007), in order to better understand the complex nature of peer interaction, more investigations in this field are necessary. Thus, this study investigates how peer interaction occurred while accomplishing the language learning activities in pair work in college EFL lessons in South Korea.

### 1.2. Rationale of This Study

The study has been motivated by a number of factors. Some are related to the present situation of EFL lessons in South Korean society: the importance of English education. Others are current issues of peer interaction in SLA theory and research: the concept of interaction related to different theoretical perspectives. Furthermore, there are my

personal interests in this field of research that drive this study. These issues are sketched in the background of the study that follows below.

### **1.2.1. The Rationale of Context: English Education in South Korean Society**

English has become the global *lingua franca*. English proficiency is required as a means of communication between native speakers of other languages. A second/foreign language is taught in the educational system because of the benefits such a language can bring, both for those inside and outside the home country (Cook, 2008). The importance of language in education has also increased with the growth of international travel. According to Benson (2001) migration, tourism and the internationalisation of business are all important factors in the worldwide expansion of language teaching and learning. These trends have had a noticeable effect on education in South Korea where demand for EFL learning continues to grow, fuelling a huge expansion in EFL education and making it one of the country's largest markets. 'English is the golden tongue for South Koreans', reported the *Washington Post* on 2 July 2007, which went on to state that Korean society is in the grip of 'English fever'. All Koreans, from children to adults, strive to achieve proficiency in English because they believe it is the key to success. At school, English is one of the main subjects taught, accounting for 25 per cent of all the marks in the national academic aptitude test for university entrance, and at work fluency in English is regarded as a prerequisite for promotion. Thus, in some respects, English education has become one of the major subjects for study in South Korea, receiving considerable attention from educators, learners and parents.

In EFL learning contexts where English is not the normal medium of communication and instruction but one of various subjects in school, Korean learners have limited opportunities for exposure to the target language. As Nunan (2003) points out, Korean EFL learners may encounter some inevitable difficulties resulting from exposure time, teaching and learning materials, learning objectives and so on. In order to reduce the difficulties to some extent, it is important to understand what happens in language classrooms and to consider how to facilitate language learning in classroom contexts in that most EFL learning occurs in language classrooms either through formal education or in private lessons. In order to do so, as Swain and Lapkin (2001) and Philp, Walter and Basturkmen (2010) highlight the importance of classroom-based research, more studies are necessary to investigate language learning in the context of a real life classroom. One aim is to maximise the opportunities already present within the language classroom, given the limited occasions for learning English outside the classroom.

### **1.2.2. Research Question Rationale**

How do people learn a second/foreign language? Which learning processes can help language learning? This study starts from this point. The meaning of language learning can be interpreted in different ways depending on theoretical perspectives of learning. The meaning of contemporary language learning is likely to be different from traditionally prevalent learning based on the behaviourist theories that have been massively influential in classroom teaching, learning and assessment since the 1950s. Behaviourist learning theory views learning as the conditioned response to external stimuli, i.e. knowledge is somewhere out there and learning is about getting it into heads (Watkins, 2003). According to these theories, language learning, like any other

kind of learning, involves 'habit formation' (Ellis, 1997, p.31). Habits are formed when learners respond to stimuli and subsequently have responses reinforced; learners remember this process. Ellis (1997, p.31) defines it thus: 'a habit is a stimulus-response connection'. These learning perspectives are based on the premise that all behaviour found in language acquisition can be explained in terms of a habit. When learners have opportunities to practise making correct responses to given stimuli, learning takes place enabling them to imitate models of stimuli, such as correct language use. What behaviourists notice about language acquisition during this process is observable behaviour, such as input and output to and from the learners. This perspective however, ignores internal processes of learning, such as the concepts of mind, intelligence or ego (James, 2006). It also ignores the fact that there are a limited number of ways in which any language can be used with very few 'right' answers.

According to behaviourism, learners can produce output that simply reproduces the input, but the reality is not the case. Learners tend to be actively involved in constructing their own patterns rather than copying the patterns of language presented in the input (Ellis, 1997). Therefore, language learning cannot be explained solely by a response to external stimuli as behaviourism implies.

Cognitive theories of learning, on the other hand, introduce the active engagement of learners as a requirement for learning (Illeris, 2002). For these theories, learning is determined by what goes on in learners' heads and their prior knowledge is crucial for learning new material (Illeris, 2002). In a SLA context related to interaction, Long (1985, 1996) develops the cognitively based Interaction Hypothesis. Much research linked to the Interaction Hypothesis has been pursued over two decades when investigating the role of a particular kind of interaction in learning, which is the negotiation of meaning. Mackey, Abbuhl and Gass (2012) point out that the key features of interaction

hypothesis are to provide opportunities for learners to receive modified input and to produce their own output, and to notice gaps in their interlanguage. In the process of interaction, Long (1996) argues that language acquisition can be facilitated. However, as peer interaction involves powerful emotions that may influence language learning, the studies focusing on cognitively oriented interaction alone may fail to capture the complex nature of peer interaction (Watanabe, 2008).

As a reaction against the limitations of the previous theories of learning, researchers have attempted to address new understandings of human learning (Watkins, 2003; James et al., 2007; Edwards, 2005). What kind of learning and knowing are appropriate to the 'learning society' of today and how can they be fostered? Since the early 1990s, sociocultural theory, exemplified in the writings of Vygotsky, which centres around the importance of interaction, has become one of the most influential models underpinning language learning (Cook, 2008). Vygotsky (1978) stressed the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition. Tasks that children cannot undertake by themselves can be successfully completed beyond their current level of competence with guidance from knowledgeable people, such as their teacher and/or peers. In time, this becomes part of their internal knowledge. This is what he referred to as 'the zone of proximal development' (ZPD). The distinctive aspect of ZPD is that the gap between learners' current state and their future knowledge is bridged by assistance from others (Cook, 2008). In other words, learning takes place on a social level first and then on an individual level.

In the area of second language learning and teaching, the concept of social assistance is interpreted through a concept known as 'scaffolding'. According to Bruner (1983), children's language acquisition is scaffolded by the helpful adult who provides a continual supporting aid to their language internalisation. This concept is extended to include helpful people at the same level as the student, such as fellow students, in a

classroom context. Learning can take place while children carry out tasks in pairs and/or groups. Sociocultural theory is based on the dialogue that learners encounter in the classroom, i.e. on the learning that takes place through social interaction (Cook, 2008). Swain (2000, p.102) calls this as 'collaborative dialogue', which means 'dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building'. The communication becomes an educational dialogue in which people create new knowledge. This notion is one of the essential features to explore in the process of language learning because through the collaborative dialogue, learners not only negotiate meaning; they negotiate learning.

In short, what sociocultural learning theory emphasises is that learning involves the process of collaborative problem solving and takes place through participation in communities of practice. Unlike interactional studies focusing on the cognitive process of an individual learner, interactional research from Vygotskian sociocultural perspectives has focused on both the social context and the dynamics of the relationship between individual learners, suggesting that such social interaction can lead to individual psychological development. As James et al. (2007) state, pair or group work in school education is not an optional extra activity but an essential process for learning. Hence by researching the relationship between interaction and language learning by taking the sociocultural perspectives into consideration, this study can explore ways in which collaborative dialogue influences language learning and may enhance sociocultural learning theory in relation to the field of second language acquisition.

### **1.2.3. Personal Rationale**

Motivation to conduct this study came from my personal experience. I had an opportunity to teach English at a college in South Korea during the winter of 2009 and



have subsequently worked as a part-time lecturer at some colleges since then. Prior to this, I had little classroom experience and few opportunities to observe what really took place in a classroom where language was taught. While I was teaching, my main interest was in observing students' responses or their behaviour during my lessons. What I discovered from these observations was that they were more active learners than I had expected.

At the beginning of my teaching experience, I would ask students to undertake individual work and would walk around the classroom to see how they were completing the activity. While some students did it on their own, others would talk and check their answers with the person who sat next to them. What surprised me was that the students talked to each other about the activities without being prompted to do so. Then I instructed the students to work in pairs. Most tried to figure out the activity together and a few pairs compared their answers with other pairs. If an answer was different, they would explain why they thought their answer was correct. After cautiously and curiously observing the behaviour of these students in my lessons, it was clear that the level of engagement of students in pair or group work exceeded my expectations and this led me to consider more closely the relationship between peer interaction and learning.

Many second language (L2) researchers emphasise the role of peer dialogic interaction in L2 learning (e.g. Donato, 1994; Kowal and Swain, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2001; Storch, 2002a, 2002b): dialogic interaction in the language learning process is communication occurring when learners encounter linguistic problems and attempt to solve them together, and in the communication, language is used both as a communicative and cognitive tool (Swain et al., 2002). The researchers strongly claim that L2 learning occurs via dialogic interaction, or even that peer interaction is evidence of L2 development. Such researchers often cite their own research data to back up such

statements. In their research, it appears that learners assist each other and negotiate with their interlocutors and that their L2 learning gradually develops. From observing my own students' behaviour, I wondered whether such processes could be occurring in their learning because there were many occasions when the students talked to each other about activities or lessons and this appeared to assist their learning through dialogic interaction. By researching this topic therefore, I may discover how peer interaction works in language learning in the context of a naturalistic language classroom. I can then apply the findings to my own teaching thereby enhancing my teaching and student learning, as well as contributing to academic knowledge by offering research-based evidence.

### **1.3. The Aim of This Study: Research Questions**

The aim of this study is to examine and describe the nature of peer interaction, in particular pair interaction, when adult learners are engaged in a range of activities in naturalistic EFL lessons. In order to understand the nature of peer interaction, this study focuses on the role relationship between the learners. The study also aims to explore learners' perceptions and feelings about the pair interaction. The knowledge thereby constructed by the learners can help explain why their interactions would not all be the same and what factors influence their interaction with a peer. The final aim is to investigate the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities. If any, this investigation will be able to suggest how to promote peer interaction in order to facilitate language learning.

Considering the aims of this study, the main research question addressed by this study is: how does pair work influence language learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) lessons, especially in a South Korean college? The research has been carried

out in the context of an English classroom in a South Korean college using case study.

In order to answer the main research question, subsidiary research questions are focused on the collection of empirical data that guides this study as follows:

- 1) How do learners interact with their partner in language learning activities?
- 2) How do learners perceive their peer interaction?
- 3) How does the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relate to language learning opportunities?

The answers to these sub-research questions can provide the elaboration and description of the processes of interaction between learners and the influence of interaction on language learning opportunities. Therefore, it is hoped that this research will contribute to knowledge about language learning via peer interaction as it occurs in EFL contexts, as well as informing and illuminating classroom practice.

#### **1.4. The Direction of This Study**

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter presents an overview of the study including the rationale for investigating pair interaction in an EFL context and highlighting the significance and purposes of the study. Chapter 2 sets out to review the theoretical bases of sociocultural theory by examining the main premises of the sociocultural theory: language as a mediational tool, the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and internalisation and inner speech. This is followed by a detailed review of SLA literature, focusing on peer interaction based on sociocultural theory.

Chapter 3 provides a methodological view of this research study. In an attempt to answer the research questions, the following research aspects are described and justified: the research paradigm, the case study approach and data collection methods.

Discussion about the effect of a pilot study follows: what discoveries were made and

how the findings influenced the research plan for the main data collection. The plan of the research design is then discussed and ethical issues regarding the conduct of research fieldwork are considered.

Chapters 4 to 7 present the data analysis and the findings in response to the three sub-research questions. Chapters 4 and 5 explore the first subsidiary research question: namely, how learners interact with their partner in language learning activities. Chapter 4 describes how the collected pair talk data were analysed in addressing the research questions and illustrates the several steps of analysis with representative excerpts from the data. At the end of the analysis process, the various types of pair interaction with their salient traits are identified. Chapter 5 reports on the findings in response to the first subsidiary research question. Based on the analysis of the pair talk data in Chapter 4, this chapter describes the type of each pair's interaction during the seven activities in relation to the types of pair interaction identified: *collaborative, cooperative, dominant/passive, expert/passive and expert/novice*.

Chapter 6 addresses the second subsidiary research question: how do learners perceive their peer interaction? This chapter investigates learners' perceptions about the peer interaction experience using learner interview data. Using post-activity interview data, this chapter reports on how the learners thought about their pair interaction while performing each activity, and then, using final interview data, uncovers more general perspectives on pair work experienced over the seven weeks of observation.

Chapter 7 addresses the third research question: how does the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relate to language learning opportunities? Without including any measurements of learning gains, learner interviews and pair talk data are used to examine the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities. Interview data provides learners' perceived learning in pair work, while pair talk data

presents the evidence of opportunities for learning, missed opportunities for learning and opportunities for accuracy.

Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with a summary and synthesis of the findings for the three sub-research questions, and discusses the contributions for theory, in particular sociocultural theory, and based on the findings of the study, the implications for classroom pedagogy. Finally, the chapter proposes directions for further research after noting the limitations of this study.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1. Introduction

Peer interactions in groups or pairs have been the topic of extensive investigation in second language acquisition (SLA) research. In second language (L2) contexts, a number of studies on group or pair work have tended to focus on the linguistic interactions that take place between learners, known as negotiation of meaning (Long, 1983), and the factors that may affect the quantity of these negotiations. However, a number of researchers have criticised the negotiation studies that view communication simply as message transmission and a decoding process (e.g. Brooks and Donato, 1994; Donato, 1994; Lantolf, 2000a; Storch, 2002a, 2002b). As Storch (2002a) points out, the focus of the studies seems to assume that all groups or pairs behave in the same way or that the nature of their relationship does not influence learning outcomes. Moreover, in some studies on negotiations between learners the analysis of language used by the learners seems to ignore the fact that learners negotiate not only the topic but also their relationship in face-to-face interactions (Storch 2002a).

Since the late 1980s, an increasing number of researchers have been interested in understanding how language development occurs through situated interaction. Some researchers in the field of SLA have examined developmental processes from a holistic perspective when the processes take place during learner interaction (e.g. Lantolf and Aljaafreh, 1995; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1998). They regard language learners as 'speaker/hearers involved in developmental processes which are realised in interaction', not 'processors of input' or 'producers of output' (Ohta, 2000, p.51). The

holistic perspective on developmental questions in SLA has been gained through a sociocultural theory about language development. This theory gives an alternative perspective on the importance of interaction in L2 learning and also provides a different approach to the method of the study and the analysis of such interaction.

Thus this chapter starts by describing significant features of the cognitive interactionist approach and then outlines the study's theoretical framework, which covers the sociocultural theory that has evolved as an extension of Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. The main premises of sociocultural theory and the key concepts embedded in this theory, which are particularly relevant to this study, are discussed. This chapter then proceeds to describe how this theoretical framework has been used in a number of studies in L2 contexts, especially peer interaction contexts. The chapter concludes by identifying some issues in the field of peer interaction and with an outline of the current study.

## **2.2. Cognitive Interactionist Approach**

Interaction research initially emphasised the role of input in second-language learning. As Mackey et al. (2012) explain, the focus of input can be traced back to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, emphasising comprehensible input that is likely to be most effective when it is slightly above the learner's current level of development (metaphor of  $i + 1$ ). Krashen (1985) claims that if learners obtain comprehensible input and their affective filters, such as anxiety and negative feelings to L2 learning, are low, acquisition would inevitably take place. According to this hypothesis, comprehensible input to learners became the significant factor in SLA.

Long (1983) articulated the interaction hypothesis, emphasising the importance of Krashen's comprehensible input in second-language learning and extending Hatch's

(1978) claim about the importance of conversational interaction in L2 learning. Long (1983) gave more attention to negotiated interaction in order to make input more comprehensible to learners. He clarified the role of interaction in SLA: it does not concern what learners hear but how they interact. In his study, Long investigated interactional modifications made by the native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) interlocutors in order to avoid or repair communication breakdowns. As a result, he found that NSs tended to modify their interactional structure when NNSs showed a lack of comprehension. Rather than modifying their utterances by reducing the syntactic complexity or avoiding difficult vocabulary, the NSs tended to use interactional adjustments or conversational modifications, such as clarification requests, confirmation and comprehension checks. Thus, he concluded that conversational modifications might be crucial in providing more comprehensible input to learners and, eventually, would be likely to promote language acquisition.

In 1996, Long incorporated new insights about the importance of attention and noticing that had emerged from the work of Schmidt (1990). Attention and awareness involved in learners' cognitive processes have significant implications because input can become intake when learners consciously attend to and notice mismatches between input and their output. Equally importantly, interactional feedback is emphasised as another crucial feature of interaction. In particular, negative feedback or information indicating a learner's incorrect use of the target language has been claimed to serve as an effective tool for drawing attention to form and meaning and helping noticing of their linguistic gaps (Long 1996; Swain, 2005; Swain and Lapkin, 1995). Negative feedback can be provided in different forms with degrees of explicitness and implicitness. Explicit feedback can be shown in overt correction, while implicit feedback includes negotiation moves (i.e., clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks) and recast. Long (1996) emphasises the importance of such implicit feedback in the



learning process. Such feedback enables the conversation flow to have a minimal level of interruption. Thus, meaningful interaction can be maintained and learners have an opportunity to modify their nontargetlike utterance. Long (1996, p.451) suggests the strengths of negotiated interaction as follows:

... negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways.

The interaction hypothesis focuses on input through the contribution of the 'more competent interlocutor' or NS, and the psycholinguistic processes stimulated by the interactional adjustments provided by the interlocutor. In other words, it concentrates on the mental processes related to individual language development. As van Lier (2000, p.247) points out, however, the 'importance of interaction for learning is an area of common ground for most perspectives on language learning' and has been a central concern of SLA research based on sociocultural theory.

### **2.3. The Theoretical Framework: from the Social to the Individual**

This section will explore the implications of second language learning from a sociocultural theory. Such explorations will lead to a view of learning that underpins this research study. Vygotsky's (1978) three key ideas are central to an understanding of the role of sociocultural contexts in which learning is constructed. Learning is mediated first on a social level between a child and other people in his or her environment, and then internalised by the child on an individual level. On a social level, learning takes place with guidance from a more knowledgeable person when learners have trouble mastering skills on their own. On an individual level, language is a key mediational tool

that aids cognitive development from social interaction for communication purposes to individual internalisation as thought.

In order to understand how sociocultural theory contributes to learning based on the ideas above, I shall review three fundamental concepts in sociocultural theory which are closely intertwined: (i) language as a mediational tool in cognitive development; (ii) social interaction within the zone of proximal development (ZPD); and (iii) internalisation and inner speech.

### **2.3.1. Language as a Mediational Tool in Cognitive Development**

A vital concept in sociocultural theory is that human beings use symbolic tools or signs created by culture over time in order to develop and establish our relationship with others (Lantolf, 2000a). In other words, we establish a mediated relationship with the world by the use of tools or signs. An individual's learning is dependent on the institutions, settings and cultural artefacts in their social environment so that they acquire new mental functions and patterns of thought via the mediational assistance of tools (Edwards, 2005).

The mediational tools can be physical or psychological, such as printed materials, gesture, music, the physical environment, discourse and so on, and are described with what is socially and culturally important. For Vygotsky, in particular, language as a tool of mediation plays a fundamental role in a child's cognitive development. He argues that language carries the concepts that are used when people act on, and try to make sense of, the world (Edwards, 2005).

The origins of learning and human development may be traced to communication with others. Donato (2000) explains that communication reflects Vygotsky's instrumental method that includes two essential ideas about language and learning. First on the

interpersonal aspect, in the form of social speech, a child learns to use language as one of the psychological tools to communicate with others and to share social and cultural meanings. Second on the intrapersonal aspect, in the form of private speech, the tool affects the child's cognitive development and learning. Hence, through the tool, a child can learn to engage in its outer and inner worlds.

In language classroom contexts, this notion of mediation can help to understand language learners by focusing on what students are trying to achieve through their language use in group or pair work (Brooks and Donato, 1994). Communication with others may be instrumental to mental development in the way that a learner restructures informal conversations within formal educational settings (Donato, 2000). For instance, teachers encourage pupils' learning in lessons towards a curricular goal, such as promoting more complex language expressions and completing tasks, by encouraging children to engage in group or pair work. Through collaborative dialogue in this educational setting, the children can jointly solve problems and build knowledge, as well as learn new expressions and consolidate their knowledge. Informal conversations between pupils enable them to experience language learning in pragmatically rich contexts that facilitate language growth and development (Donato, 2000).

In short, within a sociocultural framework, learning is mediated by tools and is attributed to participation in socially mediated activities; this mediation eventually becomes the means by which the individual's own cognitive functioning is mediated, which is the fundamental concept that underpins sociocultural theory. Based on this key idea, the following sections will examine how socially mediated activities influence individuals' mental activities and how such mediations affect individual cognitive development.

### 2.3.2. Social Interaction within the Zone of Proximal Development

Sociocultural theory assumes human agency in the process of making meaning as a product of the person acting through interactions with others (Gipps, 1999). As Vygotsky (1993) states, learning is fundamentally social and learning occurs in a context of social interactions between the individual and the social environment.

Interaction is especially important for developing human mental activity that is mediated by culturally constructed means, in that the mental activity is initially performed between people, and is subsequently transformed into an intrapsychological function. In other words, a child can acquire social and cognitive skills by working with others. In Vygotsky's view, however, all social interactions do not necessarily lead to higher forms of mental activities. To produce higher levels of mental activity the social interactions need to operate in a range just beyond our current level of competence, within what is known as the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD).

Vygotsky (1978) defines ZPD thus:

*It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (p.86).*

Vygotsky describes the adult or more capable peers as more knowledgeable others.

The key to more knowledgeable others is that they are required to have more knowledge about the particular topic being learned than the learner does: in other words, it means those who have better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner with regard to a particular task or concept. In a sense, it is necessary to create an environment in the classroom context where pupils can be stimulated to think and act beyond their current level of competence within their ZPD. When pupils have problems in the created environment, then more knowledgeable others, such as their

teacher or peers, could assist or guide them to move forwards. Once their understanding has been scaffolded in such a way and they can cope with it, they are finally able to deal with it on their own (Pollard, 1990). This means that the process of internalisation moves from an external to an internal plane where information becomes part of the individual's evolving knowledge base.

Scaffolding is another concept associated with Vygotsky's idea of the ZPD. The word 'scaffolding' is mentioned originally by Wood et al. (1976) who define it as: 'a kind of process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts' (p.90). This definition is very close to the meaning of ZPD. Swain et al. (2011) explain that ZPD and scaffolding are closely related both conceptually and syntactically. According to their explanation, syntactically ZPD cannot be used as a verb, although the metaphor of a scaffolding or scaffold can be used both as a noun and a verb. Conceptually, scaffolding is an assistance proffered by more knowledgeable others to novices; however scaffolding is interpreted as being helpful only when it is appropriate to the novices' ZPD.

Daniels (2001) argues that scaffolding as a metaphor for the temporary can be interpreted as a one-way direction from an expert to a novice. He explains that in scaffolding an experience is constructed by the expert alone, whereas in ZPD the negotiated activity between the expert and the novice means they construe the experience together. Citing Verenikina's argument through an analysis of the metaphor of scaffolding, Swain et al. (2011) address the weakness of the scaffolding metaphor that it tends to justify a direct and heavy-handed intervention by teachers in classroom contexts. Therefore, as Swain et al. (2011) suggest, a more extended review of practices that operate as scaffolding would be necessary when considering co-construction between experts and novices and interactive language development.

In summary, the distinctive aspect of ZPD is that the gap between the learner's current and future knowledge state is connected by support and assistance from others; learning takes place via social interaction so that the learner can internalise their knowledge out of external action (Cook, 2008). Vygotsky (1978, p.57) suggests that all higher mental abilities appear twice: 'first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, *between people (interpsychological)*, and then *inside the child (intrapsychological)*'. That is to say, learning is not done in isolation by each individual but created with others.

### **2.3.3. Internalisation and Inner Speech**

In the sociocultural framework of how learning takes place, the final mental process is the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one. The convergence of thinking in the last process occurs in the process of *internalisation* of socially mediated external forms (Lantolf, 2000a).

Lantolf (2000a) argues that internalisation does not refer to the wholesale transfer of external mediation to a pre-existing internal level. According to sociocultural theory, human psychological processes do not pre-exist inside the mind waiting to emerge at the right moment of maturation. Kozulin (1998, cited in Lantolf, 2000a), noting that all human beings are able to classify objects, suggests that this may well be a biologically specified ability. However, the important thing is that not everyone can classify objects in accordance with the same schema. For instance, according to Cole's (1990) cross-cultural research, in some cultures classification of objects is based primarily on the objects' functional role in everyday practical activities, while in other cultures the objects are classified based on formal schema internalised in the school system. Thus while biology provides a foundation for classification, the concrete schemata deployed

by individuals to classify entities in their society can be culturally constructed. From this reason, it can be said that the explanations of mental development in isolated individuals are inadequate. Rather, mental development is the process through which mental activities are formed on the basis of social activities. Lantolf (2000a, p.14) defines the meaning of internalisation as 'the process through which a person moves from carrying out concrete actions in conjunction with the assistance of material artefacts and of other individuals to carrying out actions mentally without any apparent external assistance'. This definition however does not mean that internalisation is free from mediated assistance. Indeed, the assistance is now internally situated.

The difference between experts and novices is whether they have internalised something that they have learned. While experts can use their mental activities without any mediated tools, novices require the tools or support in order to deal with presented tasks. In a way, language used in interaction plays a crucial role in human mental development in that language as a means of information transition itself becomes a very powerful tool of intellectual adaptation (Vygotsky, 1978). Language as social speech helps learners work with others to solve difficult tasks, plan solutions to problems and control their behaviour independently. However, where language is used in an interactional context, it does not occur only as a form of social speech but emerges as a form of *private speech*.

When human beings engage in activities or tasks, we give ourselves self-directed utterances: for example, we ask ourselves questions, answer the questions, tell ourselves to interrupt a particular activity, tell ourselves that we are wrong or that we have completed tasks. Such speech is generally referred to as private speech.

Vygotsky sees private speech as a means whereby children plan activities and strategies and therefore aid their development. That is, speech has social origins in the speech of others but can take on a private or cognitive function. As mental

development proceeds, private speech evolves into *inner speech*. Lantolf (2000a) clarifies the meaning of inner speech by citing Vygotsky: inner speech arises in the process of privatising speech so that higher forms of mental ability can arise on an inner plane, and in this way our biological ability is organised into a culturally mediated mind.

According to sociocultural theory, inner speech always conveys features of its social roots because it is derived originally from social speech, but as Vygotsky (1962) explains, it also has its own psychological function:

*Inner speech is not the interior aspect of external speech – it is function in itself. It still remains speech, i.e. thought connected with words. But while in external speech thought is embodied in words, in inner speech words die as they bring forth thought. Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings. It is a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing, fluttering between word and thought, the two more or less stable more or less firmly delineated components of verbal thought (1962, p.149).*

As seen by Vygotsky, inner speech has a form of verbal self-regulation that is derived from semiotically mediated exchanges via interaction in the social world. Dialogue that originally exists on the interpsychological plane as an interaction with others is reconstructed on the intrapsychological plane as inner speech or verbal thought. This explanation can be confused with private speech. Both concepts have a common feature in that they are derived from social speech, yet there is a distinguishable difference between them. Inner speech has mere meaning without having formal linguistic properties, but as mentioned earlier private speech could be audible to others as well as the speakers themselves.

In internal mental operations, when people face challenging tasks, in which difficult decisions have to be made by the individual, they may attempt to reseek assistance or support in performing the tasks (Lantolf, 2000a). In other words, the process is re-



externalisation. In discussions by Frawley and Lantolf (1985), they refer this process to as reaccessing earlier stages of development. If some tasks are difficult for learners and they decide to persist in the task, they may seek assistance or particular artefacts as mediation. In this sense, psychological processes once again become social as the learners seek out others.

#### **2.3.4. Summary**

At the beginning of this chapter, sociocultural theory was discussed. The discussions dealt with the fundamental tenets in relation to learning as proposed by Vygotsky. In general, sociocultural accounts of mental development use the individual's participation in culturally mediated interaction as primary explanatory constructs. A basic tenet underpinning this key concept of sociocultural theory is that 'it is inappropriate to single out qualitative differences in individual thinking apart from their sociocultural situation' (Cobb, 1999, p.139). When individuals participate in culturally or socially diverse situations, they encounter different social relationships that affect their mental activity in different ways.

According to sociocultural theory, the process of learning takes place as an individual's cognitive activities are transformed from being an interpersonal process; and evidence of learning can be seen by the learner's appropriate participation in collaborative knowledge construction using mediated tools. As James et al. (2007) explain, people learn when they participate in their society. Therefore, according to this learning paradigm, interaction between teacher and pupil or between pupils is regarded as an important feature in knowledge construction. In addition, participation in learning plays a crucial role because learning takes place during the process of engagement. Since

language as a mediational tool plays such a critical role in mental development, it is essential to investigate how this tool is used in interactive situations.

#### **2.4. Second Language Learning Based on Sociocultural Theory**

Key concepts of sociocultural theory mentioned in the previous section, such as the concept of ZPD, the metaphor of scaffolding and mediated tools were originally constructed to describe the process of child development in first language situations. L2 researchers have tried to apply these key concepts of sociocultural theory to SLA in order to explain how L2 learning and development occur. According to Ohta (2000), this principle can be successfully applied to the SLA context: social interaction functions as a mechanism for the transformation of L2 through social processes that allow the language to become a cognitive tool for language learners. Hence research about social interaction can provide a window into these developmental processes (Frawley and Lantolf, 1985).

An increasing number of researchers have conducted studies on peer interaction and L2 learning, adopting sociocultural theory as their conceptual framework and have explored the socially constructed nature of interaction and its significance to L2 learning (e.g. Brooks et al., 1997; Swain et al., 2002; Swain, 2006; Watanabe, 2008). For example, Swain and Lapkin (1998) found that peer interaction resulted in increasing accuracy when children in a French immersion classroom engaged in a story construct task. Storch and Wigglesworth (2007) also reported the benefits of pair work in the L2 classroom. In particular, both studies showed that L2 learners who worked collaboratively outperformed those who worked individually. Even though all peer interactions may not lead to language learning, a number of empirical studies have revealed that peer interaction is an important means for successful L2 learning (Lantolf,

2000b). Thus, in this section, I shall examine how SLA research based on the sociocultural theory is conducted and the ways in which the research supports the importance of peer interaction in second language learning. First I shall consider some research about the possibility of peer assistance within ZPD - the essential concept underpinning sociocultural theory - and then look more closely at verbalisation using language as an important mediated tool. Finally, the use of first language in L2 learning contexts will be discussed based on increasing numbers of research findings that it could play a crucial role in fostering peer interaction and in maximising opportunities for second language learning and development as a mediated tool.

#### **2.4.1. Peer Assistance in the Zone of Proximal Development**

Sociocultural researchers on SLA regard language acquisition as internalisation of L2 through social interaction and they believe that language acquisition happens through a dynamic transformative process (Wertsch, 1985). Internalisation of social interactive processes occurs in their ZPD. The meaning of the ZPD in the Vygotskian sense is extended in SLA to mean 'the difference between the L2 learner's actual development level as determined by independent language use, and the higher level of potential development as determined by how the target language is used in collaboration with a more capable interlocutor' (Ohta, 1995: p.96). Although Vygotsky views the partner providing assistance in ZPD as a more knowledgeable other, the SLA researchers apply his idea to a broad range of learning situations beyond novice-expert interaction, including other learners (van Lier, 1991). However, the question is whether the learners are able to provide assistance conducive to each other's language learning in the case of pair or group work, which is a common practice in language classroom contexts. The answer to this question is shown by applying the extended use of ZPD in SLA studies.

Some research found that learners could play the role of the more knowledgeable other, comparing teacher-learner interaction and learner-learner interaction. For example, Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995) examined interaction between adult ESL learners and a non-native tutor. The learners were shown to make language learning progress in ZPD through developmental assistance in tutoring sessions and also through peer interaction where there was no clear expert present. Ohta (1995) compared language use by the learner in teacher-fronted and pair-work contexts in order to examine the effects of a collaborative pair-work task. The students in pair-work were shown to perform at a higher level of competence. The findings of these studies suggest that learners can assist each other with little or no expert guidance from their teacher.

Other research found that in the process of peer interaction, learners tended to take the role of the expert in turn (e.g. Kowal and Swain, 1994) or to provide a mutual or collective scaffold to each other (e.g. Donato, 1994). Differential linguistic strengths and weaknesses among peers allow the ZPD to become obvious in groups or pairs when experts are not present and may be pooled in order to be complementary (Donato, 1994; Lantolf and Aljaafreh, 1995; Ohta, 2000; 2001; Swain, 2000; 2010). These studies have shown how peer interaction can scaffold or mediate language development, providing guidance in students' ZPD effectively through the use of various interactive strategies.

Donato (1994), who was one of the first to base research in L2 on sociocultural theory, investigated how L2 development occurs through a triadic planning task and found evidence of mutual assistance in his data. He discovered that the learners were novices individually but simultaneously they were experts collectively: they presented sources of new orientations for each other and also guided each other through complex linguistic problem solving. The important finding of Donato's research is that it

introduces the concept of collective mutual scaffolding, which refers to the interaction in which 'second language learners mutually construct a scaffolded output of the discursive process of negotiating contexts of shared understanding' (p.42). That is, groups act as collectives: there is no one clearly identifiable expert in such groups, but, instead, acting as a collective members of the group draw on their mutual resources to solve problems in a task.

Other important research was conducted by Ohta in 2001. She has shown that all learners benefit from peer interaction, whether with more or less proficient learners. Certainly, more proficient learners provide more assistance and less proficient learners make more gains, but even proficient learners benefit via interaction with less proficient peers. For the more proficient learners, this interaction can enhance their fluency and their awareness of own knowledge status. It can therefore be said that peer assistance is mutual. Like Donato's finding, Ohta found that each learner has strengths and weaknesses that occur in peer interaction: when the learners work together and are able to pool their knowledge, they can create a greater expertise as a group or pair than as individuals.

The research described above shows that, as Lantolf (2002) states, expertise can be collaboratively constructed in dialogic interaction between/among learners who share their learning goal in order to solve a linguistically based problem. The extended views of ZPD and scaffolding in L2 seem to contribute to the justification of language learning through peer interaction in L2 classrooms. The basic assumption underlying the advocacy of peer interaction of L2 is that L2 learners can provide the same kind of support and guidance for each other as adults do for children in the situation of 1LL. Additionally, ZPD is constructed through mutual scaffolding between learner and learner, and this mutual scaffolding contributes to each learner's development. Many L2 researchers (Anton and DiCamila, 1998; Swain and Lapkin, 1998; Villamil and de

Guerrero, 1998) regard learners themselves as a source of knowledge in the social context of L2 learning, and concede that there are benefits of language learning through peer interaction. Therefore, learners themselves should not be excluded and ignored in the category of more knowledgeable others since collaboratively constructed peer interaction can create learning expertise.

#### **2.4.2. Verbalisation as a Mediation Tool**

L2 researchers have drawn particular attention to using language as a mediational tool for second language learning as Vygotsky (1978) argues that language is one of the most important mediational tools in cognitive development. Verbalisation makes it possible to shape cognition and creates an audible product of thinking. Thus, Swain and colleagues (e.g. Brooks and Swain, 2009; Lapkin et al. 2008; Swain, 2006, 2010; Tocalli-Beller and Swain, 2005) have argued that 'languaging' is an act that mediates cognition and then is a source of second language learning. Swain (2006) has proposed a concept of languaging deriving from Vygotsky's work that demonstrates the critical role of language in mediating cognitive processes: as thinking is mediated by language, verbalising is cognitive activity (Vygotsky, 1986). Swain (2006, p.98) defines languaging as an activity, which is a 'process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language'. Choosing the verb form 'languaging' is to focus on language as a process rather than as an object. In essence, the goal of languaging is to solve a cognitively complex problem using language to mediate the problem solution (Swain and Watanabe, 2013).

Languaging can be seen when people talk with others as a form of collaborative dialogue. Swain (2000) defines collaborative dialogue as dialogue in which learners are engaged in their linguistic problem solving and knowledge building. In collaborative

dialogue, language is used both as interpersonal communication and as a cognitive tool when 'learners work together to solve linguistic problems and/or co-construct language or knowledge about language' (Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller, 2002, p.172). In other words, language mediates meaning-making processes as a cognitive tool and communication with others as a social tool (Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller, 2002). During collaborative dialogue, thus, learners can refine their knowledge or understand a phenomenon using language as a cognitive tool to mediate their thinking.

A number of studies have suggested that collaborative dialogue, as joint problem-solving dialogue, reflects a source of L2 learning and development. Donato (1994) provided support for peer-peer collaborative dialogue as a source of L2 learning in his analysis of collective scaffolding among L2 learners of French. The analysis of the collaborative dialogue showed that the learners, regardless of their language proficiency mutually supported each other in order to solve the linguistic problems that they encountered.

Swain and her colleagues have shown how learners engage in collaborative dialogue via peer interaction in order to solve language-related problems (e.g., Swain and Lapkin, 2002; Watanabe and Swain, 2007; Brooks and Swain, 2009). As a unit of analysis, these studies used language-related episodes (LREs), which are defined by Swain and Lapkin (1998) as 'any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others' (p.326). That is, learners could use appropriate and correct forms and meanings and reflect on their language use. By using tailor-made post-tests for the LREs produced by learners, these authors traced the L2 learning that occurred during the LRE. Swain and Lapkin argue that the LRE is helpful for understanding the process and product of language learning.

In Swain's 2000 work, she examines mediation from the perspective of collaborative dialogue in a French immersion and an adult ESL classroom. Her French immersion study demonstrates through collaborative dialogue how young learners are able to organise and mediate their own learning without the intervention of an expert teacher. From the results of the study, Swain argues that collaborative dialogue is a key form of mediated learning. Through their dialogic interaction, the learners negotiate meaning, but they can also negotiate learning. By citing Wells' explanation of the characteristics of utterance, Swain (2000, p.113) summarises her arguments from the results of her study as follows:

*When a collaborative effort is being made by participants in an activity, their speaking (or writing) mediates this effort. As each participant speaks, their 'saying' becomes 'what they said', providing an object for reflection. Their 'saying' is cognitive activity, and 'what is said' is an outcome of that activity. Through saying and reflecting on what was said, new knowledge is constructed.*

In this perspective, collaborative dialogue is recognised as the process of language learning mediated by language use since some actual language learning can be noticed as occurring in the learners' dialogues (Swain, 2000). Lantolf and Thorne (2006) point out that a key element of Swain's research is that it accords with peer-generated contingent assistance while also serving the meta-cognitive function of making language form and function visible within the interaction.

As Lantolf and Thorne point out, Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller (2002) come to a similar conclusion. They review studies in which peer-peer dialogue can be linked to a particular aspect of L2 learning such as writing, speaking, listening and reading activities. Analyses of dialogue between/among learners selected in the reviewed studies have shown how learners use language as a cognitive tool to mediate their thinking: and how talking about the target language mediates L2 learning and development. Thus, they conclude that collaborative dialogue generated as learners



work together on the activities mediates L2 learning. It reflects the fact that the term 'collaborative dialogue' emphasises learners' collaboration in mediating L2 learning. As these researchers suggest, it could be important to explain to learners how and why to collaborate in order to enhance peer-mediated learning.

As shown in the studies above, language during collaborative dialogue plays an important role in mediating L2 learning. With regard to producing language, some researchers within a sociocultural theoretical orientation argue that in order to mediate language learning, learning can be mediated by either the first or the target language until L2 learners become independent in problem-solving activities. Thus, it would be valuable to discuss how the use of L1 appears in L2 learning contexts and is able to mediate L2 learning.

### **2.4.3. Use of the First Language**

The use of the first language (L1) has been a controversial issue within L2 learning. In general, teachers tend to discourage use of L1 in the language classroom on the assumption that it will have harmful consequences for L2 learning and to be reluctant to use pair or group work in their lessons in case pairs or groups use shared L1. In particular, in the foreign language context where learners have fewer opportunities to use, and are less exposed to the target language outside the classroom, learners who share the same L1 tend to use L1 to manage the task process and to discuss linguistic problems efficiently. Research findings based on sociocultural perspectives (e.g. Anton and DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks and Donato, 1994; Storch and Wigglesworth, 2003) suggest that L1 as a cognitive tool can mediate the learning of another language in the extended scope of sociocultural theory: the use of L1 may be a useful tool, actually essential to make sense of the L2 learning process.

Brooks and Donato (1994) analysed the dialogue of eight pairs of third-year high school students of Spanish as a foreign language during classroom tasks. Although these researchers did not focus only on the use of L1, they observed that learners used their L1 to talk about their L2 use, to establish a joint understanding of what the task was about and to formulate the learners' task goals. They argue that its use is 'a normal psycholinguistic process that facilitates L2 production and allows the learners both to initiate and sustain verbal interaction with one another' (p.268).

A study conducted by Anton and DiCamilla (1998) illustrates the valuable role that interaction among learners in the same L1 can play in the collaborative performance of tasks in the L2 classroom. The researchers investigated the talk of five dyads working collaboratively on writing tasks when learning Spanish as an L2 and their analysis of the functions of L1 use identified two functions: interpsychological functions and intrapsychological functions of L1 use. The former was seen as a social and cognitive function and the latter was found as a form of private speech. As a social function, learners used L1 to mutually define a range of aspects in their task and to develop a shared perspective of the task, i.e. intersubjectivity. On a cognitive level, learners used L1 to complete the task by constructing effective collaborative dialogue and providing each other with scaffolded help. In order to construct collective scaffolding, which is identified by Donato (1994), the use of L1 plays the role of mediating device and helps learners to scaffold through interaction. Finally, learners used L1 to direct their own thinking about linguistic and other issues through private speech, which was an externalised form of their inner reflections or speech. Thus Anton and Dicamilla argue that through these functions, L1 use enables learners to engage in collaborative activities and then creates opportunities for L2 learning.

Swain and Lapkin (2000) examined the use of L1 in a study of pair work in grade eight French immersion classes. One class worked on a dictogloss task and the other did a

jigsaw task in pairs. Three main functions for L1 were identified. The L1 was used to move the task along, i.e., managing task completion, to focus attention on vocabulary and grammatical items, and for interpersonal interaction. Based on these findings, Swain and Lapkin argue that L1 use had critical cognitive and social functions and may facilitate L2 learning for low-proficiency learners and on complex tasks like the dictogloss task and, thus, should not be prohibited.

More recently, Storch and Aldosari (2010) investigated the effect on L2 proficiency levels and task type on the amount of L1 used by EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. The finding was that learners used their L1 modestly. The amount of L1 was more related to task type rather than learners' proficiency levels. Learners mainly used L1 for managing tasks and facilitating deliberations over vocabulary.

Based upon these findings, researchers who have investigated the use of L1 agree that it plays a key role in L2 learning. As Brooks and Donato (1994) point out, researchers are not encouraging the use of L1 during L2 interaction, but urge teachers not to stifle the use of L1 which has a psychological function in initiating and sustaining verbal interaction. If the use is inhibited, it is potentially harmful to the language learning process 'because it discourages the employment of a critical psychological tool that is essential for collaboration' (De Guerrero and Villamil, 2000, p.64). Therefore, it is logical that the use of L1 plays an important role in helping learners to mediate each other and to learn other language.

#### **2.4.4. Summary**

In this section 2.3, the reviews lay the ground for the theoretical rationale for the research question that guides this study: namely, how does pair work influence language learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) lessons. Sociocultural perspectives establish learning as a fundamentally social experience and thus provide

a rationale for the use of interaction in the classroom. In particular, the extended concept of ZPD provides the rationale that learners working in groups or pairs with little or no expert guidance can provide scaffolded assistance conducive to learning.

Furthermore, from this perspective verbalising of own thinking is regarded as a cognitive tool that mediates development as well as the processes it reflects. That is, learners can refine their linguistic knowledge or understand a phenomenon using language to mediate their thinking. Therefore, it gives a rationale to an emphasis on peer talk in group or pair work.

Another way to facilitate peer talk is by using the learners' native language. Within sociocultural perspectives, researchers have proposed that the use of L1 plays a mediating role, enabling learners to complete a task more effectively by constructing mutual scaffolded help, by maintaining dialogue with their peers and by externalising their thoughts (e.g. Anton and DiCamilla, 1998; Villamil and de Guerrero, 1998). In other words, L1 can serve a range of important functions that facilitate language learning and task completion. For these reasons, these authors suggest that the use of the L1 should not be prohibited in EFL contexts where learners share the first language, but neither should it be actively encouraged because it may substitute for the target language, rather than support it (Swain and Lapkin, 2000).

## **2.5. Issues in Peer Interaction Research**

The above review of studies that have adopted sociocultural perspectives to research on peer interaction highlights the possibility of learning through peer interaction.

However, there are some issues in the field of peer interaction that require additional investigation. Many SLA studies investigating the effects of peer interaction on language learning have focused on how aspects of the context affect peer interaction

and further language learning. A variety of factors, such as the type of peer interaction, time and L2 proficiency differences and so on, can be considered to facilitate learning through peer interaction and can all intersect to influence effective peer interaction and language learning. The following sections will discuss these contexts that affect and promote peer interaction and studies that inform the contexts in greater depth.

### **2.5.1. The Types of Peer Interaction**

A growing number of researches have investigated the types of peer interaction and its significance for L2 learning from the perspective of sociocultural theory. As mentioned in section 2.3.1, the researches show that peers can concurrently be both experts and novices, providing assistance to each other in order to achieve a higher level of performance (e.g. Anton and DiCamilla, 1998; Donato 1994; Ohta 2000, 2001; Swain and Lapkin, 1998). However, some research has demonstrated that not all peer interaction provides an occasion for learning: only certain types of interaction can be more conducive to L2 learning than others and provide learners with opportunities for language learning. In order to understand the type of peer interaction, I will discuss the relational level of learners when they work together on tasks.

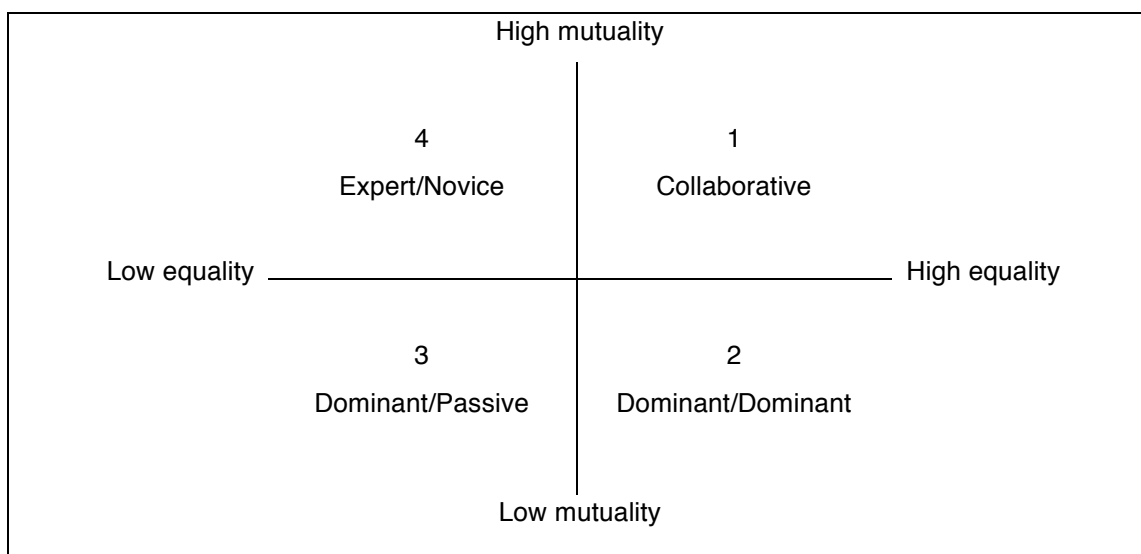
In the language classroom, when learners work in small groups or pairs, they may interact with their peers in different ways. For example, some seem to collaborate well and work together, whereas, in others, one member may dominate the interaction or each member may individually work and rarely interact with peers. Different types of peer interaction with collaborative orientation or non-collaborative orientation have been reported by some studies in L2 learning (e.g. Donato, 1994; Kowal and Swain, 1994; Storch, 2002a).

The study by Donato (1994) found that learners in the collective groups pooled their incomplete knowledge and co-constructed resolutions to language related issues, providing each other with valuable assistance. He labelled such situations as 'collective scaffolding'. On the other hand, it was relatively hard to find the features of collective scaffolding in the loosely knit groups. Donato's findings are significant for research on peer interaction. As Storch (2002a) mentions, his findings emphasise the need to take into consideration the type of peer interaction functioning in any research on peer interaction. However, Donato's focus on groups was simply to divide them into groups of collective scaffolding or loosely knit clusters. Other types of group formation are hard to account for, such as the expert/novice relation.

Damon and Phelps (1989) categorise peer interactions into three types: peer tutoring, cooperative learning and peer collaboration. The categorisation is based on two criteria: equality and mutuality. Equality means the degree of control that each learner has over the direction of a task, while mutuality means the level of engagement with each other's contribution. In peer tutoring, one learner as an expert instructs another one who is a novice in that material. The engagement is low on equality in that the two learners do not have equal status in their instructional relationship: the mutuality is varied according to the expert's interpersonal skill and the novice's receptiveness to learning. In the case of cooperative learning, which is an umbrella term that loosely includes a diversity of team-based learning approaches, equality is high and mutuality is variable from low to moderate, depending on the degree of task subdivision, cooperation or competition and reward structure. In peer collaboration the learners at all times work together and jointly on the same problem, unlike cooperative learning where students work individually on separate components of a problem. Thus, it is both high on equality and mutuality. Although the three categories show different degrees of equality and mutuality in peer engagements, as the authors admit, there are important

subcategories within the three categories as well as blends between them. The three categories of Damon and Phelps are developed by Storch who suggests four different patterns of pair interaction.

In Storch's (2001, 2002a, 2002b) longitudinal investigation into the pattern of interaction in an adult ESL classroom context, she demonstrates that not all peer group work collaboratively. Drawing on the work of Damon and Phelps (1989), Storch reports a series of findings that describe specifically four distinct patterns of dyadic interaction. The patterns are distinguishable in terms of two intersection criteria: equality of contribution and mutuality. Graphically, Storch presents the four quadrants formed by two intersecting axis, as shown in Figure 2.1. (Storch, 2002a, p.128). She labelled each quadrant as collaborative, dominant/dominant, dominant/passive and expert/novice.



**Figure 2.1. A model of dyadic interaction (Storch, 2002a, p.128)**

In the collaborative pattern, learners work together in order to complete the task and help each other. They seem to prefer to interact with each other when left to their own devices. In dominant/dominant pattern of interaction, even if learners work jointly and contribute equally to the task, they tend to fail to engage with each other's contribution, unlike the collaborative pattern. In the dominant/passive pattern, the dominant participant takes control of the task with an authoritarian stance and the other

participant tends passively to engage in the task in a subservient role. Their interactions show very little negotiation between them because the passive one rarely contributes or challenges in order to complete the task. In expert/novice pairs, the expert participant takes control of interaction in a similar way to the dominant participant in the dominant/passive type. However, this participant actively encourages or assists the novice to participate. Storch (2002a) labelled these four patterns of dyadic interaction, but it is possible to find a role relationship that would not be identifiable according to Storch's classification. Using Storch's framework, Watanabe and Swain (2007) identified an expert/passive pattern of interaction in which task engagement of the passive learner was decreased because they felt intimidated and reluctant to say something to their partner, despite the consistent encouragement of the expert. Such a pattern of peer interaction was not identified in Storch's study. It implies a need for further study in this area in order to depict other possible types of pair interaction according to the degree of equality and mutuality.

Storch's findings suggest that collaborative orientation such as collaborative and expert/novice patterns are more conducive to language learning than non-collaborative orientation like dominant/dominant and dominant/passive patterns in that the former showed a great number of instances of knowledge transfer. More interestingly, in Storch's study pairs in non-collaborative orientation showed more instances involving either no transfer of knowledge or missed opportunities for learning.

Based on the findings of the above studies, it can be said that all peer interaction does not necessarily lead to language learning. For guiding language learning through peer interaction, interactions need to be characterised as collaborative. When learners work together, using such methods as co-construction of new knowledge, peer assistance and solving problems together, the opportunities for language learning can only be increased and the process can thus be helpful to language learning. Therefore, in



studies on peer interaction and language learning it is important to understand the type of peer interaction, such as how learners engage with each other and how they engage in tasks. For this reason, this study closely investigates how learners interact with their partner while performing tasks. Now, I will discuss how the time required establishing a social relationship between learners to successfully work together is important.

### **2.5.2. Time**

In order to establish a social relationship between learners, time is an important factor to be considered in the research area of peer interaction (Donato, 2004). However, it has not received adequate research attention. Only a few studies suggest time can be a significant factor in establishing a stable relationship between learners.

In a study of Brooks et al. (1997), three pairs of intermediate level university learners of Spanish performed five jigsaw tasks. The finding showed that over time, the frequency of first language use, private speech and talk about task procedures dramatically declined. The conclusion of the study was that it takes time for learners to develop their social relationship with their partner and to support each other in learning contexts. In the process, the learners can progress to collaborative interaction. Therefore, the researchers warned that in the case of learners who were not accustomed to working together, studies of single tasks conducted in short time frames cannot depict and reveal the reality of how learners construct their learning in interactive contexts. Instead, Brooks et al. (1997, p.530) suggested that 'a developmental perspective on language learning, therefore, is critical to understanding the potential benefits of collaboration on task performance'.

Storch (2002a) also points out that studies of peer interaction using one instance of time ignore the possibility that peer relationships may take time to develop. To

complement this defect, she examined the nature or interaction between 10 pairs of adult ESL learners over a range of tasks and over time (a semester). The analysis revealed that patterns of pair interaction were fairly stable over time and across tasks, but only one pair became collaborative after starting from a dominant/dominant pattern of interaction. From the finding, it can be said that some learners may take more time to develop a social relationship than others. Another study by Storch (2004) investigated learners' motives and goals when they interacted in pair work. From her findings, she suggested that learners' experience of working together with the same peer over time might lead to a sharing of goals or produce distinct patterns of interaction. It implies that learners need time to develop a relationship with their peer.

Even if there is very little information about the relationship between time and the type of peer interaction, the above studies show that time cannot be neglected when trying to understand the type of socially developed peer interaction. For this reason this study was planned to last for seven weeks in order to establish and develop social relationships between learners. The relationships cannot occur instantly but would be take time.

### **2.5.3. L2 Proficiency Differences**

Learner proficiency has been debated as one of the influential factors in peer interaction as learners at different proficiency levels are commonly observed in an L2 classroom. However, research to date does not suggest consistent findings regarding which levels of proficiency differences are more effective.

Kowal and Swain (1994, 1997) propose that large differences of language proficiency between learners may reduce the degree of collaboration. In their study of the pair discourse on a dictogloss task, they found that in homogeneous pairs such as having

similar levels of L2 proficiency, the pairs tended to contribute more equally and alternate their role of expert or teacher. The learners assumed equal responsibility for finding solutions to the task. On the other hand, in high heterogeneous grouping, such as upper-middle and low, the stronger learner tended to contribute most of the work whereas the weaker learner was not willing to get actively involved in the task but let the stronger learner lead and do it. As Stone (1993) suggests, group members need to respect one another's opinions and perspectives in order to do successful scaffolding. Kowal and Swain argue that this may be difficult if proficiency differences between learners are too large.

Leeser (2004) investigated the effect of proficiency on the occurrence and resolution of LREs focusing on collaboration between L2 Spanish learners. The learners were classified as three different groups: high-high, high-low and low-low. The learners' interaction was analysed by the frequency, type (e.g. lexical or grammatical) and outcome of LREs (correct, unresolved or incorrect). The findings indicated that high-high pairs showed the highest number of LREs, followed by higher-lower and low-low pairs. Therefore he concluded that although a lower-proficiency learner may benefit from being paired with a higher-proficiency learner, the optimal pairing for high-proficiency learners is with fellow high-proficiency learners.

On the other hand, Yule and Macdonald (1990) suggest a different finding from those researchers: different-proficiency pairs could work successfully if an appropriate interactive role was given to each learner. In their study, when the lower-proficiency learner had more responsibility for the task, more negotiations of meaning and successful resolutions were found. However, when the higher-proficiency learner assumed the more dominant role, the lower-proficiency learner became a passive learner because the higher-proficiency learner seemed to ignore their peer's contributions and there was little negotiation between the learners.

Watanabe and Swain (2007) revealed interesting relationships among learners' proficiency, the role relationship between learners and the occurrence of language learning. The researchers compared the interactions of core students interacting alternatively with lower- and higher-proficiency learners, looking at the LREs produced. Using Storch's (2002a, 2002b) model of dyadic interaction, these researchers found that collaborative pairs showed more evidence of learning regardless of their proficiency differences. Thus, their findings suggested that proficiency differences do not seem necessarily to affect the nature of peer interaction and L2 learning. Rather, the pattern of interaction that both learners co-construct may have greater impact.

Storch (2001) also suggests that a difference in learners' proficiency may not necessarily be important. In her study, she found that the pair with the highest proficiency difference among three dyads was the most collaboratively engaged in the task and that the homogeneous pair was non-collaborative and had fewer opportunities for learning.

As seen in previous studies, the relationship between proficiency difference and language learning is controversial. Pairing learners with higher/lower proficiency may result in greater collaboration than pairing learners from similar levels of low proficiency (Leeser, 2004). However, lower-proficiency learners may feel more comfortable interacting with peers of a similar level than with stronger peers (Kowal and Swain, 1997). The disparate findings from previous studies imply that the effect of L2 proficiency in promoting learning is fairly complex. As Storch (2001) and Watanabe and Swain (2007) propose, L2 proficiency may not be the significant factor for peer interaction or, as Philp et al. (2014) suggest, it may be affected by other factors such as social relationships among learners. More empirical research on this issue needs to be conducted. This current study provides insights in this important area. The following section will discuss how learners can effectively assist each other when they need

assistance to solve the linguistic problems arising during task performance, regardless of proficiency levels.

#### **2.5.4. Effective Assistance**

L2 research on scaffolding has shown how learners working together reach a higher level of performance by providing assistance to one another (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Anton and DiCamilla, 1998). After reviewing the last decade's scaffolding literature, van de Pol et al. (2010) investigated the research in the effectiveness of scaffolding. They claimed that scaffolding is effective in terms of students' metacognitive and cognitive activities, but in terms of affect the students' results diverge. Thus further research is needed to focus on peer interaction situations in naturalistic classroom contexts.

In the constructed process within the ZPD, development is unlikely to occur if too much support or assistance is provided. Development can be delayed if the assistance is about what learners are already able to do by themselves, and if the assistance does not withdraw as the learner develops the ability to work independently. Therefore, the effects of assistance can be evident in the performance of the one assisted as well as the one giving assistance (Ohta, 2000).

Webb (2002) suggests the following conditions are required for effective helping. The help-giver is required to offer explanation in relation to the help-receiver's need, at the appropriate time, correctly and in detail, to correct the receiver's lack of understanding. In addition, the help-receiver is also required to respond to the help. First, the latter has to understand the helper's explanation. Second, the student has to be given the opportunity to use the explanation to complete the task and then the student has to be given a chance to practice it. Webb claims that when these conditions are satisfied, it

can be beneficial to both the help-giver and the help-receiver as the explanation encourages the help-giver to clarify their own understanding and 'make it understandable to others' (Webb, 2002, p. 3). The explanation can also help the help-receiver fill in any gaps in their understanding. Without satisfying these conditions, Webb explains, the outcomes of empirical research about the relationship between receiving explanations and learning are likely to be inconsistent and weak.

Ohta significantly contributes to our knowledge of the roles of peer assistance in L2 learning (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). In her work (Ohta, 1995, 2000), she presents analyses in detail about the contingent processes implicated in peer assistance. Ohta (2000) criticises the lack of research about the interactional mechanisms involved in the provision and obtaining of support, while the various researches on interactive processes show how collaboration may result in the provision of developmentally appropriate assistance. In order to investigate interactional cues, Ohta (2000) analysed a dyadic interaction between two college-level students, Hal and Becky, who carried out tasks during a second-year Japanese foreign language class. Ohta shows how each student offered assistance in order to co-construct L2 learning. Hal helped Becky when Becky indicated that she needed assistance through interactional cues. Through the process of receiving developmentally appropriate assistance, Becky showed improvement of her use of a difficult construction. As Becky became able to self-regulate, Hal provided less assistance to her. A key finding of this study is that the provision of developmentally appropriate assistance is not only dependent on the ability of the peers to be able to assist, but also on the partner's readiness for help through interactional cues. Webb (2002) makes a similar claim. She suggests that the help-seeker has to clearly convey his or her difficulty to understand and express a need for help. It is only then that the help-giver can help the help-seeker by satisfying the

conditions of effective help as mentioned above. In order to truly be helpful, says Ohta (2000, p.52), 'learners must somehow discern when assistance will be of use'.

The reviewed studies suggest that the way to provide and receive assistance is important to promote learning. In practice, it is not easy to understand how peer assistance would help learners' learning. In order to deeply understand how learners understand and accept peer assistance, it is necessary to investigate their thinking and feeling about their experienced assistance processes and further interaction processes. For that reason, the next section will discuss how learners' perceptions about peer interaction are crucial to understand the area of peer interaction and learning.

### **2.5.5. Perception of Peer Interaction**

As seen in previous sections, peer interaction seems to closely relate to language learning: especially when collaborative interaction is enacted by learners, engaging in collaborative dialogue in the process of accomplishing specific tasks, a number of studies reviewed above conclude that the positive effects on language learning would appear. Predominant studies used recorded dialogue of peer interaction in order to analyse learners' discourse as linguistic behaviour during interaction and thus reached such a conclusion. However, is the result the same with learners' thinking? There are few studies that investigate the learners' perceptions and feelings about their experienced interactions. In order to better understand the complex nature of peer interaction, learner perceptions about their experience of the interaction cannot be neglected.

In McDonough's (2004) research, learners believed that peer interaction through small group/pair work was not conducive to improving English grammar but useful for practicing oral communication skills. However, the findings were contrary to their

beliefs. This research explored learning opportunities when 16 Thai EFL learners completed small group/pair works, including their perceptions about peer interaction. Even if the learners provided each other with learning opportunities during the small group/pair work, their responses on the questionnaire revealed that they did not perceive the work as useful for language learning. The learners seemed worried about learning the wrong grammar from their peers, even though data analysis of their small group/pair talk showed that the learners provided each other with useful and grammatically correct feedback.

Interestingly, McDonough and Sunitham (2009) found contradictory results to McDonough's (2004) research discussed above. In the same context of Thai EFL learners, the learners worked on a range of exercises as a pair during self-access computer activities outside class time. In responses to a questionnaire, most learners answered that they preferred to work in pairs rather than to work individually on the activities because they felt they received assistance from their peers. However, post-test results showed very little evidence of learning English compared with results of a pre-test. The post-test results showed that some learners did not remember linguistic items that they had even discussed their peers. Therefore, this research suggested that how learners judge pair work experience might be related to their own perceptions or thinking about those experiences rather than actual language learning shown in test scores. This suggests, in relation to my own study, that learner perception on learning through pair work needs to be included in any investigation on peer interaction and learning, and it would be important to compare learners' thoughts about learning and actual learning.

Studies by Watanabe and Swain (2007) and Watanabe (2008) explored learners' perceptions and feelings about their interaction through the stimulated recall of recorded dialogic data and post-task interviews. These studies found that all learners



preferred working with the peer who shared their ideas or opinions, regardless of that peer's proficiency. From the findings, it seems that learners regard an effective partner as one who makes an effort to engage in collaborative dialogue with them. This leads to the consideration that learners value collaborative dialogue as an opportunity for language learning (Watanabe and Swain, 2007).

As shown in the studies above, the process of peer interaction suggest that learners' emotions can influence their learning. Swain and Miccoli (1994) point out that the studies focusing on peer dialogue data may find it hard to capture the complex nature of peer interaction. Furthermore, Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) explain that every learner has own agency, which means 'dispositions that incline us to act and react in specific ways' (p. 146), and use these during their learning. This means that learners' views on their interaction cannot be ignored: they can provide valuable insights about their understanding of peer interaction. An exploration of learners' perceptions about their peer interaction experiences may lead to a better understanding of the complex nature of peer interaction and develop our understanding of the role of interaction in L2 learning.

### **2.5.6. Evidence for Second Language Learning**

Even if a number of studies suggest that the nature of peer interaction has implications for the individual's language learning, few studies present evidence that link the nature of peer interaction and individual language learning. As I reviewed in section 2.2, the link between peer interaction and individual learning is implied in Vygotsky's cognitive development. If within an individual, learning is internalised of knowledge co-constructed on the interpsychological plane as an interaction with others, it is possible

to say that different functions on the interpsychological plane can be reflected in the individual learning outcomes.

Besides reporting on the nature of mutual scaffolding in peer interaction as mentioned in section 2.3.1, Donato (1994) also provided empirical evidence that collective scaffolding resulted in L2 learning. Donato found that of the 32 cases coded as reflecting scaffolded help, 24 of the language items worked on collaboratively were reused in individual performance. This was the evidence of individual language learning that peer scaffolding could lead to linguistic development in collective groups. The finding suggested the link between L2 learning and the nature of peer interaction. However, his investigation about language learning outcomes was limited to collective groups, not including other types of group.

Storch (2002a) used a different approach to investigate a possible link between the pattern of peer interaction and language development. She initially attempted to compare results of pre- and post-testing. However, she pointed out that it was hard to link improvement to performance in the pair work because, in an ESL setting there were many factors providing exposure to the target language, not only in the classroom. Moreover, it cannot be predicted which items the learners focus on in peer interaction so that Storch could not match the items focused on in the pair work with the items tested on the post-test. Therefore, Storch used a process-product approach.

Under this approach, Storch identified opportunities for language learning that learners constructed through their interaction in pair work and examined evidence for the take up of the learning opportunities in a subsequent task. At first Storch analysed LREs regarded as representing opportunities for language learning by Swain (1998, 2000) in pair talk data. The language items negotiated by learners in LREs were regarded as potential tracers for the language learning (Donato, 1994). Then, Storch examined whether learners could successfully use the language items while individually

performing similar tasks. In the process, she presented three categories: instances suggesting a transfer of knowledge, instances showing no transfer of knowledge and instances suggesting missed opportunities. As a result, pairs with collaborative orientation, such as collaborative and expert/novice patterns, showed more instances suggesting a transfer of knowledge than pairs with non-collaborative orientation. On the other hand, the missed opportunities appeared most frequently in the dominant/passive and dominant/dominant types of dyadic interaction, while no transfer of knowledge occurred more often in the dominant/dominant pattern. Therefore, Storch concluded that language learning is more likely to occur in pairs with collaborative orientation than in pairs with non-collaborative orientation.

As seen in those studies above, it is important to be aware of the complex nature of peer interaction and its links to language learning. Once again, collaborative peer interaction during a task-based activity may provide more language learning opportunities for language learners than non-collaborative interaction.

## **2.6. Summary**

This chapter has presented theoretical support for peer interaction in second language learning contexts based on the perspective of sociocultural theory. The perspective supports the importance of peer interaction as ‘individual knowledge is socially and dialogically derived’ (Donato, 1994, p. 51). In other words, it establishes learning as a primarily social experience, occurring as a result of social interaction between individuals, mediated by language (L1 or L2) and reflected in language. Lantolf and Thorne (2006, p.287) summarise three interrelated concepts of sociocultural theory:

*Three interrelated concepts are involved, namely that social interaction informs the development and character of mental processes, that cultural tools mediate psychological functioning, and that development advances through the ZPD. Or to*

*paraphrase, transformation involves learning, which acts as a catalyst to development in the matrix of culturally organised and culturally mediated activity.*

These elements are interrelated with each other. Stetsenko (1999, cited in Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) argues that research needs to be a synthesis of these concepts, bringing together the ZPD with social interaction and cultural tools. Lantolf and Thorne (2006) also add that peer interaction should be included among learners in classroom contexts where learning takes place. They suggest that conceptual and empirical investigations in this field may make great contributions to sociocultural theory research, not only in L2 learning but also in other educational contexts.

The peer interaction studies within this sociocultural theoretical framework reviewed in this chapter approached peer interaction from different perspectives. These studies uncovered how peer assistance occurs in learners' ZPD that is applicable to language learning 'in formal and informal instructional settings and in asymmetrical (i.e., expert-novice) as well as symmetrical (i.e., equal) groupings' (Storch, 2002a, p.122); how language is used as a mediating tool that reflects the cognitive and communicative processes taking place; and how L1 as a cognitive tool mediates the learning of another language. In considering peer interaction studies based on the sociocultural theoretical framework, some issues concerned were identified and subsequently discussed. These issues form the basis for this current study.

The studies reviewed suggest that further research on peer interaction and language learning is needed in order to better understand the type of peer interaction and how exactly learners work together. Only through a thorough understanding of these individual and contextualised details, can any conclusions about its role be made. Peer interaction that emerges from most of the studies reviewed shows that learners with a collaborative orientation can provide each other with assistance and scaffold each other's learning. However, a number of studies highlight that not all peer interaction

leads to language learning and development. Social dynamics factors, such as learners' relative proficiency or social relationship with peers, significantly influence the nature and effectiveness of any peer interaction that might occur. Some researchers consider that these factors affect the effectiveness of peer assistance and eventually enhance L2 development in peer interaction contexts. For example, Baralt et al. (2016) suggest social engagement is capable of mediating learners' cognitive engagement. Learners who felt happy and had fun while working with their peers tended to engage in more social scaffolding, showing more instances of cognitive engagement. Sato and Viveros (2016), when investigating the proficiency effect on group work in the foreign language class, found that the low proficiency group tended to engage in more collaborative interaction than the high proficiency group and showed more L2 development gain. Although proficiency impacts on learners' interactional behaviours, they concluded that having a collaborative mindset, which means a learner's psychological approach to their peer or task, might be a powerful mediating factor for L2 development.

Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995) describe effective assistance as being graduated and contingent in an expert and novice situation, such as tutoring. In other words, effective help moves from being implicit to explicit as the expert determines the appropriate level of help, offers it only when needed and withdraws when the novice shows signs of independent functioning. However, they are uncertain whether their findings apply to other situations. Unlike in tutoring situations, peers may not have responsibility for helping one another or for facilitating each other's development in language learning tasks. That is, the expert learner may assume their own role in peer interaction to complete tasks successfully, and not as one to assist another to carry out the task and/or to perform it together. Furthermore, as Webb (2002) argues, there is another issue regarding how learners can effectively provide and receive assistance as

needed. For this reason, the nature of the scaffolding in peer interaction may be different, as explained in Storch's (2000) research. Even if the effect of peer interaction could be different, studies in L2 classrooms have shown that scaffolding can occur in peer interaction (Donato, 1994; Lantolf and Aljaafreh, 1995; Ohta, 1995, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1998; Swain, 2000). As Ohta (2000) and Lantolf and Thorne (2006) suggest, more research is needed to better understand peer interaction and the nature of effective assistance in peer interactive situations.

This literature review has demonstrated that the significant body of research into peer interaction in L2 learning contexts calls for additional investigation in this field in order to more deeply understand the nature of peer interaction. This provides the justification for the study. Investigating the type of pair interaction based on the learners' role relationship while performing language learning activities, learners' perceptions of their work in order to understand what factors influence their pair work and their feelings about the work, and the evidences of language learning opportunities based on peer interaction, will build knowledge and help the educational community to understand the complex nature of peer interaction. This research study, therefore, sets out to answer the question: how does pair work influence language learning in EFL lessons, especially in a South Korean college? In order to answer the main research question, subsidiary research questions are focused on the collection of empirical data that guides this study as follows:

- 1) How do learners interact with their partner in language learning activities?
- 2) How do learners perceive their peer interaction?
- 3) How does the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relate to language learning opportunities?

## Chapter 3

### Research Methods

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes and justifies the research strategy used. It starts by outlining the research questions, which were already mentioned in Chapter 1. The appropriate methodology is then defined and the methods chosen to gather data are described, i.e. classroom observations through audio recording and observation notes and student interviews. The research design is then explained, including the subject of this research, data collection methods and research processes. Finally, the chapter ends by discussing the ethical considerations of events that had occurred while undertaking fieldwork.

#### 3.2. Research Questions and the Role of the Researcher

The main research question addressed by this study is: how does pair work influence language learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) lessons, especially in a South Korean college? In order to find answers to this question, the case study approach was chosen and data collection was carried out in the context of EFL lessons, specifically in a South Korean college. The following three subsidiary research questions (mentioned in Section 1.3.) guide the field research: (i) how do learners interact with their partner in language learning activities? (ii) how do learners perceive their peer interaction? (iii) how does the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relate to language learning opportunities? The research methods used in answering each of these questions are described below.

This classroom research was carried out in my own English classroom as an integral part of my teaching and as a way to increase and improve my students' learning. As a part-time lecturer at a South Korean college, I chose my own classroom for the context of this research in order to answer the research questions. From a practical perspective, research in my own classroom would make it easy for me to access the research participants and to effectively manage my time.

While conducting this research, I had the dual roles of teacher and researcher. A distinguishing feature of this classroom inquiry is that I researched while I taught; I could not stop teaching in order to carry out the research. Therefore, I define myself in this study as a classroom inquirer, an insider who was conducting classroom research in my own classroom setting; likewise my participants became student collaborators in this research. This aspect, however, raised a number of ethical issues that will be discussed in detail below. The aims of this classroom inquiry were to understand students' learning, to improve my own practice as a teacher, and eventually to convey the findings from this study to other teachers and researchers in order to illuminate their own research and practice.

### **3.3. Research Paradigms**

At the heart of any research, there are inherent perspectives on the way knowledge is constructed and known. The beliefs concerning how the world is ordered, what we may know about it and how we may know it are called paradigms (Hatch, 2002).

Traditionally, the positivist paradigm is the most dominant in educational research fields. Positivists assume that a single and objective reality is out there to be studied, observed and measured and that researchers can be independent from objects of their study. Under these assumptions, positivists behave as if researchers do not have any impact on their search for the truth (Hatch, 2002). In relation to methodology, positivists



emphasise the measurement and analysis of variables, explain how it works and predict and control its workings. The research paradigm and its methods depend on the research goals. Within the traditional and dominant paradigms this research cannot achieve the research goals/aims stated in Chapter 1. Rather, an alternative research paradigm is required to understand this classroom-based research.

As this research study explores human behaviour within its natural settings, a constructivist paradigm is more suitable because of the certain distinct characteristics. Constructivists assume that multiple realities exist and are constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own viewpoint. In other words, the world is a subjective phenomenon to be interpreted by individuals rather than measured. Based on this assumption, constructivists stress the socially constructed nature of reality: following the hermeneutic principles of constructivism, researchers interpret and co-construct participant perspectives whereby it is impossible and undesirable for researchers to be distant and objective in their studies (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). It means that research in the constructivist paradigm entails a mutual engagement with participants and the researchers who construct a subjective reality. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest naturalistic qualitative research methods as a data collection tool from within the constructivist paradigm, because inquiry into multiple realities can only be studied holistically. For the purpose of this classroom-based research, a qualitative research method such as classroom observation and student interviews, based on the constructivist paradigm, is used because it provides an understanding of such phenomena in a classroom context.

Before continuing discussion of qualitative research, although I have defined my role as classroom inquirer because of my dual role as a researcher and a lecturer in a classroom, I prefer to refer myself as a researcher in this study. In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher is seen to be part of the researched in study because of the role of

interpretation, but my intention of calling myself as a researcher is to emphasise the role of one who planned and conducted the study and interpreted the data collected in the study.

### **3.4. Qualitative Research**

When a problem needs to be explored, qualitative research is conducted that is depending on the purpose and goals of the research; when we want to understand the contexts in which participants in a study address an issue; when we want to develop theories that may be partial and inadequate; and when, simply, quantitative measures and statistical analyses cannot explore the problem sufficiently (Creswell, 2007).

In this research study, the goals are to find out how learners interact with their partner while completing pair work in EFL lessons, how they think about the interaction and how the interaction influences their learning, especially in a South Korean college. In other words, it was planned to explore the nature of peer interaction, learners' perception of the interaction, and the relationship between the interaction and language learning. This research eventually attempts to provide a better understanding of the role of peer interaction in language learning. This research depends on qualitative data as its qualitative nature is to explore human behaviour within a natural setting (Hatch, 2002).

Creswell (2007) describes the design of qualitative research and the use of inquiry approaches as follows:

*Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under*

*study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action. (Creswell, 2007, p. 37)*

This definition places emphasis on the process of research, how it relates to the study of a social or human problem and then how the researcher acts on the findings. In the process, the researcher collects data to fully describe contextual actions in a natural research setting, and interprets and develops the constructs that emerge from an analysis of the data. This methodological process may lead to the case study approach, as used for the current study. The case study approach provides the appropriate framework for observing and audio-recording a particular set of learners' participation in peer interaction and then interviewing them to understand their perceptions in relation to peer interaction and language learning. The next section provides a more detailed examination of the case study approach and the methods applied in collecting data for this research study.

### **3.5. The Case Study Approach**

Stake (1995, p. xi) defines the case study as 'the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances'. Case study research is described within the perspective of qualitative research because 'research focused on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education' (Merriam, 1988, p.3). The decision to use qualitative case studies stems from the fact that this design is a precise fit for a researcher's interest in insight, discovery, interpretation and change rather than hypothesis testing.

The case study has in fact been differentiated from other research designs by what Cronbach (1975, p.123, cited in Merriam, 1988) calls 'interpretation in context'. By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity, this approach aims to illustrate the interaction of significant factors and characteristics of the phenomenon. The case study seeks holistic description and explanation. As Yin (1994) explains, the case study is a design particularly suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context. Yin (1994) goes further, describing it as a strategy for doing research that involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. From this standpoint, the strength of the case study lies in its attention to the complexity of the case in its own right, whether or not participants hold conflicting or discrepant viewpoints.

There are, however, critics of the case study who suggest that qualitative case study reports can appear too subjective, biased and lacking in quantifiable measures and data. In addition, there is further concern about the validity of the results and whether they can be generalised to any other settings. Stake (1995) argues that case studies can draw certain generalisations. A case or a few cases in a particular situation can be generalised from the findings and, after further research, the generalisations can be increasingly modified and refined. For the positivists, this view might not be thought or accepted as generalisation, but Stake (1995, p.7) emphasises that 'they are generalisations that regularly occur all along the way in case study'. An important thing to note, however, is that case study does not promote generalisation. If case study researchers are interested in producing generalisations, they may choose more traditional comparative or correlational studies. Rather, the real concern for the case study researcher is particularisation, not generalisation (Stake, 1995). Case studies are used to establish understanding about the study in question, such as what it is and

what it does. As Stake (1995, p.8) puts it, its uniqueness is that 'the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself'.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) explain why the case study is of interest outside the case itself. The selected cases can be examples of what may be happening in specific situations; therefore the findings can produce valuable insights over time and other researchers may relate the findings to their own case and ascribe meaning to them. In this respect, the way in which the study is reported is important: it should show clearly how the case study turns out in order to allow the reader to make their personal interpretation.

This study investigates cases of peer interactions occurring in English lessons in a South Korean college. In order to generate data within the case, two main methods are used in the naturalistic classroom context: classroom observations and student interviews. From the collected data, this study focuses on particular events within the cases, and presents the rich and vivid descriptions of the incidents that occurred within the context of peer interaction. This study cannot present generalisations of cases but will produce valuable insights for other English teachers or researchers of other examples of this situation; and most importantly, it will also provide pointers for my own future practice. Other teachers and researchers as well as myself may use the findings to improve their own situations and practices (Yin, 1994). The next section will explain how this case study will be conducted naturalistically in my own English classroom and the methods used.

### **3.6. Data Collection Methods**

Brown and Dowling (1998) point out that inevitable deficiencies exist in any research, but, to minimise these, it would be helpful to apply two or more methods to the same

problem. Brown and Dowling suggest that approaching the subject from different angles enables methodological triangulation to increase and ensure the internal validity of the findings of the case study. Taking a different angle on a subject confirms or questions descriptions and interpretation of findings and regularly redirects researchers back to where they started (Stake 1995). Thus, in this study, two data gathering methods were used: classroom observations including audio recording and participant interviews with stimulated recall.

### **3.6.1. Classroom Observations**

In order to identify the nature of peer interaction, information was collected through classroom observations. The observation data show how participants behaved in the processes of pair work. Van Lier's (1988) rationale for implementing classroom observation is that researchers - even teachers - actually have limited knowledge of what goes on in classrooms, and it is relevant and valuable to increase that knowledge. In my case, I am already present as a teacher, but it is hard to notice the details of what goes on there. This can only happen by actually going into classrooms for data. In a similar vein, Robson (2002) explains that the primary advantage of observation is its directness; it tells researchers what goes on in the classroom, and enables a close, rigorous examination of interaction; the researchers are able to watch what people do and listen to what they say, as distinct from what people say they do. As Robson states, real life in the real world would be shown within the natural settings of the classrooms.

As stated earlier, my role in this research was a classroom inquirer. As an insider, I could not occupy the role of external observer. Instead I became a participant-observer in that I observed my students' learning - particularly peer interaction - as participants in my lessons. Participant observation may be a particularly useful tool of study when

the primary interest is in gathering detailed information about what is happening (Cohen et al., 2007). By being immersed in a particular context, Morrison (1993, cited in Cohen et al., 2007) argues that the relevant features of the situation will emerge and a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationship factors. Such emergent features assist in studying 'the generation of social processes and interaction which lend themselves to accurate explanation and interpretation of events rather than relying on the researcher's own inferences' (Cohen et al., 2007, p.405). Hence, the data derived from participant observation are strongly related to reality, i.e. what actually goes on there.

However, Yin (2009, p.113) illustrates the potential bias produced by participant-observation stating that 'the participant role may simply require too much attention relative to the observer role'. It means that the observer may not have enough time to take field notes or may experience difficulties in attempting to be in the right place at the right time in order to observe important events. From a practical perspective, it was difficult to lecture and oversee student conversations simultaneously. Even when undertaking activities in pairs one can only focus on those students participating in the research, but my responsibility as a lecturer was to involve the whole class, not just the research participants. Otherwise it would be unfair to those students not involved in the research. So, in order to collect conversational data relating to participant peer-to-peer interaction, audio recordings were used to complement the limitation of the participant-observer role.

#### **3.6.1.1. Audio Recording and Transcriptions**

Audio recordings are helpful in showing what conversations actually take place between participants. Silverman (2005, 2006) suggests three distinct advantages of audio recordings and transcripts, when citing Sacks' answers to the question of why he

prefers to audio-record rather than rely just on written notes. First, audio-recordings are 'a public record, available to the scientific community' (2005. p.184) that field notes alone cannot provide. Audio-recordings provide a record of detailed conversations that I might miss while teaching. Second, the recorded data can be replayed in transcriptions. The transcription process is time consuming, but it is worth it in order to fully understand the recorded data. As Silverman points out, the preparation of transcripts was not simply a technical detail prior to analysis of data. Rather, processing the transcripts was itself a research activity: I could repeatedly listen to recordings in order to find previously unnoticed recurring features which I could study again and gain. A third advantage is that recorded data shows sequences of utterances. In this study, sequences of conversation were crucial for data analysis as this could illustrate how interaction took place and enabled me to make sense of the conversation within the sequences.

On the other hand, there is some criticism that data based on audio recordings are not complete. When the data is analysed, physical motions such as facial expressions are neglected because the audio-recorded data cannot present them. As Sacks points out, 'there cannot be totally "completed" data any more' (Sacks, 1992, p.26, cited in Silverman, 2006). Silverman (2006) advises researchers not to worry that the research method chosen may not be able to cover all issues because all methods have their own peculiar advantages and disadvantages. What we need to do is to choose research methods that have minimal disadvantages when finding out answers about research questions. Therefore, in order to keep any disadvantages to a minimum, I took observation notes, particularly on any salient features of interaction while participants were doing tasks in pairs, in addition to audio-recording them.

The audio-recordings detailed ample live incidents of peer interaction: i.e. how learners set their goal to do an activity, how they discussed activity management, how they



initiated interaction with their peer and how they responded to each other. The data showed the dialogue between participants. However, this is based on the premise that the behaviour itself has 'no double meaning, hidden meaning or confusion associated with it' (Denscombe, 2007, p.215). That is, dealing with the intentions or perceptions of students' behaviour through classroom observations is difficult in itself and the limitations of recorded data is that it may not reveal any obfuscated meanings when trying to find answers to how interaction is used in learning. Another method is therefore desirable to find satisfactory answers to how learners perceive and interpret peer interaction and how this interaction assists their learning.

### **3.6.2. Student Interviews**

In order to complement the limited observations, as well as to more deeply understand the pair interaction from the perspective of the learners, student interviews were conducted. As Watanabe (2008) points out, many studies with recorded dialogue of peer interaction analysed only learners' discourse during the interaction. However, they failed to complement such analysis with data from participant interviews that were intended to discover learners' perceptions and feelings about the interactions they experienced. As Swain and Miccoli (1994) mention, collaborative learning involves powerful emotions that could affect its outcome, and the studies with the data of peer-interaction dialogues alone may fail to discover the complex nature of peer interaction. That is, how learners think about their own interactions should not be ignored. Interviews can provide a valuable source of participants' interpretations of pair work. Interviews enable the researcher to understand others' experience expressed through their language reflecting their own beliefs and values (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Silverman (2006) also emphasises the advantages of interviews in qualitative research

compared with the quantitative fixed-interview or questionnaire, citing Bryne's explanation:

*qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire. Open-ended and flexible questions are likely to get a more considered response than closed questions and therefore provide better access to interviewees' views, interpretation of events, understandings, experiences and opinions. (Bryne, 2004, p.182, cited in Silverman, 2006)*

In order to obtain in-depth and thorough information through interviews, Bryne emphasises the importance of effective interviewer skills. For example, in an open-ended interview, Silverman (2006) suggests that researchers should decide how to present themselves to interviewees, try to gain and maintain trust and, in order to establish rapport with interviewees, attempt to see the world from the interviewees' viewpoint, not only from their own.

Creswell (2007) highlights the nature of the relationship that exists between the interviewer and interviewee in qualitative interviewing. He states that the interview is actually a hierarchical relationship with power distributed between interviewer and interviewee. This relationship might be reflected in this study because as well as being an interviewer I also taught the interviewees. As interviewees, my students were required to reveal their perceptions and feelings of peer interaction and their learning. In the process, they might feel uncomfortable revealing such thoughts to their teacher. To minimise this effect, I made every endeavour to prevent my biases and values from standing in the way, as well as avoiding being judgemental about my students' insights. For example, I tried to avoid any negative or even positive comments on learners' talk; instead I simply replied to say 'right' or nodded my head.

The purpose of these interviews was to examine students' perceptions and feelings about peer interactions and the relationship between the interactions and their learning. In order to explore the issue individually after completing activities in pairs, two types of interviews were used in this study: individual stimulated interviews in order to prompt participants to recall their thinking at the time of pair work (more details about this in the following section) and open semi-structured interviews in order to gain information about their language learning in pair work, feedback on pair work and reflection on their own and partner's participation in pair work.

The manner of the interviews was explained in detail to the students, including the structure of the interview and how responses would be recorded with their permission: all interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed in full. The interviewees were encouraged to develop ideas and speak more openly, elaborating on any points that were of particular interest or relevance. To clarify and extend their responses, as Gillaham (2000) suggests, I asked supplementary questions using an open-ended format that allows interview questions and the sequence of questions to evolve naturally as the interview proceeded. I used prompts to stimulate discussion of other material as a form of stimulated recall interview; only live interviews, where the use of probes and prompts can be incorporated readily, are able to provide information such as this. For these reasons, the student interview would be a useful method to reveal participants' thoughts, which observation data cannot show, and which was essential to answer my sub-question of how learners perceive the peer interaction.

### **3.6.2.1. Stimulated Recall Interviews**

In an attempt to prompt participants to recall thoughts that they had while performing the activity that originally took place, stimulated recall interviews (SRI) were selected. As a type of introspective method, Gass and Mackey (2000) explain that stimulated

recall methodology can be used to prompt participants to recall their thoughts at the time of an activity originally took place. In an attempt to explore learners' thought processes and strategies, stimulus plays a key role in which the collected data, such as video-taped or audio-taped data, or written products rely on participants recalling a previous event. As Gass and Mackey (2000, 17) note, there is an assumption that 'some tangible (perhaps visual or aural) reminder of an event will stimulate recall of the mental processes in operation during the event itself', which is theoretically based on an information-processing approach.

One of the main aims of conducting stimulated recall in general is to reveal cognitive processes that might not be evident through simple observation. Gass and Mackey (2000) insist that this introspective method is particularly important in the context of second language research in that the investigation of cognitive processes in L2 research is only one area where stimulated recall can be applied: for example, Ericson and Mohatt (1977, cited in Gass and Mackey, 2000) explore questions about individuals' perspectives on learning. Like other L2 research, SRI in this study was chosen to reveal participants' cognitive processes regarding interaction while completing activities with their partner.

There is one issue about SRI as one of introspective methodologies, which is the accuracy of the data. A crucial assumption behind stimulated recall is based on recall accuracy: there is a potential problem of validity when data are based on delayed or weak stimulus recalls. As pointed out by Ericsson and Simon (1996) and Gass and Mackey (2000), in some cases, recalled memory may not always relate directly to the original event. Learners may recall thoughts in relation to the pre-experienced event in a similar frame, which is not the original event, or create a plausible story in which they do not remember any experiences. Another issue pointed out by Ericsson and Simon (1996) is that some interference occurs during the period between the original event to

be recalled and the recall. Some memory can be contaminated and rapidly decay from the interference. This is one of the most significant threats to claims that stimulated recall data can uncover information about participants' cognitive processes (Gass and Mackey, 2000).

If there is only a small amount of intervening time between the event itself and the stimulated recall, the scope for interference is limited. Bloom (1995, cited in Gass and Mackey, 2000) found as high as 95 per cent accurate recall within two days of the original event, whereas the accuracy rate decreased to about 65 per cent after an interval of two weeks. Therefore, for maximum accuracy, Polio et al. (2006) insist that a recall must be conducted relatively close to the event. That is, the sooner after the event the stimulated recall takes place, the more likely it is that uncorrupted memory structures will be accessed. Based on the results of previous research, SRI in this study was conducted within at least two days of the original event: it was planned to avoid the possibility that participants might say what they think the researcher expects them to say or might create a plausible explanation for themselves to account for their lost memory.

Even if SRI has the limitations as mentioned above, it has the significant advantage of accessing human cognitive processes that are unavailable by other means. The advantage helped me to explore the answer to this research question: how pair work influences language learning in EFL lessons.

### **3.7. Pilot Study and Its Impact**

Prior to conducting the main data collection in this study, planned research strategies were examined and carried out in a small-scale pilot case. The purpose for carrying out the pilot study was twofold. First, it was to provide method training in a range of case

study research instruments including classroom observations with audio recording and follow-up interview schedules and techniques. Stake (1995, p.49) points out that 'one of the principal qualifications of qualitative researchers is experience'. Without experience, there is little chance of understanding and interpreting the data. The pilot study provides such experience for the researcher. The second purpose was to help clarify, modify and develop case study methodology. As Yin (2009, p.92) puts it, 'a pilot test is not a pre-test' to be used as the final plan for data collection but is a process that assists researchers to modify and develop relevant questions and improve the conceptualisation for the research design. The flexibility of the pilot study can give the researcher an opportunity to learn during the process.

The same 12 learners who participated in main data collection (more details of participants in the following section) participated in the trial. As a regular class routine, learners worked in pairs to do a given activity: in the case to sequence a jumbled dialogue. Pair work was audio recorded by learners and then all of them were interviewed.

Participants could practice using a digital recorder in pairs in this pilot study. It should be noted that the participants were in charge of recording their pair talk. They were asked to switch on the recorder as soon as they started pair work and to switch off when it was finished. In this pilot study, they might learn where was the proper place to place the equipment in order to cause the least disturbance to their work. This pilot study also gave me, as an early-career researcher, the opportunity to conduct a stimulated interview using the digital equipment with recorded pair talk data for the first time. In order to recover learners' cognitive processes that might not be evident through observation, it was important to make them recall their thoughts at the time of pair work. At the beginning of the interview, learners seemed awkward at listening to their voice and pausing the recorder, but after repeating the process, they seemed to become

more confident and comfortable in recalling their pair work. In the process, I learned how important it is to listen to the participants and to make them talk about their work. Thus, in the main study, both participants and researcher could comfortably conduct stimulated recall interviews with confidence.

This pilot study led me to reconsider one of the initial data collect methods, video recording. At the beginning of this study, video recording was planned to complement the limitation of the participant-observer role: it would be useful in recording learners' non-verbal behaviour in pair work, such as body language or facial expressions. In the pilot study, the researcher found that setting up video equipment could disrupt the running of the class and might make all the learners in the class self-conscious or anxious. After the pilot study, some students who did not participate in this study asked me not to use the video in the classroom: they felt that the video recording seemed to monitor them and it made it hard for them to concentrate on their work. The same request came from some of participants. They said that it made them uncomfortable and they could not ignore the recorder even if it were to be positioned discretely in a corner of the classroom. Scott and Morrison (2007) raised their concern about whether participants are likely to consciously alter their behaviour when they become aware of being observed. Students' behaviour might be influenced by observation, especially during the video-recording process. As mentioned above, pilot study is a flexible way to modify research plans and is an opportunity to test out whether the data-gathering plan works or not. In consideration therefore of the students' concerns, I decided to use only audio recording to capture pair talk in the main study. Instead of video recording, I made observation notes on any noticeable features of interaction while doing a pair work even if I could not write about the non-verbal behaviour in as much detail as video-recorded data would provide.

### **3.8. Research Design**

Based on the methodological literature explored above, this section will illustrate the context in which I, as a classroom inquirer, carried out research for data collection.

#### **3.8.1. Context of the Study**

The study was conducted in the course called as Tourism English among EFL courses offered for credit at a South Korean college. The course was open to students in the Department of Tourism Management and I was in charge of three classes for the course. The course aimed to develop language skills in terms of tourism English within a curriculum under the department. With this in mind, students took a lesson of two hours per week for one academic year, which consisted of two semesters, each semester consisting of 16 weeks including mid-term and final examination periods.

#### **3.8.2. Participants: Selected Samples**

Data were collected in three of my own courses over a seven-week period during the first semester. The week prior to the commencement of the research, details were explained to the whole class. I then canvassed their views on the research, and encouraged them to inform me individually if they did not wish to participate. Of the 28 students in Class A, 24 agreed to participate in the study; of the 30 in Class B, 28 agreed; of the 27 in Class C, 25 agreed. It should be noted that it was possible that a power relationship between the students and myself might exist and that this could make them feel reluctant to reject my proposal of participating in the research, as I was both the lecturer and the researcher. In order to minimise the power relationship, I explained repeatedly that there were not any disadvantages for students who did reject the participation.



Two pairs were selected from each class (i.e. 12 learners in total): in each lesson, the whole class was allowed to work in the same self-selected pairs throughout the whole semester. Although it was expected that such numbers would generate sufficient data to examine the issue at hand, it involved some decision-making. While I was aware that selecting a large number of participants from several classes would generate extensive data, this would prevent me from carrying out detailed investigations into the individual processes involved in the pair interactions. Thus, I selected two pairs in each class, on which I could concentrate in detail.

As Stake (1995: p.56) explains, 'selection of *data sources* can be left too much to chance': there are moments to choose data sources, such as best persons, places and occasions. He clarifies the meaning of 'best' as the one that 'best help us understand the case, whether typical or not' (Stake, 1995, p.56) and answer my research questions thoroughly: namely, how learners interact with their partner in language learning activities, how they perceive the peer interaction and how the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relates to language learning. Furthermore Lincoln and Guba (1985) note that the purpose of sampling in a naturalistic inquiry is to include as much information as possible and to maximise the information. In order for this to happen in my study, what I expected from my participants was not representativeness or typicality of peer interaction in language lessons but diversity of interaction according to their different levels of English proficiency, their age and sex. The diversity was not utilised to compare the differences. It was expected to gather fruitful data from the range of participants. As active learners, not silent ones, participants were expected to provide as much input as possible in order to generate a better understanding of the role of peer interaction in lessons. Therefore, based on my observation for three weeks before starting data collection, I chose six pairs who had actively participated in lessons

and pair work, because as a lecturer I was uniquely positioned to judge students' learning attitudes in my lessons. Table 3.1 presents a brief profile of each participant.

**Table 3.1. Participants**

Class No.	Pair No.	Name (Pseudonym)	Mock TOEIC <sup>1</sup> Score	Relative English Proficiency	Sex	Age
Class A	Pair 1	Hyuk	680	High	Male	23
		June	450	Low	Male	23
	Pair 2	Min	750	High	Male	22
		Jang	730	High	Male	20
Class B	Pair 3	Mia	760	High	Female	19
		Sung	600	Intermediate	Male	19
	Pair 4	Young	800	High	Male	19
		Jimin	650	Intermediate	Male	19
Class C <sup>2</sup>	Pair 5	Jina	780	High	Female	24
		Sun	310	Low	Female	43
	Pair 6	Mijin	610	Intermediate	Female	23
		Chang	600	Intermediate	Male	27

The participants were classified as high, intermediate and low L2 proficiency by their mock TOEIC score and my judgement as a lecturer. The criteria used to gauge the participants' L2 proficiency were their scores on mid-term exams in class earlier in the semester, as well as my general observations made over the semester. The proficiency levels were relative among the participants.

Before starting this study, in order to understand their relationship in pair, I unofficially asked participants for the reasons why they chose each other as a partner. Since Hyuk and June in pair 1 were best friends, their proficiency levels were known to each other. While June who was a relatively low-proficiency learner, expected to his partner's help

<sup>1</sup> The college provided a mock TOEIC test for the first-year students that they had to take on a specified date in the first semester.

<sup>2</sup> Class C was an evening course.

to complete activities, Hyuk told me that he felt a responsibility for helping or guiding June's learning. It seemed that June relied on Hyuk's help and Hyuk noticed June's attitude. On the other hand, in pair 2, Min and Jang decided to become partners because of their similar proficiency level. They told me that they had already been enjoying doing activities together before starting this study. Each believed that pair work could help to improve their own English proficiency.

Mia and Sung in pair 3 became partners because happened to sit next to each other. Mia seemed to be proud of her English proficiency and Sung realised his partner's English proficiency was better than his. Likewise with pair 3, Yong and Jimin became a pair because of their seating. Yong had a relatively high level of English proficiency in his class. Jimin knew it and expected to learn something from Yong in pair work.

Sun and Jina became a pair at the request of Sun. At the first day of lesson, Sun confessed me that she might have difficulty in understanding lessons because she had not studied English over the last 20 years. On the other hand, Jina had continuously studied English after graduating from high school and her job offered many opportunities to use English. Sun noticed that Jina was a relatively high proficiency student and asked Jina to become her partner. Jina accepted Sun's request. Sun expected to get some help from her peer in pair work. In the case of pair 6, Mijin and Chang sat next to each other so that they might become a pair. Mijin told me that she was very interested in studying English: in order to improve her English proficiency, she took on-line English lessons and read articles or books in English almost every day. Chang also liked English, but he did not do any more than taking my English lessons. Both knew each other well and their English proficiency levels were known to each other as being similar.

### 3.8.3. Activities

The words, 'work, 'activity' and 'task' are commonly heard and often used interchangeably in classroom language. In the context of SLA, the meaning of task is specifically clarified and narrowly, used in relation to task-based language learning (TBLL), as distinguished from other devices such as 'activity' or 'exercise'. However, there is still not any consistent and single universal definition of a task. Thus, before describing activities used in this study, it would be valuable to clarify my focus in relation to the term 'activities'.

After reviewing several definitions of 'task' drawn from the research and pedagogic literatures and identifying critical features of a task, Ellis (2003) distinguishes between the meaning of 'tasks' and 'exercises' by adopting a narrower definition of 'tasks'.

'Tasks' are activities that are primarily focused on meaning-focused language use while 'exercises' are activities that are primarily focused on form-focused language use. However, Ellis recognises that the purpose of both a task and an exercise is the same in learning a language; the difference is how this purpose is to be achieved. Learners need to pay attention to meaning and form in both tasks and exercises.

While having the same goal of language learning, the meaning of an 'activity' here adopts a broader definition than the meaning of 'tasks' and 'exercises' within TBLL: the term 'activity' in this study incorporates any kind of language learning activities in which the learners engage in accordance with their teacher's instruction in a language classroom context. It is not restricted solely to the use of the target language to convey meaning but includes the use of language to deliver a message and to display and practise learners' linguistic knowledge. Therefore, 'activity' is understood as a language-learning occasion and learners are involved in these activities in order to produce the target language and develop their communicative and linguistic knowledge in the target language.

Seven different language activities were used as the main data collection instrument to record the processes of peer interaction undergone by the learners while accomplishing the activities (see Appendix A in detail). The activities formed part of the regular class work. There were two main methodological purposes of the activities as an instrument for data collection. One was to provide the learners with an opportunity to engage with each other in the process of activity performance. The second was to encourage the learners to reflect on language by working on the activities. The following is a description of each activity used in the study.

**Activity one: filling in the blanks**

Students were asked to fill in each blank of the presented dialogue using a word or words found in a given box: this activity provides pre-selected language items that learners were required to use. The intention of the activity was to enhance vocabulary learned in the lesson and to show how to use the vocabulary in a real conversation about how to book a round-trip ticket.

**Activity two: the different time zones**

After practising the given sample dialogue, students were asked to compose a dialogue about the different time zones, using the presented clocks. This activity provided the learners with conversational practice that included expressions such as 'ahead of' or 'behind'. The outcomes of the activity were not predetermined and could be various; it would, however, expect similar outcomes among the learners since a sample dialogue was presented to them.

**Activity three: An information activity**

After reading a notice about restricted items on flights, students were asked to answer three questions related to the notice. The main focus of the activity is on learners' comprehension of the given text, but there is another implicit aim. The given text

contained comparative forms such as 'less than', 'more than' and 'bigger than' and the three questions actually tested learners' understanding of the meaning of the comparative form. Thus, besides a comprehension check, the subsidiary focus of this activity is on learning how to use the comparative form.

**Activity four: Jumbled dialogues**

Two jumbled dialogues related to seats were presented to students: one situation was about looking for a window seat and the other was about asking for empty seats that were together. The given dialogues are real world examples for learners, not only regarding what people do in a particular situation, but also how they deal with such a situation.

**Activity five: Reconstruction of text**

The given text about how to complete an immigration card contains some errors. Students were asked to reconstruct the text in order to produce one that is meaningfully and grammatically correct. The grammatical structures included a focus on subject-verb agreement, verb inflections and plural inflections. The lexical focus included changing a modal verb and an adverb, depending on the meaning of the text.

**Activity six: Making a story**

Twelve word cards were provided to students. The students were asked to choose at least five cards from these and use them to make a story. The words on the cards were related to travel English, which was the topic of the course. There was no predetermined or finite solution. However, the intention was to use the cards to induce the learners to employ expressions learned in previous lessons and activities. The activity could therefore provide them with an opportunity to freely practice what they had learned.

### **Activity seven: Adding a sentence**

The topic of this activity was holidays. Using the topic, students were asked to start with one sentence, then join a new sentence to the previous sentence, making chain of at least 10 sentences. With the suggested topic, learners would be free to decide on the composition of their story and the outcomes would, of course, vary.

As can be seen, the content of all the activities<sup>3</sup> was clearly linked to the course syllabus involving the tourism English. These activities were not formally assessed but formed part of the regular class work to give students opportunities to practice language they had been exposed to in class. The students were expected to use various aspects of their English ability. Bygate and Samuda (2009) emphasise that a task should be related to a lesson because if the task was not used for a pedagogical purpose, its value would be jeopardised. They suggest that 'task engagement was likely to be enhanced by the students' perception of the task as useful for their participation in the lesson and for their learning beyond the task' (Bygate and Samuda, 2009, p.101).

#### **3.8.4. Data Collection Procedure**

This study was classroom based. Data were collected over a period of seven weeks in May and June of the first semester after my pre-observing for three weeks to select participants and running a pilot study for a week.

Students were asked to complete each activity in pairs. They were told that if they felt that their L1 would be helpful to them in completing the activities, they should feel free to use it. The dialogue of the pairs was audio-recorded as they worked on the activities

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<sup>3</sup> Activities one to five were selected from supplementary books in relation to course syllabus and activities six and seven were made by me, the lecturer.

and the audio-recorded data were transcribed verbatim (see transcription symbols in Appendix D). In addition, observation notes were made by me, the researcher while the students completed the assigned activities in pair work or immediately after the class. Given that the researcher was the lecturer who had a responsibility for the whole class, observation notes were fairly brief and were of the most salient behavioural features. The features were marked when transcribing the dialogues of the pairs. The transcription of the pair talk attempted to reflect the nature of peer interaction and to represent the interaction as it occurred. The transcripts of the pair dialogues formed the main source of data used to describe the pair interactions.

Unlike other studies on pair interaction that relied only on recorded pair talk, student interviews as another important source of data in this study were included in this study in order to gain an understanding of pair interaction from learners' perspectives. The 12 participants were interviewed individually after each lesson (i.e. seven times each). Two types of interview were used in this study: post-activity interviews including stimulated recall and final interviews.

Post-activity interviews with stimulated recall took place within two days of the original activity performance because individual interviews were closely related to the information gathered through the audio recordings of pair work. In the stimulated recall interview, the audio recorder was rewound and replayed for the students to listen to themselves during their own pair work in each lesson. While listening to the recorder, the participant could pause the recorder at any time if they wished to describe their thoughts at any particular point in the interaction. The researcher also paused it to ask a participant to recall their thoughts at the time the original interaction was going on. The aim of this stimulated recall procedure was to elicit the learners' thoughts and reflections on their experience of working in pairs. After the stimulated recall, they were



asked to reflect generally on the activity completed in pair work (see post-activity interview outline in Appendix B).

Alongside the post-activity interviews, participants were interviewed individually at the end of the study. These interviews were conducted using open semi-structured questions in order to allow flexibility in the topics considered (see final interview outline in Appendix C). These interviews were conducted to elicit their perceptions and feelings about their pair interaction experiences. The interview data were used to incorporate the participants' perspective on their behaviour and to understand the nature of their interaction, which may not be apparent from the recorded pair talk alone. All interview sessions including the stimulated recall interviews and the final interview were audio-recorded and conducted in Korean because it is the first language for the all participants and the researcher. The interview data were transcribed and for the purpose of this report, some parts of the transcriptions were translated into English.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

This research has concentrated on the ethical issues of the British Sociological Association (BSA, 2002) because this study attempted to explore the effects of peer interaction in English language learning, indicating that the subjects are likely to be involved directly in this research sample. As such, it is imperative to reflect upon ethical issues pertaining to justifiable and acceptable research, bearing these in mind at all times so as to attain valid and reliable data. According to the ethical guidelines of the BSA (2002), it is crucial that researchers are made aware of issues of anonymity and confidentiality when seeking permission to carry out research. This study included such information on the consent form.

Any discussion of ethics relating to the methodology of qualitative research necessarily takes as a central issue the question of the relationship between the researcher and the researched (van den Berg, 2001). According to Eisner as cited by van den Berg, the aim of research is for the public good through knowledge creation, but an act of research might harm others in order to achieve that good. There are three well-known principles for the protection of human subjects: privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. Before carrying out this research, participants were informed of their rights in relation to these three key aspects in the form of a consent form.

As Stake (1995) points out, most educational case data gathering involves at least a small invasion of personal privacy. He goes on to explain that the meaning of privacy is 'a matter of avoiding personal exposure to everyone outside intimate circles, circles decoded by the individual' (Stake, 1995, p.59). It is true that any research inevitably invades personal privacy, but what is asked of researchers is that they review their behaviour if there are indications that it may interfere with the lives of others (Stake, 1995). It is possible therefore, that aspects of this research might invade the privacy of student participants. Students might, for example, be wary of commenting about their peers or indeed about my teaching, as such revelations might expose private thoughts that normally they would rather hide. Therefore, before conducting interviews with the students, I assured them that no one would take offence as a result of what they said and explained that their comments would in fact be of great value in improving their learning and my teaching.

In terms of confidentiality and anonymity, all participants of this research, including the college and the students, were offered the opportunity to remain anonymous and told that all information would be treated with the strictest confidentiality. The consent form (see Appendix E) given to the participants stated that all information collected would be confidential and would be used for research purposes only. The identity of participants

would remain anonymous: no one besides the researcher will know their real names. Furthermore, when data from this study should be published, their name will not be used. I explained that the data gathered would be stored on my personal computer, and only myself, as the researcher, could have access to it.

Besides their right to be protected, information about the research that influences their decisions about whether to participate should be given to the participants (Silverman, 2006). In other words, I had a responsibility to explain to participants as fully as possible what the research would be about, how the research would be carried out in lessons, why I wished to use audio equipment in lessons and interviews with students, what would be involved and what I would do with the information obtained. The fact that I was both researcher and teacher in this study means that the information gathered could be of particular importance to my participants. They might decide to participate in this research because they felt they had to do so and might worry about any impact it might have on their marks as I was the one who decided whether they fail or pass. In an effort to prevent any misunderstanding and to help students comprehend exactly what their participation would mean, I explained verbally all details of the aims and processes of the research and presented clear criteria of how the class would be marked to ensure that participation would in no way affect their grade in the course. To this end, voluntary participation would be clearly emphasised as an essential element of consent.

When interviewing students, care would be taken to ensure they were relaxed at the start of the interview because differential power between a classroom inquirer and informants could have an effect on their responses. I explained to them that this was not an interrogation to find out right or wrong answers, but that it was a conversation event: all responses would be of value and importance. I also pointed out that I was the one who would be learning from them this time. Furthermore, in order to stimulate their

participation during the interview and to increase their interest and memory, I used audio-recording data recorded from the observed lessons. By using it for the interview, I was cautiously trying not to impose my own framework on the students because the purpose of the interview was to represent the interviewees' thought, not mine. In order for this to happen, I tried to avoid controlling their behaviour in the interview situation; they were to teach me what I needed to know.

In short, during this research I treated all participants as fully respected individuals, not just as data-collecting subjects, while keeping all ethical concerns in mind.

### **3.10. Summary**

This chapter described how the study was implemented in an ongoing class of EFL adult learners. It described the setting of this study including its context, its participants, and the activities presented to the participants. Then, it described how data were collected via classroom observation and learner interviews and reviewed ethical considerations. As a classroom-based study, it is important to note that this study was not made solely on research considerations but on the basis of pedagogical grounds for the regular class practices. Therefore, it can be said of this study that it could also provide an understanding of phenomena in a naturalistic classroom context, in particular of pair work in the course.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, will describe how the pair talk data were analysed in order to address the first research sub-question: namely, how do learners interact with their partner in language learning activities?

## Chapter 4

### Data Analysis: The Types of Pair Interaction

#### 4.1. Introduction

The goals of this study are to find out how learners interact with their partner while completing pair work in EFL lessons, how they think about the interaction and how the interaction influences their language learning. In order to achieve these goals, first of all, it is important to explore the first goal, namely the nature of pair interaction. This chapter will describe how data collected over seven weeks were analysed in addressing this research aim and then identify the various types of pair interaction with their salient traits.

The main source of data used to address the first research question was 42 transcripts of audio-recorded pair talk (seven activities each done by six pairs). Besides the pair talk, I used my observation notes, stimulated recalls and post-interview data to supplement this analysis. In particular, stimulated recall comments helped me to better understand the participants' intended behaviour in their interaction.

#### 4.2. Process of Analysis

An inductive qualitative approach was used to analyse pair talk data. Coding categories emerged through a grounded theory approach to data analysis: as Cohen et al. (2007) explain, when employing the features of grounded theory, the sorting and categorising of data emerged following reiterative reading of the data.

Following a similar procedure used by Storch (2002a), a random sample of 14 transcripts (two transcripts from each activity, one-third of the total of 42) was first

selected. Then, in my attempt to describe the role relationship of each pair that the type of pair interaction seems to depict, I repeatedly read the transcripts. In particular, I focused on reading to find out how the learners approached each activity, how each played a role in pair work, how they participated in pair work and how they contributed to complete the activity. In order to facilitate an understanding of the nature of pair interaction, a combination of open and axial coding was used to deconstruct pair talk data into manageable chunks. In the case of an open coding, the data were explored and a unit of analysis was identified for creating new codes, categories and sub-categories. In order to relate categories to their sub-categories, axial coding was used. The axial coding helped 'to integrate codes around the axes of central categories' (Ezzy 2002, p.93). By applying these processes to the sample of 14 transcriptions, preliminary sets of categories used to code pair talk data were developed.

The method of constant comparison was adopted in order to look for irregularities that did not fit the preliminary sets already made. As Cohen et al. (2007) suggest, new data from 14 additional transcripts were compared with the existing data and categories. When the data did not fit into the established categories, new and emergent categories were developed. Then the same process was repeated with the remaining 14 transcripts. This step enabled me to refine the categories by comparing cases in a single category with previous cases coded in the same category and with the differing categories as well. Thus each category emerged and was developed from this process of data analysis. The following section elaborates on the steps of data analysis in detail.

### **4.3. Five Steps of Data Analysis**

In order to examine how each pair approached and completed the activities, there were five steps of data analysis. For the preliminary steps, pair talk data were segmented

into types of talk and episode. Then the segmented data were used to examine the nature of the episodes, such as how episodes were initiated and how the pair responded to each other. The detailed analysed episodes then were examined by the level of learner engagement. Based on the salient features of pair talk data, different types of pair interaction were recognised. The next sections explain each form of analysis undertaken.

### **4.3.1. Step 1: Data Segmentation into Types of Talk**

Based on the literature of peer interaction (Brooks and Donato, 1994; Brooks et al. 1997; de Guerrero and Villamil, 1994), transcripts of pair talk were segmented into two types of talk: about-activity and on-activity talk.

#### **4.3.1.1. About-activity Talk**

About-activity talk was data when learners talked about how to go about completing the given activity. Brooks et al. (1997) found that language learners did not only talk about the language used to perform the task but also spoke about what they were supposed to do or the procedures for completing the task. In doing so, the learners externally stated procedures involved in the tasks or their emotional reactions to participating in the tasks. In the pair talk data, such talk was discovered.

#### **4.3.1.2. On-activity Talk**

On-activity talk was segments of pair talk data in which the learners engaged in the process of completing the activity. Such talk was observed when learners talked about language they were producing and generated their ideas to make stories. In addition,

on-activity talk included instances when learners read sentences from the text provided and translated them into Korean (L1) in order to understand the meaning of text.

### 4.3.2. Step 2: Data Segmentation into Episodes

Transcripts of pair talk data segmented into about-activity talk and on-activity talk were segmented for episodes, which in this study mean a semantically related dialogue. The taxonomy of codes distinguishing between episodes in about-activity talk and episodes in on-activity talk is presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Titles for categories were chosen to capture the features of the talk. In some episodes, two issues were dealt with at the same time. In that case, these episodes were coded as two episodes respectively.

#### 4.3.2.1. About-activity Talk Episodes

As can be seen in Table 4.1, in coding about-activity talk for episodes, six sub-categories were identified in the data.

**Table 4.1. Types of episodes: about-activity talk**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stating activity requirements [state]:</b> episodes in which the learners state the instructions in order to clarify what the activity requires.</li> <li>• <b>Discussing activity direction [direction]:</b> episodes in which the learners establish procedures for doing the activity.</li> <li>• <b>Negotiating a stage [stage]:</b> episodes in which learners negotiate the next stage of the activity or the close of the activity.</li> <li>• <b>Negotiating a role [role]:</b> episodes in which learners negotiate a role or responsibility.</li> <li>• <b>Assigning a turn [turn]:</b> episodes in which the learners discuss who will start the activity.</li> <li>• <b>Expressing affective reactions [affective]:</b> episodes in which the learners express their own feelings about the activity.</li> </ul>
--



“Stating activity requirements” were episodes in which the learners stated the instructions in order to clarify what the activity required them to do. The following excerpt illustrates such an episode.

**Excerpt 1: Stating activity requirement**

- |   |       |   |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | Sun:  | 두개의 다른 dialogue가 있다는 거지? (Does it mean that there are two different dialogues?) |
| 2 | Jina: | 네. (Yes.)   |

“Discussing activity direction” were episodes in which the learners established procedures for doing the activity. Some learners discussed how they would approach the activity. As seen in Excerpt 2, Jimin suggested reading the given texts and translating them into Korean (line 2).

**Excerpt 2: Discussing activity direction**

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Young: | 어떻게 할까? (How do we approach this activity?)  |
| 2 | Jimin: | 한 문단씩 읽고 해석해보는거 어때? 그리고 문제에 대한 답하자. (Why don't we read and translate each paragraph? And then let's answer the questions.) |
| 3 | Young: | Okay.  |

Some episodes were discovered in talk that attempted to work out how to structure the whole sequence of activities:

**Excerpt 3: Discussing activity direction**

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 2 | Jang: | I went on holiday to Paris. 이 문장을 시작으로 이야기를 만들어 보자. (Let's make a story starting from this sentence.)  |
| 3 | Min:  | Okay. 그렇게 시작해 보자. (Let's start with it.)   |
| 4 | Jang: | 그래. (Okay.)  |
| 5 | Min:  | 그럼: I went on holiday to Paris. 이 문장에 이어서:: (Following this sentence::) I went there with my family. 그런 다음에 어떻게 갔고 어디에 머물렀는지, 가서 뭘 했는지 등등. 이렇게 이야기를 확장해 보자. (Then how to get there, where we stayed, what we did there and so on. Let's extend the story like that.) |
| 6 | Jang: | Good idea.   |

“Negotiating a stage” were episodes in which the learners negotiated about starting the activity, moving to the next stage of the activity or ending the activity as follows:

**Excerpt 4: Negotiating a stage**

- 2 Young: But shall we:: start?  
3 Jimin: Okay.

**Excerpt 5: Negotiating a stage**

- 13 Jimin: Shall we move on?  
14 Young: Yes, please.

**Excerpt 6: Negotiating a stage**

- 45 Young: Now nine errors. Done.

“Negotiating a role” were episodes in which learners negotiated or assigned a role.

Usually, the role was about who would be the scribe as seen in Excerpt 7.

**Excerpt 7: Negotiating a role**

- 10 Sung: 니가 적을거지? (Are you going to write down?)  
11 Mia: Okay.

However, occasionally, when the learners did the activity that asked them to compose a story, such as activity 6, they negotiated about their imaginary roles as shown in Excerpt 8.

**Excerpt 8: Negotiating a role**

- 8 Jang: 음:: 우선 내가 official 할게. (Um:: let me become an official.)  
9 Min: Okay. I'm a student.

“Assigning a turn” were episodes in which the learners talked about their turn, such as who would start. Sometimes, some learners talked about partner’s turn in order to invite the other to contribute to the activity, as seen in Excerpt 9.

**Excerpt 9: Assigning a turn**

- 14 Hyuk: 왜 안해? 너 차례야. (Why don't you do it? It's your turn.)  
15 June: 어? 나보고 하라고? 그냥 니가 다 해석해. (Ah? Did you ask me to do it? Why don't you do all of the translation?)  
16 Hyuk: 같이해야지. 모르는 단어 있으면 내가 알려줄게 한번 해봐. (Let's do it together. If you don't know the meaning of some words, I will explain them. Try to do it.)  
17 June: 아:: 알았어. (Ah:: Okay.)

“Expressing affective reactions” were episodes in which the learners expressed their feelings about the activity such as fear, enjoyment or dislike, as seen in Excerpt 10.

<b>Excerpt 10: Expressing affective reactions</b>	
1	Min: 이거 재밌겠다. (It looks interesting.)
2	Jang: 그러게. (I think so.)

#### 4.3.2.2. On-activity Talk Episodes

Table 4.2 presents six sub-categories of episodes identified in the data of on-activity talk episodes with their definitions.

<b>Table 4.2. Types of episodes: on-activity talk</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Generating an idea [Idea]:</b> episodes in which the learners present their own idea for composing a story.</li> <li>• <b>Checking comprehension [Check]:</b> episodes in which learners check each other’s comprehension of given texts.</li> <li>• <b>Sequencing sentences [Seq]:</b> episodes in which learners sequence jumbled sentences.</li> <li>• <b>Focusing language use [LRE]:</b> language related episodes (LREs) in which learners focus their attention on language use.</li> <li>• <b>Reading text provided [R]:</b> episodes in which learners read aloud the text (written in English) by turns, provided as a form of conversational dialogues, a notice or an announcement.</li> <li>• <b>Translation given text into Korean [T]:</b> Episodes in which learners translate a given text into Korean, their first language. For some pairs, these translation episodes followed “reading text provided” episodes.</li> </ul>

In “generating an idea” episodes, the learners had more opportunities to present their own ideas while performing some activities, such as the activities of “the different time zones” (activity 2), “making a story” (activity 6) and “adding a sentence” (activity 7), which required the pair to make a story based on given information. When learners generated own ideas to make a story, they usually expressed the idea in Korean or

English. For example, in the following excerpt from Sun and Jina, Sun suggested her idea to continue the story (line 17) and her partner agreed her idea (line 18).

**Excerpt 11: Generating an idea**

- 17 Sun: = 계속해서 친구한테 들었는데 spa가 좋다더라. 이렇게 표현 하는거 어때?  
(Continuously I heard from my friends that the spa is good. What do you think about using this?)
- 18 Jina: 좋아요. (All right.)

In the case of Jimin and Young, as shown in the following excerpt Young extended Jimin's idea. Jimin suggested his idea to make a story (line 24) and Young asked to clarify the idea (line 25). With Jimin's explanation, Young suggested extending the sentence in order to clarify the meaning (line 26) and Jimin agreed to his partner's suggestion (line 28). Thus, they would continue the story with a co-constructive idea; this episode was coded as "generating an idea".

**Excerpt 12: Generating an idea**

- 24 Jimin: Then:: you must be busy to to prepare.
- 25 Young: Ummm prepare what?
- 26 Jimin: What? 출장준비로 바쁘겠지. (Because of preparing for a business trip)
- 27 Young: 그럼 (then) then you must be busy to prepare for the business trip.이라고 하는거 어때? (how about expressing it like this?)
- 28 Jimin: 오:: 그래 그게 더 좋겠다. (Oh:: Right. This is better.) Prepare for the business trip. Okay.

"Checking comprehension" episodes [check] were those where the learners checked each other's comprehension of given texts. A learner checked whether the other learner was following his/her message or understanding of the contents of the given texts as seen in Excerpt 13. While performing activity three, Hyuk asked whether his partner understood the contents of the given texts after they together translated the texts into Korean (line 24) and June responded with the positive answer (line 25).

**Excerpt 13: Checking comprehension**

- 24 Hyuk: 내용 다 이해 했지? (Do you understand all of the contents?)
- 25 June: 어. (Yes.)

Episodes where the learner explained the contents of the given texts based on their own understanding were also coded as “checking comprehension”. In Excerpt 14, Jang and Min explained to each other how they guessed the contents of the dialogue after looking over some given words.

**Excerpt 14: Checking comprehension**

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 3 | Jang: | 보기에 있는 단어들을 보니깐, 왕복티켓을 예매하려는거 같네. (Looking over the words of the examples, I think it's about booking round-trip tickets.)       |
| 4 | Min:  | 어. 근데 대기자 순서가 있는걸 보니 예약이 다 찬거 같은데. (Right. But it seems that the reservation is already booked because there is a waiting list.) |
| 5 | Jang: | 그럴 수 있겠다. (That might be right.)   |

In the activity for “information” (activity 3), learners were asked to answer three questions followed by a given information text. The answers were related to learners’ comprehension of the contents of the text. In a way, the talk about discussing the answers was classified by “checking comprehension” episodes. In Excerpt 15, Young read the first question asking about the content of the given text (line 20) and Jimin answered it based on his understanding of the text (line 21).

**Excerpt 15: Checking comprehension**

- |    |        |  |
|----|--------|--|
| 20 | Young: | ‘Number one, what should passengers do with a container with more than hundred millilitres of a liquid?’ |
| 21 | Jimin: | They should put them in their checked luggage, right?  |
| 22 | Young: | Yes. Put them in their checked luggage. =  |

“Sequencing sentences” were episodes in which learners sequenced jumbled sentences, particularly shown in the activity four, “Jumbled Dialogue”. In the following excerpt, Mia asked which sentence would be the first among the jumbled sentences (line 14) and Sung suggested respective sentences for the two different dialogues (line 15).

**Excerpt 16: Sequencing sentences**

- 14 Mia: 몇번이 제일 먼저 시작되는 부분일 거 같아? (Which number do you think would be the first?)
- 15 Sung: 'Excuse me'로 시작하는 7번이랑 9번 아닐까? Isn't it the number 7 and 9 starting with 'Excuse me'?)
- 16 Mia: 그럴겠지. (Yes.)

The next episodes were those in which learners focused their attention on language use. Swain and Lapkin (1998, p.326) define language-related episodes (LREs) 'as any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others'. LREs as a research methodology have been used by SLA researchers using similar data such as learner dialogues on language tasks (e.g. Kowal and Swain, 1994; Kim and McDonough, 2008; 2011; Storch, 2007; Swain and Lapkin, 1995; 1998). LREs were further categorised into three episodes depending on the focus on a particular aspect of language: form-focus, lexical-focus and mechanical focus.

Form-focused LREs [F-LRE] were language segments in the pair talk where learners dealt with grammatical aspects of English. These included episodes dealing with verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word formation and articles. The following excerpts were coded as form-focused LREs:

**Excerpt 17: F-LRE dealing with a plural form**

- 6 Sun: 우선 all passenger에 s를 붙여야 하지? (At first, all passenger need to add 's'?)
- 7 Jina: 아:: 그러네요. 복수 (Ah:: Right. Plural)

**Excerpt 18: F-LREs dealing with auxiliary verb and passive form**

- 18 Young: And: what about may? The first sentence is must, not may.
- 19 Jimin: Oh ... I think so. It is must, not may.
- 20 Young: Ye, because it's not option. All passengers have to: do it.
- 21 Jimin: Right. So change may to must and:: complete to be completed, right?
- 22 Young: Yes.

LREs in which the focus of attention was on word or phrase meaning, word choice, other ways of expression and use of prepositions were coded as lexical LREs [L-LRE].

The following excerpts exemplify lexical LREs:

**Excerpt 19: L-LRE dealing with use of prepositions**

- 33 Mijin: 시차는 (“Time difference is: Korean translation”) time difference ... What is the time difference. ... 런던과 서울의를 어떻게 표현하지? (How to express ‘between London and Seoul’?)
- 34 Chang: Of London and Seoul? What is the time difference of London and Seoul? 어때? (How about this?)
- 35 Mijin: of? 런던과 서울 간의 시차차너. (It’s the time difference between London and Seoul.) 두 도시 간의 차이잖어. (It’s difference between two cities.) 머머 사이에. (Between something)
- 36 Chang: 아! (Ah!) Between A and B? =
- 37 Mijin: = 맞다 맞다. (Right, right) Between London and Seoul!
- 38 Chang: Yes, then: What is the:: time difference umm between London and Seoul? Right?
- 39 Mijin: Yeah!

**Excerpt 20: L-LRE dealing with word meaning**

- 10 Sun: 그럼 less than을 뭐라고 해석했어? (Then how did you translate ‘less than’?)
- 11 Jina: “이하”여. “머머보다 더 적은” 이라고 생각하시면 되여. (“Less than: Korean translation. You can think about it, “less than something: Korean translation”)
- 12 Sun: 알았어. (Okay.)

LREs in which learners paid attention to spelling and pronunciation were coded as mechanical LREs [M-LRE]. There are examples of mechanical LREs as follows:

**Excerpt 21: M-LRE dealing with pronunciation**

- 4 Young: 그럼 복도자린? (Then, aisle seat?)
- 5 Jimin: [aɪl] [si:t]? 발음 맞아? (Is it the correct pronunciation?)
- 6 Young: [aɪl] [si:t] right.
- 7 Jimin: 이 단어 발음이 늘 헛갈려. (I always confuse the pronunciation of this word.)

**Excerpt 22: M-LRE dealing with spelling**

- 18 Sun: 어::: eleven 스펠링이 어떻게 되지? (Ah::: What is the spelling of ‘eleven’?)
- 19 Jina: e-l-e-v-e-n.
- 20 Sun: 그래. (Right) e-l-e-v-e-n.

### 4.3.3. Step 3: The Features of Episodes

After data were segmented into the type of activity and then episodes as preliminary steps, the episodes were analysed for the episodes' features. In order to focus on the process of how learners engage with each other to negotiate or discuss problems and then to find solutions, the analysis was limited to episodes that included some problem-solving process and decision-making process and excluded of the reading and translation episodes. However, in cases where the learners had trouble pronouncing some words in the reading episodes and translating the given texts in translation episodes, these episodes were included because the learners had to solve the difficulties. In analysing the features of the episodes, the following aspects were focused on: how it was initiated and how it was responded to.

#### 4.3.3.1. Initiations

Initiation in episodes appeared in various ways. As can be seen in Table 4.3, episodes were initiated via a number of different forms of request [R], rhetorical question [Rh/G], noticing a problem [Noticing] and suggestions [S].

Table 4.3. Initiations	
• Requests	seeking information for an opinion, an explanation, clarification, correction and comprehension [R/info]
	seeking confirmation in response to one's own suggestion [R/C: own] of the other learner's suggestion [R/C: other]
• Rhetorical question (self-directed question) [Rh/Q]	
• Noticing a problem [Noticing]	
• Suggestions	of answer with explanation [S/ex]
	without any explanation [S/without]
	of an idea about making a story [S/idea]

There were two types of request identified in this data. First, it was a request seeking information to elicit responses such as opinion, explanations, clarification and comprehension. The form of the request could be varied such as direct Wh-questions,



statements of uncertainty or repetitions of another's utterance. The following excerpts are examples of such requests. Excerpt 23 contains a request for an explanation of meaning (line 16).

**Excerpt 23: Request for explanation**

- 15 Jina: It takes about eleven =  
 16 Sun: = about이 무슨 뜻이지? (What is the meaning of 'about?')  
 17 Jina: “대략, 약”이란 뜻으로 쓰여요. (It's the meaning of “about: Korean translation”) 여기서 약 11시간(Here, “about eleven: Korean translation”) about eleven

As a form of comprehension check, a few learners checked whether the other was following his/her speech or whether the other had any difficulty in understanding the vocabulary given in the activity. For instance, in the following excerpt Jina asked her partner whether she understood the words in the given box or if she had any problems understanding the meaning of other words (line 1). As a result of her partner's request, Sun had an opportunity to ask about an unknown word (line 2). Jina helped her partner to understand the meaning of the word (line 3).

**Excerpt 24 : Request for comprehension**

- 1 Jina: 보기 단어 중에 모르는거 있으세요? (Are there any unknown words among examples?)  
 2 Sun: 음 ... fixed date? Fixed가 뭐지? (What is 'fixed?')  
 3 Jina: 고정된. 고정된 날짜라는 말이에요. (“fixed: Korean translation”)

Excerpt 25 below contains two requests: a request for eliciting thoughts about related language (line 8) and a request for eliciting self-correction (line 10). Young, who already knew the word, 'aisle', asked it of his partner to enrich his vocabulary (line 8). Another form of request was for a correction. It was used to elicit self-correction of the other's wrong expression as the form of the repetition of all or part of the other's utterance was said with rising intonation.

**Excerpt 25: Request for comprehension and a correction**

- 8 Young: 그럼 스펠링은? (Then, spelling?)  
 9 Jimin: 어:: a-i-l-e  
 10 Young: a-i-l-e?  
 11 Jimin: 아닌데 s가 들어가는데 s가 묵음인데 ... 아, a-i-s-l-e [aɪl] 맞지? (No, 's' is included, but it's silent syllable... Ah, is a-i-s-l-e correct?)  
 12 Young: Right. Aisle.

The second type of request was to elicit feedback or a confirmation to student's own suggestion or their partner's. In the requests seeking confirmation related to own suggestion, they could take the form of a yes/no question, a statement with rising intonation or a statement followed by a question tag. Then, the followed answers could be the form of a simple confirmation, disconfirmation, repetition, or counter suggestion. In Excerpt 26, Mia asked for her partner's confirmation in response to her suggestion (line 25) and the request was answered by a confirmation via repetition and additional explanation of the opposite expression (line 26).

**Excerpt 26: Request for a confirmation**

- 25 Mia: 어. (Right.) 4시간 시차. (Four hours time difference) Seoul is four hours ahead ... of 가 들어가나? (Does it include 'of'?)  
 26 Sung: Yeah, ahead of, behind without of  
 27 Mia: Okay, then, Seoul is four hours ahead of Mexico.

In order to elicit confirmation, clarification or reiteration of the other speaker's utterance, requests included repetition with rising intonation, or questions such as "what do you mean?" or "what did you say?" In Excerpt 27, Jimin asked Young to repeat what he said before because he did not remember it (line 8). To his request, Young repeated his utterance. Then Jimin repeated Young's utterance with rising intonation as the form of request for explanation (line 10) and Young simply answered with phatic expression. With a question to elicit an elaborated response (line 12), Young responded eliciting to remember the meaning of the sentence (line 13).

**Excerpt 27: Request for a reiteration and clarification**

- 8 Jimin: Okay. What did you say before?  
 9 Young: Have you ever been Brisbane before?  
 10 Jimin: Have you ever been?  
 11 Young: Yes.  
 12 Jimin: What does it mean?  
 13 Young: We learned Have plus p.p. in the previous lesson.

Although two types of request mentioned above focused on requests the learners addressed to each other, the data included some questions that were rhetorical or self-directed, rather than eliciting a response from the listener. Excerpt 28 contains a self-directed question. Mijin noticed the error that she made, which was the omission of 's' from plural words. She repeated the word using rising intonation, and without any pause for her partner's response, she pointed out the error (line 25), thus, implying that this question was self-directed.

**Excerpt 28: Self-directed question**

- 25 Mijin: 잠깐, hour는? Hour도 s가 빠졌네. (Wait, how about 'hour'? It also missed 's'.)

Noticing a problem was coded when the learners identified that something was wrong with a partner's utterance or the given text. In relation to a given text, such notices were found particularly in the case of the "reconstruct of text" activity, where learners were working on amending the text. In the following excerpt, Chang noticed that something was wrong with the text (line 23). When he had pointed this out, Mijin suggested the amendment to the text (line 24).

**Excerpt 29: Noticing a problem**

- 23 Chang: 근데 앞에는 must가 나왔는데 여긴 may가 나왔어. (Then, it was 'must' in the previous sentence, but here it was 'may'.)  
 24 Mijin: 응. 되어져야 하니까 must아냐? (Right. Isn't it 'must' because it has to be done?)  
 25 Chang: 그래. Must로 고치자. (Right. Let's change to 'must')

Initiations via suggestion were varied. Learners frequently suggested answers to a problem while working on activities. Sometimes they suggested the answer with an elaborated explanation or sometimes without one. In Excerpt 30, Jang suggested the sequence for the jumbled sentences without any explanation.

**Excerpt 30: Suggestion of answer without any explanations**

18 Jang: then ... 다음에 확실한건 1번 다음에 10번이 온다는거. (I'm sure that number 10 is followed by number 1.)

On the other hand, in the following excerpt, Young gave the reasons when he suggested the answer. This type of suggestion was classified as suggestions of answer with an explanation.

**Excerpt 31: Suggestion of answer with explanation**

25 Young: The next sentence is 'blank please'. That means ... the blanks are connected. So, that must be class and business class.

The data show that learners suggested their own ideas in order to make a story. June suggested his idea for making a story (line 24). Using June's suggestions, the pair made the sentence (line 27).

**Excerpt 32: Suggestion of an idea**

24 June: 근데, 날짜 물어보기 전에 왕복티켓을 원하는지 물어보는거 어때? (Then, how about asking to buy round-trip tickets before asking booking date?)  
 25 Hyuk: 오:: good idea. 그럼 이 사이에 (Then, between the sentences) ... would you like to book a =  
 26 June: =round-trip ticket.  
 27 Hyuk: Okay. Would you like to book a round-trip ticket?

#### 4.3.3.2. Responses

Data were analysed for how the learners responded to the initiations mentioned in the above section. In Table 4.4 below, the various types of response are listed.

**Table 4.4. Responses**

- Explanation after a request [Ex/solicited]  
without any requests [Ex/unsolicited]
- Repetition following the other's utterance [Rep]
- Extension to the other's utterance [Ext]
- Completion of an utterance the other began [Compl]
- Agreement or confirmation in response to requests for confirmation [Ag]
- Disagreement in response to requests for confirmation [Disa]
- Uncertain in response to requests for confirmation or information [Unc]
- Acknowledgement to other's utterance [Ack]
- Encouragement to the other [Enc]
- Translation from Korean into English [Trans: K-E]
- Translation from English into Korean [Trans: E-K]
- Suggestion to search in English dictionary [S/Dic]
- Correction to other's utterance [C/O]
- Self-correction of own wrong expression [Self-C]

The explanations were commonly solicited in response to requests. For requests for information, the learner responded with explanations. However, if, without any requests learners elaborately explained how they understood the text, the explanation was coded as unsolicited.

Excerpt 33 contains an explanation given in response to a request for a word meaning. Sun asked the meaning of a word in the given text (line 9). Jina explained the meaning and then explained why the word was used in a passive form (line 10).

**Excerpt 33: Explanation after a request**

- 9 Sun: 어: occupied가 무슨 뜻이지? (Ah: What is the meaning of 'occupied'?)
- 10 Jina: occupy라는 동사에요. "차지하다. 사용하다" 이런 뜻인데, 주어가 사람이 아닌 사물이니까 수동태로 쓰인거예요. ('Occupy' is verb. "Occupy: Korean translation". The subject is not a person so the passive form was used.)
- 11 Sun: 알겠어. (I got it.)

Excerpt 34 contains an explanation about the reason for add 's' to the word in an instance of unsolicited explanation. Young noticed some errors in the sentence (line 4)

and Jimin remarked upon one error without any additional explanation (line 5). After Yong agreed with Jimin's suggestion, he explained why the word was changed to the plural form (line 6).

**Excerpt 34: Unsolicited explanation**

- 4 Young: 'The immigration card must be complete' ... completed(?) 'by all passenger' ... s(?) 'include children' "입국카드는 작성되어져야 한다. 모든 승객들에 의해. 아이들을 포함하여" ("The immigration card must be completed by all passengers including children: Korean translation") I think: some errors in this sentence.
- 5 Jimin: I just find passenger. Not passenger, passengerS.
- 6 Young: Yes, because of all. Change to passengers. ...

Repetitions were made in response to a request for a confirmation or made following a partner's suggestion. In Excerpt 35, Hyuk suggested an idea for making a story (line 31) and June repeated the sentence after confirming that he had had the same idea (line 32).

**Excerpt 35: Repetition**

- 31 Hyuk: 어: An open ticket please.
- 32 June: 나도 그 대답 생각 했었는데. (I thought the answer too.) An open ticket please.

Excerpt 36 contains a repetition in response to a confirmation request. Sun asked to confirm her suggestion (line 23) and Jina confirmed it with repetition (line 24).

**Excerpt 36: Repetition**

- 23 Sun: 'X hotel? That ... sounds good.' 맞니? 저번 수업시간에 배운 표현 같은데. (Right? I think we've learned this expression in the previous lesson.)
- 24 Jina: Right. 'That sounds good.'

Extensions were sometimes added to another's suggestion. In Excerpt 37 below, Sung made a sentence to end the story (line 30). Mia extended the sentence with the expression that was used at the beginning of the activity (line 31). Sung agreed to Mia's idea by repeating the extended expression (line 32).

**Excerpt 37: Extension to other's utterance**

- 30 Sung: Have fun.  
 31 Mia: Have fun with your family.  
 32 Sung: Yes, with your family.

Completions were found when one learner completed an utterance that the other had begun. The following excerpt is an example of such a completion. Suggesting the use of a different subject, Sung started to make a sentence (line 28). Then, Mia continued Sung's utterance and completed the sentence (line 29). In agreement, Sung repeated Mia's utterance (line 30).

**Excerpt 38: Completion**

- 28 Sung: Mexico를 먼저 쓸 수 있지. (Mexico can be used at the beginning of the sentence.) 그럼, (Then,) Mexico is =  
 29 Mia: = four hours BEHIND Seoul.  
 30 Sung: Right. Behind Seoul.

Suggestions are part of initiation as mentioned in section 4.3.3.1, but depending on the content, they become part of the response. In relation to the request asking for a word's meaning, it happened neither learner knew. Then they suggested looking in an English dictionary to solve the problem.

**Excerpt 39: Suggestion to look in an English dictionary**

- 12 Mijin: “용기들을” (“Containers: Korean translation”) ... ‘transparent’가 머지?  
 (What is the meaning of ‘transparent’?)  
 13 Chang: 몰라. (I don't know.) Dictionary, please.  
 14 Mijin: Okay. Transparent.  
 15 ...  
 16 Chang: “투명한”이란 말이네. (“transparent: Korean translation”)

The category of corrections included correcting or suggesting reformulations of the language produced by the learners. The category was divided into two subcategories of other-corrections or self-corrections. Other-corrections were instances where the learners corrected, suggested reformulations or considered different alternatives to the

language produced by a partner. In Excerpt 40, Mia made a sentence for making a story (line 23), but the sentence contained an error, missing article. Sung noticed the error and pointed out the missing article (line 24). Following Sung's advice, Mia could correct the sentence (line 25).

**Excerpt 40: Other-correction**

- 23 Mia: It was very memorable sight.
- 24 Sung: 어 ... 근데, sight가 단수잖아. 그러면 관사 a가 필요 하지 않아? (Ah ... then, 'sight' is the singular. Then, doesn't it need an article, 'a'?)
- 25 Mia: 관사? 아, 그러네. (Article? Ah, Right.) It was a very memorable sight. Memorable에 신경을 쓰다보니 관사를 빼먹었네. (I was too concerned about 'memorable' so I missed the article.) Okay.

Self-corrections were instances in which the learners corrected their own utterance or considered an alternative language choice without any assistance from their partner:

**Excerpt 41: Self-correction**

- 20 Jimin: You: no did you:: no didn't you: lose anything in your bag?

Self-corrections also contained instances where the learner corrected their own utterance but with minimal assistance from their partner. In these instances, the partner's assistance involved repetition of the wrong expression with a rising intonation, or hints to correct the wrong expression such as 'you missed one word'. Excerpt 42 below was coded as a self-correction. Sung made a sentence to continue the story with an error involving a plural form (line 8). Rather than correcting the error, Mia repeated the words with a rising intonation giving Sung an opportunity to correct the error (line 9). Then, with Mia's help, Sung corrected the error (line 10).

**Excerpt 42: Self-correction**

- 8 Sung: The island was different from ... other place in Korea.
- 9 Mia: Place? Other place?
- 10 Sung: No no other placeS.



#### **4.3.4. Step 4: The Level of Pair Involvement in Episodes**

The nature of initiations and responses was closely examined in coding for the features of episodes. The initiations and responses could not be taken into consideration separately. Rather, it was important to look at sequences of utterance in order to examine how the learners interacted during the process of completing the given activities. The sequences of initiations and responses show how learners reached resolutions in the episodes in relation to the problem-solving and decision-making processes: whether both learners engaged in the process of the resolutions, albeit sometimes in very different ways.

Episodes were divided into two patterns. In some episodes, there was not any interaction between the two learners, with only one learner involved in the episodes initiating a problem or suggesting a solution; these were coded as non-interactive [Non-IN]. In others, there was some involvement of both learners even if the level of involvement varied between partners from low to high; these were coded as interactive [IN].

##### **4.3.4.1. Non-interactive Episodes**

Non-interactive episodes [Non-IN] were those in which only one learner was involved in the decision-making process and the other did not respond to the initiation at all.

Without any responses, their talk moved to the next decision-making process. The following excerpt shows a non-interactive episode. While performing the activity of “jumbled dialogues”, Young explained one dialogue after reading and translating one sentence. However, without any responses to Young’s opinion, Jimin read the given sentence and translated it into Korean. Thus this “checking comprehension episode” was coded as non-interactive.

**Excerpt 43: Non-interactive**

- 2 Young: 아마도 하나의 dialogue는 자리를 같이 앉기를 원하는거 같다. (Maybe, one dialogue is about asking to sit together.)
- 3 Jimin: ‘Just a moment while I check that for you.’ “내가 당신을 위해 그것을 확인하는 동안 잠시만요: Korean translation” ... [ ] ...

**4.3.4.2. Interactive Episodes**

Interactive episodes [IN] were those where a learner responded in some manner to other’s utterance, using such forms as requests, suggestions, or problem noticing.

According to the nature of response including the nature and direction of assistance, the level of involvement was identified as low, medium or high interactive.

Episodes in which there was minimal interaction between learners or no assistance for a request were coded as low interactive episodes [IN/L]. It included episodes where the responses to suggestions or requests for confirmation were limited to a phatic utterance such as ‘yes’, ‘right’, ‘yeah’ and were not followed by any comments.

Furthermore, it included instances where the responses to requests for information were uncertain because the conversation in the requests did not sustain itself or the interlocutor could not provide assistance and where response was limited to an echoic repetition without any comments or suggestion. The following excerpt is coded as a low interactive episode. Chang suggested each proper word for completing sentences seeking for confirmation (line 16) and Mijin simply confirmed with agreement without following by any comments (line 17).

**Excerpt 44: Low Interaction**

- 16 Chang: 이제 남은 보기는 business class, class. (The left examples are ‘business class and class’.) What class would you like? Business class, please. 맞지? (Right?)
- 17 Mijin: Yes.

Medium interactive episodes [IN/M] were those in which there was some involvement by both learners. It included episodes where the assistance was unidirectional from

one learner. For example, episodes where one learner requested information such as the meaning of a word and the other explained it were coded as [IN/M]. In Excerpt 45, Sun asked the meaning of a word and as a response to the request, Jina explained it. Then, Sun accepted the assistance by Jina. The difficulty in this L-LRE was solved by unidirectional assistance by Jina.

**Excerpt 45: Medium interaction**

- 8 Sun: 그리고 이게 뭐야? (and what is it? )  
 9 Jina: Transparent? 이건 “투명한”이란 뜻이에요. (It means “transparent”.)  
 10 Sun: 그래. (Okay.)

Furthermore, the ‘medium’ category included episodes in which requests for confirmation were responded to a confirmation followed by some extra explanation or own opinion. In Excerpt 46, Jimin suggested a sentence to continue a story in English and asked his partner whether it was a correct sentence. In response to the request, Young confirmed it explaining that Jimin had correctly followed the activity instruction.

**Excerpt 46: Medium interaction**

- 10 Jimin: Oh, okay. Ummm ... Why are you travelling to New York? Is it okay?  
 11 Young: Ye. You use one of cards ‘travel’. I think it’s okay.

High interactive episodes [IN/H] were those in which both learners were considerably involved. The episodes showed the active participation of both learners and bi-directional or co-constructed assistance in the decision-making and problem-solving process. It included episodes where one learner elicited correction and the other corrected their own error via elicitation, in that even if the assistance was unidirectional, the learner elicited the other’s participation and led to self-correction.

The following excerpt contains an episode dealing with F-LRE. While performing the second activity, “The different time zones”, June suggested the wrong form of a word (line 18). Rather than correcting it, Hyuk pointed out what was wrong by repeatedly

saying the word (line 19). Via the elicitation, June could suggest the correct form of the word (line 20). Hyuk's assistance led to June's active participation, providing an opportunity for self-correction; and June successfully changed his incorrect expression to the correct one. Thus, their interaction was coded as [IN/H].

**Excerpt 47: High interaction**

- 17 Hyuk: Then, 서울과의 시차는 있나요? 이렇게 이어보자. (Let's continue to 'Is there any time difference?')
- 18 June: 시차? ("time difference: Korean translation") 시차가 영어로 뭐였지? (What is the "time difference: Korean translation" in English?) time different?
- 19 Hyuk: different? ... 형용사잖아. (It's adjective.)
- 20 June: 어. 형용사지 ... (Right. It's an adjective.) 어::: time difference. Right?
- 21 Hyuk: time difference. Right.

As an example of co-construction, Excerpt 48 was coded as [IN/H]. In the L-LRE, June noticed the error in the given text and explained the reason for the error (line 27). Hyuk agreed to June's suggestion and asked him about how to correct the error (line 28). In spite of Huyk's elicitation (line 30), June did not correct the error and Huyk suggested the correct word (line 32). The co-construction process was thus initiated by June's notice of the error and resolved by Huyk's correction.

**Excerpt 48: High interaction**

- 27 June: 음:: 이 "그리고"가 이상한다. 방금 앞에서는 모든 승객이 작성하는데, 이번에는 하나만 작성한다. 이걸 상반된 내용 이잖아. (Um:: This 'moreover' is strange. Just before the sentence, all passengers have to fill in the form, but this time only one form is filled in. This is opposite contents.)
- 28 Hyuk: 그럴지. 그럼 moreover 대신에 머가 오는게 좋을거 같아? (Right. Then which word is proper instead of 'moreover'?)
- 29 June: But?
- 30 Hyuk: 접속사 말고, moreover처럼 부사 (Not a conjunction, but an adverb like 'moreover')
- 31 June: 부:사라. 몰라. 머가 있어? (A:dverb. I don't know. What is it?)
- 32 Hyuk: however라고 =
- 33 June: = 아 however. 그래. 이게 '그러나'란 뜻이 있지. (Right. It has the meaning of "however: Korean translation"). Okay.
- 34 Hyuk: 어. 여기서는 however라고 고치는게 좋을거 같아. (Yes. It's better to change to 'however'.)
- 35 June: Okay.

Furthermore, episodes added or extended to each other's suggestions were coded as [IN/H]. Excerpt 49 illustrated such a process. The idea was initiated by Sun (line 25). After repeating the sentence, Jina suggested adding a word to clarify the meaning of the sentence (line 26). Sun agreed to her partner's suggestion (line 27) and Jina added the additional word repeating the sentence (line 28). The pair collaboratively completed the sentence.

**Excerpt 49: High interaction**

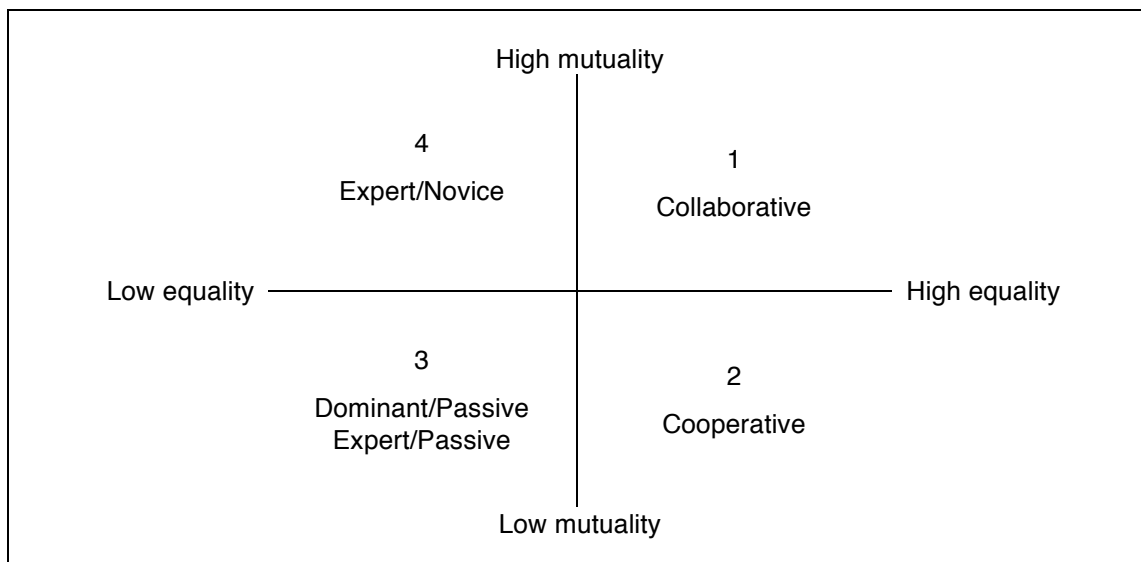
25	Sun:	'Thanks for waiting. ... You are confirmed on flight to ... New York on June the first.' 맞니? (Right?)
26	Jina:	잘 하신거 같은데요. (I think you do well) 'Thanks for waiting. You are confirmed.' 여기에 now를 넣는거 어때요? (How about adding 'now' here?) 'You are now confirmed.'=
27	Sun:	= 그래. 지금 한거니까 now confirmed가 좋겠다. (Right, it's done now so 'now confirmed' is good.)
28	Jina:	'You are now confirmed on flight to New York on June the first.' 긴 문장인데 표현 잘 하셨습니다. (You expressed that very well even if it was a long sentence.)

**4.3.5. Step 5: The Types of Pair Interaction**

Based on an analysis of the features of episodes and the level of engagement, the data were analysed to describe the role relationship of each pair. Following Storch's model of dyadic interaction, which presents four patterns of dyadic interaction characterised by various degree of equality and mutuality, the two indices, for equality and mutuality, were used to distinguish a different role relationship for each pair. As explained regarding Storch's model in Chapter 2, mutuality refers to the level of engagement with each partner's contribution and equality refers to the degree of control or authority over the activity. In this study, according to the level of involvement, coded from non-interactive or low to high interactive, the degree of mutuality was determined. For determining the level of equality, the coded data of the features of episodes were used:

how the pairs approached each activity, who initiated the episodes and who contributed to solve the problems.

Storch (2002a) suggested four patterns of dyadic interaction: collaborative, dominant/dominant, dominant/passive and expert/novice. However, in this study, labels used in my attempt to describe the role relationships did not perfectly match Storch's classifications. Five distinct types of interaction emerged from the process of data analysis and were labelled as *collaborative*, *cooperative*, *dominant/passive*, *expert/novice* and *expert/passive*. These five types could be graphically represented by four quadrants as shown in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1. A model of pair interaction**

Quadrant 1 represents a type of interaction labelled '*collaborative*', in which equality and mutuality are both moderate to high. In a collaborative relationship, the pair tends to work together on most parts of performing an activity. Through negotiations or co-construction about unsolved problems, the problems can be resolved with the agreement of both learners. Furthermore, when one learner requests information or confirmation, the other provides elaborative explanation or gives feedback to the interlocutor's suggestion with confirmation. When suggesting correction to the other,

the learner tends to elicit the partner's self-correction, repeating the error with rising intonation or providing minimal assistance. In the process of engagement with each other, it shows mostly medium to high levels of pair interaction.

Quadrant 2 represents a type of interaction labelled '*cooperative*', where the level of equality is moderate to high but mutuality is moderate to low. Without any superior status in each learner's role, they tend to contribute equally to the activity. However, they do not engage with each other's contributions very actively. Even if they perform a activity together, as Damon and Phelps (1989) explain, it seems that they take sole responsibility for one part of the problem with the activity being subdivided. Thus, in this role relationship, the learners seem to do the activity individually rather than together showing a low to medium level of interaction.

In Storch's pattern, this quadrant is labelled as dominant/dominant in that although both learners contribute the activity, they have unwillingness to fully engage with each other and in their discourse, they do not reach an agreement but frequently show disagreement on a problem. Unlike in Storch's analysis, I have hardly found any unwillingness to work together or disagreement. Rather, pair talk shown as cooperative interaction in this study reflects that learners seem to have sole responsibility to each part of the activity without providing or receiving assistance to each other or suggesting their own opinion on the activity. Therefore, the cooperative nature of interaction is labelled in quadrant 2 in relation to division of labour.

Quadrant 3 represents a moderate to low level of mutuality and equality. This type of interaction was labelled as '*dominant/passive*'. Dominant learners tend to lead the activity by initiating conversation, suggesting their own ideas and solving problems by themselves. The other learner, who seems to be passive, tends to accept their partner's suggestions or solutions without any challenges or contributions. Thus, there is very little negotiation between them and their talk reflects low level of interaction.

In addition, in this quadrant, an '*expert/passive*' relationship is also included, which was not presented in Storch's frame, but identified in Watanabe and Swain's (2007) study. While the role of the passive partner has the same label as that in the relationship of dominant/passive, the role of the passive partner is different in the '*expert/passive*' relationship. The expert learner, who is similar to the one in the expert/novice relationship in quadrant 4, tries to encourage and invite the passive one's participation but the passive peer does not actively engage in the activity and with the expert. Rather, the passive learner tends to simply respond to expert one's request. Therefore, their level of interaction shows low to medium. This is different from the '*dominant/passive*' relationship because the expert learner in the '*expert/passive*' relationship invites their partner to participate in the problem-solving process rather than solving the problem alone like the dominant peer.

Quadrant 4 represents the type of pair interaction labelled '*expert/novice*', in which mutuality is moderate to high but equality is moderate to low. In this type of interaction, although the expert learner seems to lead the activity, their partner is consistently encouraged to participate. With the expert's assistance, the novice learner seems to actively engage in performing the activity. According to active engagement by both learners, the level of pair interaction appears to be medium to high.

It is important to note, as Storch (2002a) has acknowledged, that learners could perform differently according to the type of activity, and multiple types of pair interaction might emerge during a single pair work. Therefore, pair interaction was coded separately for each activity and if learners changed the nature of their interaction during a single activity performance, each type of pair interaction was coded because it was important to explore and understand the nature of pair interaction fully.

Once categories for the type of pair interaction were established, the coding of the data was checked by intercoder-reliability. A second trained coder who was not familiar with



the data was one of my colleagues. After explaining the general aim of the analysis and how to establish the descriptive categories, eight randomly selected transcripts (representing almost 20 per cent of the pair talk data set) were given to the second coder. The reliability of the coding was calculated using simple percentage agreement, i.e. the coding of the two coders was compared. There was 87 per cent agreement, which is considered to be an acceptable level of coding reliability (Neuendorf, 2002).

#### **4.4. Summary**

In order to answer the first research question, namely how learners interact with their partner in language learning activities, this chapter provided a detailed description of how collected pair talk data were analysed and illustrated the analysis with representative excerpts from the data. Using five steps of data analysis, the transcribed data were analysed. In the preliminary steps of data analysis, pair talk data were segmented into types of talk and episodes. The next step was to analyse the talk for the salient features in the segmented data. Then, these features were used to examine the level of learner engagement. Based on the data analysed in these four steps, the five types of pair interaction were identified: *collaborative*, *cooperative*, *dominant/passive*, *expert/passive* and *expert/novice*.

## Chapter 5

### Findings: The Types of Pair Interaction and Salient Features

#### 5.1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to identify whether pair work can positively influence language learning particularly in an EFL class context. Thus, this chapter reports on the findings which address the first subsidiary research question: how do learners interact with their partner in language learning activities? Based on the analysis of pair talk data in the previous chapter, this chapter describes each pair's interactions in seven activities in relation to the type of pair interaction: identified as *collaborative*, *cooperative*, *dominant/passive*, *expert/passive* and *expert/novice*. As mentioned in Section 4.3.5, since learners can interact differently according to the type of activity, each set of pair work for each activity is presented independently. After describing each pair's interaction, the following section will summarise the different types of pair interaction and discuss the related factors that can influence learners' engagement.

#### 5.2. Results for Each Pair

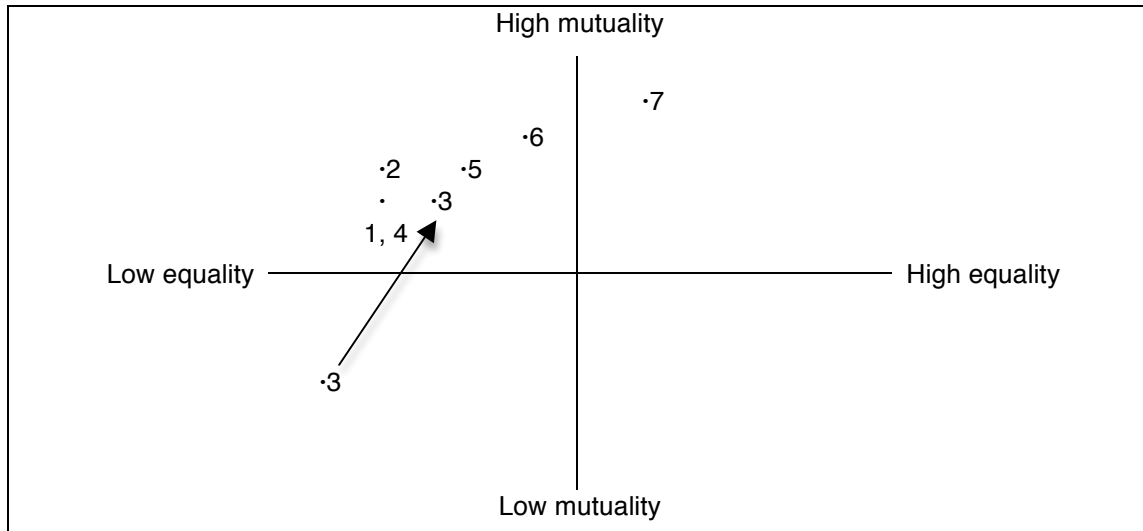
In order to highlight each pair's differences, I present each case independently. As noted in the previous chapter, five types of pair interaction were identified in the pair talk data and the types were distinguished in the terms of equality and mutuality. The different types of pair interaction can be displayed in a diagram made up of two intersecting axes of equality and mutuality as previously shown in Figure 4.1 (Chapter 4). The types for each activity by the same pair were independently plotted on the diagram. The intention to produce the scatter diagram is to show the relative placement

of each pair's talk for each activity. In other words, the diagram shows the different levels of mutuality and equality for each type of pair interaction, according to how they resolved problems or difficulties and how they interacted with each other. The relative placement can indicate whether pair interaction developed or regressed, or whether pair interaction was stable over time or unstable. The placement was based on the method of constant comparison as qualitative analysis, which was across the whole set of pairs and across the activities. The six scatter diagrams for the six pairs will be presented in the following sections with more detailed explanations of the diagrams.

### 5.2.1. Pair 1: Hyuk and June

Figure 5.1 shows that this pair's interaction was displayed dominantly in quadrant 4 and only once in each of quadrant 1 and 3. In particular, the pair showed a movement from *expert/passive* to *expert/novice* relationship in the third activity, which indicated that learners' attitude can change during a single activity performance. Overall, the pair tended to engage in joint problem solving and knowledge building while performing the seven activities. In pair interaction with a collaborative orientation, their role relationship was mainly characterised as *expert/novice* and developed to *collaborative* at the last activity.

In the role relationship of *expert/novice*, when one learner as an expert would instruct the other, it is generally assumed that the expert has more information or competence than the novice. Hyuk seemed to assume the role of an expert, leading June to complete the activities and helping with his difficulties with language. He tends to have more control over information and instructional agenda rather than possessing the authority over his partner, June, who had the role of a novice.



**Figure 5.1. Hyuk and June's interactions in the seven activities**

In the first, second and fourth activities, the pair showed the distinct role relationship of *expert/novice*, led by Hyuk. Excerpt 50 shows the features of the relationship.

According to Hyuk's direction in the activity (line 3), June tried to make a sentence in English (line 4). However, he had a difficulty in choosing a word (line 4). Then, Hyuk acting as the expert, offered elaborate explanations to his partner (line 5). Furthermore, in relation to the incorrect verb form suggested by June (line 6), Hyuk elicited June's self-correction with further explanations (line 7). Hyuk's prompting led to June's success in correcting the verb form (line 8) and forming the correct sentence (line 10).

**Excerpt 50: Pair talk in activity 2**

- 3 Hyuk: 그럼 우선 어디로 여행하세요? 라고 물어 보자. (Then, first of all, do we ask where they are travelling?)
- 4 June: 어. (Yes.) Where:: are you ... 여행하다: 어:: Travel은 명사인데, 어떻게 말해? (How do you say "travel: Korean translation"? 'Travel' is a noun.)
- 5 Hyuk: travel은 동사로도 쓰여. ('Travel' can be used as a verb form.)
- 6 June: 그럼 (Then) Where are you travel?
- 7 Hyuk: Are과 travel을 같이 써? 둘다 동사잖아. 가까운 미래를 물을 때= (Can you use 'are' and 'travel' together? They are both verb forms. When you ask future =)
- 8 June: = are travelling?
- 9 Hyuk: Right.
- 10 June: Where are you travelling?
- 11 Hyuk: 그럴지. (Right.)

What is interesting in this extract is the process of assistance depicted: Hyuk as the expert learner attempted to provide the novice learner, June, with a hint rather than present the correct answer. This process invited the novice to take part in the search for the problem solution. This sort of assistance is described as proleptic and often occurs in instructional situations (Kowal and Swain, 1994). Teachers deliberately do not present correct answers, but give some hints. They expect that learners can figure out the problems by themselves using the hints. In Excerpt 50, Hyuk elicited June to reach a resolution through proleptic assistance, rather than by imposing his view. While performing the three activities, Hyuk frequently provided this kind of assistance to his partner in regard to the target language use, whereas June participated in the activities by asking explicit questions about the language and accepting Hyuk's assistance.

In the third activity, June changed from being a passive learner to a novice during a single activity performance. At the beginning of the activity, he seemed to lie back in his chair and to have no willingness to participate. However, June's attitude was changed owing to Hyuk's consistent invitations, as seen in Excerpt 51. June started the activity with negative comments (line 1) because he felt it was difficult, as shown in the stimulated recall in Excerpt 52. On the other hand, Hyuk seemed to notice his partner's negative attitude and consistently invited June to participate in the activity (line 2, 4, 6), when June responded to Hyuk's invitation without any concern (line 3, 5, 7).

**Excerpt 51: Pair talk in activity 3**

- 1 June: 질문이 3개데:: 근데 질문이 왜 이렇게 길어. 잘 모르겠다. (There are three questions:: then why are the questions so long. I don't understand them.)
- 2 Hyuk: 어디보자. 같이 천천히 해석해 보자. 뭐가 어렵겠어? 우선 notice에 무슨 내용이 있나 보고 같이 해석하면서 해보자. . 'restrictions'이건 "제한"이란 뜻이야. (Let's see. Let's slowly translate them together. It won't be difficult. First, let's look at the contents in 'notice'. 'Restriction' means "restriction: Korean translation".)
- 3 June: 어. (Right.)
- 4 Hyuk: 뭐에 대한 제한인거 같어? (Can you think what kind of restrictions they are?)
- 5 June: 뭐:: 여기 써있는 거겠지. ... (Well:: it may be the things written here. ...) 'liquids, gels, aerosols'

- 6 Hyuk: 그렇지. (Right.) ‘in carry-on bags’ “기내에 들고 탈 수 있는 가방에 있는 liquids, gels, aerosols에 대한 제한들” 이게 이 글의 제목이야. 제목을 보니 대략 무슨 내용인지 알겠지? (“Restrictions on liquids, gels, and aerosols in carry-on bag: Korean translation”. This is the title of this information. After reading the title, do you know roughly the content of this writing?)
- 7 June: 아니. 모르겠는데. 니가 먼저 해석 해봐. (No, I don’t know. Why don’t you translate it?)

**Excerpt 52<sup>4</sup>: SRI**

- 1<sup>5</sup> June When I saw the content, I didn’t know what it was. Ummm honestly I thought I didn’t want to do. ...[ ]...

June’s passive attitude in the activity was verified by his partner. Hyuk recalled how June approached the activity:

**Excerpt 53: SRI**

- 1 Hyuk As soon as we started, June showed a negative attitude. So I was a little apprehensive. It seemed that he would assume the role of an onlooker unlike previous attitudes.

However, June’s passive attitude did not last long. His attitude changed with his partner’s efforts and his increased interest in the activity. He commented how his mind was changed:

**Excerpt 54: SRI**

- 9 June: When I heard Hyuk’s translation, I was wondering how to translate ‘less than’ and I thought it wasn’t difficult as much as I thought.
- R<sup>6</sup>: So did you have in mind that you would like to participate?
- June: Yes, I thought I would like to do together. ...[ ]...
- 17 June: When Hyuk said that we had to do together, I thought I needed to participate. I felt sorry to Hyuk so that I participated in the activity even if I didn’t do well.

After that, June actively engaged in the activity as verified by Excerpt 55. He suggested the answer (line 31) and extended on his utterance (lines 33, 35) following his partner’s elicitation (line 32).

<sup>4</sup> Interview comments were translated from the original language, Korean, to English.

<sup>5</sup> The number of stimulated recall comments is matched with the line of pair talk transcription.

<sup>6</sup> R stands for the researcher.

**Excerpt 55: Pair talk in activity 3**

- 31 June: 음:: “승객들은 100미리 이하(?) 액체를 가진 용기들로 무엇을 할 수 있나?” 어:: 아까 여기 나왔는데. 답은 ... (Um:: “Passengers with less than 100ml of a liquid (?) with containers what can do: Korean translation”. Um:: it was here. The answer is ... ) They can carry the container.
- 32 Hyuk: 그럴지. 근데 container가 어디에 있어야 = (Right, then where is the ‘container’ =)
- 33 June: = Ah, plastic bag
- 34 Hyuk: 그럴지. (Right.)
- 35 June: They can carry the container in a plastic bag.

June showed a changed attitude in his engagement with his partner and contribution to activity completion while doing the third activity, whereas Hyuk consistently assumed a leading role in doing activities. Thus, the equality was enhanced from low to low/medium and the mutuality from low/medium to medium/high.

While performing the first four activities except activity three, the degree of equality and mutuality in their interaction did not change significantly. However, from the fifth activity onwards, there were some noticeable changes in their interaction. June’s contributions to completing the fifth activity, “reconstruction of text”, increased greatly in comparison with the previous activities. June pointed out six errors among nine errors and changed the errors to correct forms with Hyuk. Excerpt 56 shows that June found errors relevant to plural nouns (line 21) and suggested the resolution (line 23).

**Excerpt 56: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 21 June: 어:: 근데, 여기 all passenger이거 이상한데. (Um:: then, here ‘all passenger’ is this strange?)
- 22 Hyuk: 왜? (Why?)
- 23 June: all이 복수니까 passengers가 되어야하는거 아냐? (‘All’ is a plural. So isn’t it ‘passengers’?)
- 24 Hyuk: 그럴지. 복수 passenger에 s가 빠졌네. Okay. 아까도 all passenger 나오지 않았나? (Right, plural. It missed ‘s’ in ‘passenger’. Doesn’t ‘all passenger’ appear before?)
- 25 June: 나왔어. 여기 쥘 위에. (It does. At the beginning.)
- 26 Hyuk: 그럼 이것도 all passengers로 고쳐줘야지. 잘 찾았어. (Right, then let’s change it to ‘all passengers’. Good.)

In Excerpt 57, June discovered the error (line 27) but seemed to find it difficult to correct it himself. Hyuk explained how to change the error (line 30), but June could not correct the error following Hyuk's explanation. Eventually, Hyuk corrected it himself. At the moment of Hyuk's utterance, June immediately repeated it as he knew the word. As seen in June's response in line 33, it seemed that Hyuk's explanation in line 30 was not sufficiently clear for June to come up with the word, 'however'. Webb (2002) suggests that explanations provided by a helper should be sufficiently clear in order to enable the help-receiver to correct their own misconception or misunderstanding.

**Excerpt 57: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 27 June: Okay ... 음: “그리고, 결혼한 커플 ... 18살 이하의 아이들과 함께 여행하는 결혼한 커플은 단지 하나의 양식만 작성한다.” 음:: 이 “그리고”가 이상하다. 방금 앞에서는 모든 승객이 작성하는데, 이번에는 하나만 작성한다. 이견 상반된 내용 이잖아. (Okay ... Um: “and married couple ... travelling together with children under the age of 18 years only complete one form: Korean translation”. Um:: the “and: Korean translation” is odd. Before the sentence, all passengers must complete the form. But now only one form is completed. This conflicts with previous content.)
- 28 Hyuk: 그럴지. 그럼 moreover 대신에 머가 오는게 좋을거 같아? (Right, then how do you think to change “moreover”?)
- 29 June: But?
- 30 Hyuk: 접속사 말고, moreover처럼 부사 (Not a conjunction. An adverb like ‘moreover’)
- 31 June: 부:사라. 몰라. 머가 있어? (Ad:verb. Don't know. What can that be?)
- 32 Hyuk: However =
- 33 June: = 아 however. 그래. 이게 ‘그러나’란 뜻이 있지. (= Ah ‘however.’ Right it means “however: Korean translation”). Okay.
- 34 Hyuk: 어. 여기서는 however라고 고치는게 좋을거 같아. (Yes. It's better to change it to ‘however’.)
- 35 June: Okay.

Hyuk recalled that he did not notice the error until June pointed it out, as seen in Excerpt 58. It shows that an expert learner can benefit from the assistance of a novice, as presented in previous research (e.g., Donate, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2000). Certainly, there are many cases where a more capable learner provides more assistance to a novice partner. However, Ohta (2001) explains that no learner is universally more or less capable than a peer, but that each learner presents an array of strengths and



weaknesses that may be complementary. Thus, even if this pair has the relationship of expert and novice, mutual assistance can be observed, rather than only an expert helping a novice.

**Excerpt 58: SRI**

27 Hyuk I didn't notice the error in this sentence before June said it. After I heard, I noticed it's the opposite meaning from the previous sentence.

With June's increased contributions and participation in activity five, it can be said that the level of equality moved to moderate from low and the level of mutuality became moderate to high.

Examples of other changes in pair interaction were shown in activity six. Before this activity, Hyuk suggested the direction of activities and June agreed to Hyuk's suggestions. However, now, for the first time, June suggested the direction about how to do the activity, as shown in Excerpt 59. Starting with Hyuk's invitation to June to contribute (line 1), June participated in this activity suggesting his idea about the direction of the activity (line 2) and explaining the reasons for his suggestion (line 4). It seems that June intended to test out what he had learned in previous lessons and activities.

**Excerpt 59: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 1 Hyuk: 어떤식으로 story를 만들지? (Which way should we make a story?)
- 2 June: 비행기표 예약하는거 어때? (What about flight ticket reservation?)
- 3 Hyuk: make a reservation을 넣어서? (Do you mean we can use 'make a reservation'?)
- 4 June: 어. 예약할라면 목적지도 있어야 하고 여권번호, 왕복티켓인지 물어야 하잖어. 5개 단어는 충분히 들어갈거 같아. (Yes. In order to reserve, we need to say destination, passport number, whether it is round-trip tickets. I think we can use at least 5 word-cards.)
- 5 Hyuk: 그래. 그렇게 해보자. (Okay, let's do so.)

Based on June's idea about the direction of the activity, they mutually constructed the story and completed the activity. Excerpt 60 shows how both learners were engaged in

pair interaction: June presented his idea for making a story (line 24) and Hyuk continued the next story (line 29).

**Excerpt 60: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 24 June: 근데, 날짜 물어보기 전에 왕복티켓을 원하는지 물어보는거 어때? (By the way, why don't we ask about a round-trip ticket before asking the date of booking?)
- 25 Hyuk: Oh:: good idea 그럼 이 사이에 ... (Then before the question ...) Would you like to book a =
- 26 June: = round-trip ticket
- 27 Hyuk: Okay. Would you like to book a round-trip ticket?
- 28 June: Yes, please.
- 29 Hyuk: 그런 다음 언제 가는지 물어보고 이제는 언제 오는지 물어봐야지. (Then we ask about the date of leaving and now let's ask about the return date.)
- 30 June: 이거 전에 activity에서 한 표현인데: 어:: (This expression was used in one of the previous activities. Um:) What about ... the return date?
- 31 Hyuk: Ah: An open ticket please.
- 32 June: 나도 그 대답 생각 했었는데. (I thought of that answer too.) An open ticket please. 어: 그런 다음에 agent가 확인 해줘야지? 음: (Ah: then does the 'agent' need to confirm? Um:) Let me check for you.

The interesting point is in lines 25 and 26. While Hyuk was saying the sentence in line 25, June suddenly interrupted him and completed the sentence in line 26, even though Hyuk did not show any difficulty in making the sentence. June explained his behaviour, as seen in Excerpt 61. It seems that pair work provided June with an opportunity to test out his knowledge: the expression 'round-trip ticket' was used in activity one and he was not sure about the meaning of it at that time.

**Excerpt 61: SRI**

- 26 June I wanted to use this expression because I've learned it. That's why I interrupted him.

In activity seven, June seemed to feel comfortable in presenting his thoughts. He frequently suggested his ideas and requested help from his partner when he encountered any problems. However, June displayed a changed attitude when approaching some difficulties during the activity. Excerpt 62 shows how he approached the problems. With Hyuk's proleptic assistance with an explanation and elicitation (line

31), June could change the incorrect conjunction to the correct preposition (line 32), a situation that was frequently observed in this pair relationship. However, it was the first time that June solved a problem by himself without receiving any hints or assistance from his partner: June corrected the error of a verb form while repeating his utterance (line 34). Through repeated practice acquired during previous activities, it seems that he learned how to monitor and correct his performance without any help. This kind of experience may build enough confidence for the learner to successfully produce their own utterance and promote self-correction (Ohta, 2001).

**Excerpt 62: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 30 June: Airport ... closed because the earthquake.
- 31 Hyuk: Because를 쓸 때는 뒤에 주어와 동사가 나와야 해. 근데 여기서 earthquake라는 명사만 나왔잖아. 그럼 뭘 써야해? (When we use 'because', it follows with a subject and verb form. But you use the noun, 'earthquake'. Then what can you use?)
- 32 June: 어::: because of(?) 이건가? (Um::: 'because of(?)' Is this correct?)
- 33 Hyuk: Right, because of the earthquake.
- 34 June: Okay. Airport closed no no airport was closed because of the earthquake.
- 35 Hyuk: Right. Airport was closed. Good.
- 36 June: 수동태. (Passive form)
- 37 Huyk: 어. 수동태. (Yes, passive form.) Um: so:: I couldn't go to Japan.

June's engagement in doing the activity became the most active here among the seven activities. He did not show the attitude of a novice or passive learner. In the post-activity interview with respect to their interaction, both learners said that they helped each other. It was the first time that June did not regard his partner as the leader. In previous interviews, he appreciated his partner's leading. In this interview, however, he expressed appreciation for Hyuk's assistance in relation to English expressions, but did not mention about his partner's guidance over the activity, as shown in Excerpt 63. It seems that he recognised his own active participation.

**Excerpt 63: Post-activity interview with June**

I think I participated well with helping each other. Hyuk first suggested an idea and we developed his idea and made a good story. As I told you before, he helped me a lot with English expressions.

Hyuk also mentioned about their interaction in the post-activity interview:

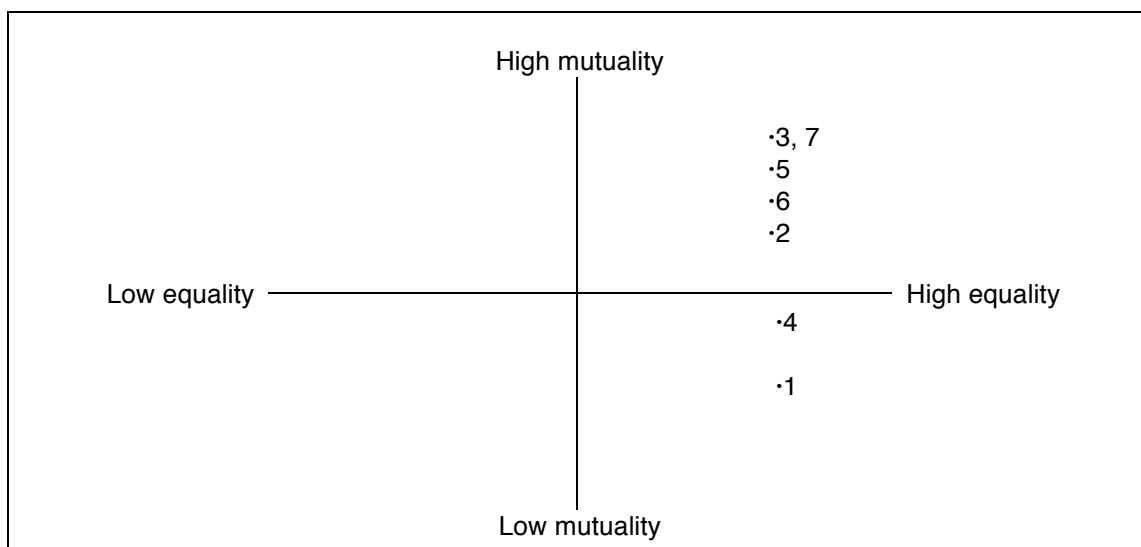
**Excerpt 64: Post-activity interview with Hyuk**

June helped to make the story and I helped to correct his errors. We completed this activity by helping each other. Like June said, at the end of the activity, it was perfect.

Based on these participants' comments, it could be said that their role relationship become collaborative, showing a high level of engagement and fairly similar levels of contributions to the activity. Thus, the interaction of this pair could, at the end, be classified as *collaborative*.

**5.2.2. Pair 2: Min and Jang**

Figure 5.2 shows that this pair displayed a *collaborative type* during most activities, but for the first and fourth activities, the pair showed a *cooperative type*. They showed a very similar level of equality in all of the activities, whereas they displayed varying degrees of mutuality, from low to high.



**Figure 5.2. Min and Jang's interactions in the seven activities**

For the first activity, Min and Jang's pair talk can be described as the type of interaction labelled as *cooperative* in this study. The pair started the first activity by discussing the procedure for doing the activity and briefly exchanged their understanding of the given text. After that, they read the given dialogue with translation into Korean in turn and suggested suitable words in the blanks. In the process of making suggestions, both learners contributed equally to the activity, but did not engage with each other's contributions.

Excerpt 65 shows that the correct words for the blanks were suggested by a series of monologues. Min read the dialogue, adding the correct answer in the blank and explaining the reason that he chose the answer. However the explanation seems self-directed: even though the speech may look communicative, it seems that there is no expectation of a response (line 10). As a response to Min's utterance, Jang's phatic utterance followed. In Jang's turn, he also showed self-directed speech: talking to himself he said that he needed to read the next dialogue before suggesting answers for the blanks (line 11). After Jang's long monologue, Min also merely answered with the phatic utterance, 'yes'. Although Jang asked his partner to confirm his suggestion (line 13), it seems that he did not intend to seek assistance from Min. Rather, it seems to be just a formal request. In response to Jang's request, Min simply confirmed his partner's suggestion without any challenges or comments (line14).

**Excerpt 65: Pair talk in activity 1**

- 10 Min: 'Just my luck. Put me on your::: ... waiting list for Saturday and book me for Sunday, please.' 기다려야하니까 waiting list가 답이지. (Have to wait. So, the answer is 'waiting list'.)
- 11 Jang: Right.  
 어: (Ah:) 'Certainly, sir. What about the::' ... 문장이 너무 짧아서 이걸 다음 문장을 읽 봐야 알겠다. 건너 뛰고: (This sentence is too short so that I can understand after reading next sentence. Skip it:) 'Do you have a:: in mind or do you want an::' ... 음:: 대답이 'open ticket, please'인걸 보니 'do you want an open ticket'이겠다. (Um:: the answer is 'open ticket, please' so it is 'do you want an open ticket'.)
- 12 Min: 어. (Yes.)

- 13 Jang: 앞에는 ‘fixed date in mind’일거 같고:: 그 앞에는: ... 어: (The first blank might be ‘fixed date in mind’ and before the blank: Ah:) ‘What about the return date?’ Right?
- 14 Min: Yeah.

Even though this pair started this activity by discussing how to approach it and equally contributed to complete it, they seemed not to intend to discuss the solution of the problem by providing and receiving any assistance. Thus, the features of this pair talk can be classified as *cooperative interaction*.

In the activity four “jumbled dialogues”, it is interesting in relation to activity approach strategy that this pair decided to start it separately: after reading the given text individually, they came back to being a pair by exchanging information through discussion and feedback. To explain why, both learners said that the activity seemed to be complicated and it would be better strategy to read and think about the text alone before beginning to sequence the jumbled sentences together:

**Excerpt 66: SRI**

- 3 Min: Um: it looks complicated, but I became interested in this activity because I thought I could make it. So, at first, I wanted to review the whole content by myself. Then I would like to find answers with Jang so that I suggested doing so.
- R: At first, you wanted to grasp the meaning of content by yourself.
- Min: Yes.

**Excerpt 67: SRI**

- 3 Jang: This time I liked the idea of reading the content individually before working together. The sentences looked difficult and if we read them individually, I thought it would be better for understanding them.
- R: Was it difficult to work together in order to understand the content?
- Jang: No. Um:: if I thought about the content in advance and then we worked together, I thought it would be easy to find answers.

Their way of approaching the activity seems to be the feature of *cooperative type*. After reading the activity individually, they worked together to sequence the jumbled dialogues, exchanging their understanding about the given text as seen in Excerpt 68.

**Excerpt 68: Pair talk in activity 4**

- 7 Min: 어떤거 같아? (What do you think?)
- 8 Jang: 하난 떨어져 앉게 됐으니 같이 앉을 자리를 물어보는거 같고 = (I think one dialogue is about asking to sit together because their seats are separated = )
- 9 Min: = 다른 건 창가쪽 좌석으로 옮겨 달라는 거 같아. (= I think the other is about asking to change to a window seat.)
- 10 Jang: 나도 그렇게 파악했어. (I think so.)
- 11 Min: 내용이 파악되니까 답 찾는데 어려움은 없을 거 같다. (We've finished understanding the content, so that it won't be difficult to find answers.)

After talking about their comprehension, they rarely invited each other to join in the decision-making process. As shown in Excerpt 69, when Min suggested the sequence of the dialogue (line 17), Jang simply agreed to the suggestions and went on to suggest the next sequence (line 18). In response to Jang's suggestions, Min also accepted the idea without adding any comments and continued his turn (line 19).

**Excerpt 69: Pair talk in activity 4**

- 17 Min: 9번은:: 바로 다음에 오는게 2번이겠다. 창가자리가 다 찾다고 하는거. (Number nine is:: followed by number two. It's about asking for a window seat.)
- 18 Jang: Yes. then ... 다음에 확실한건 1번 다음에 10번이 온다는거. (I'm sure that number ten is coming after number one.)
- 19 Min: 그치. (Right.) 그 다음에 (The next is) would that be all right, sir? 괜찮은지 묻고 대답이(Ask if it would be fine and the answer is) Yes, that'll be fine. 7번 1번 10번 3번 5번. 맞지? (Number seven, one, ten, three, and five, right?)
- 20 Jang: Yes, 하난 해결했고. (One dialogue is completed.)

The fourth activity was started individually and ended up with cooperative work. Both learners contributed to the activity at a similar level, but they hardly invited their partner to join in the process of the problem solving and each resolved the problem individually. Thus, this pair performed the activity using the type of relationship termed *cooperative*, which were relatively high on equality, but moderate to low on mutuality.

Except for the two activities described above, this pair displayed the features of *collaborative* interaction: equality was stable at a high level, whereas mutuality varied

from moderate to high. In the *collaborative type* of peer interaction, this pair employed a range of problem-solving processes.

While performing the third activity, “information”, the pair frequently shared their understanding of the text and suggested the answers to the given questions via mutual assistance and negotiation. For example, Excerpt 70 illustrates the process of discussion in order to reach an acceptable agreement. When Jang suggested an answer for the second question, Min sought his partner’s confirmation in order to add more detailed information (line 17). In response to the confirmation request, Jang offered an explanation and justification in order to convince Min, rather than imposing his own view (line 18). Min accepted his partner’s suggestion because he could understand it.

**Excerpt 70: Pair talk in activity 3**

- 16 Jang: 2번은:: (Number two is:: ) less than 100ml and the answer is:: they can carry them in a plastic bag.
- 17 Min: 근데 ‘a one-liter, transparent, re-sealable plastic bag’이라고 상세히 표현 안해도 되나? (By the way, is it okay not to explain in detail such as ‘a one-liter, transparent, re-sealable plastic bag’?)
- 18 Jang: 결국 그 말들이 다 plastic bag을 수식하잖어. 그렇게 길게 답 안해도 괜찮을 거 같은데. (The expressions eventually refer to the ‘plastic bag’. I think it would be fine even if we don’t say such a long answer.)
- 19 Min: 음:: 그럴구나. 수식받는 말이 plastic bag이니깐 괜찮겠다. (Um:: Right. It would be fine because the referred word is the ‘plastic bag’.) Okay.

In the process of performing the fifth activity, they consistently invited each other to participate and mutually solved the problems. Excerpt 71 shows how the reconstruction of text was co-constructed by this pair through a series of dialogue. When the learners noticed the problem, they discussed the use of the correct preposition (lines 15-18), but they were struggling to choose the preposition. To solve the problem, Jang suggested using a dictionary (line 18). Their solution is likely to build and expand their lexis in the process of co-construction.



**Excerpt 71: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 15 Min: 근데 ... “특히”라는 의미로 ‘on particular’가 맞아? (Then ... is ‘on particular’ right as the meaning of “in particular: Korean translation”?)
- 16 Jang: 음:: 이거 좀 헷갈리는데. 뭐지? (Um:: it’s a bit confusing. What is it?) On? In?
- 17 Min: in 아니야? (Isn’t it ‘in’?)
- 18 Jang: 음 ... 그런거 같긴 한데 확신은 없어. 사전 찾아볼까? (Um ... I think so, but I’m not sure. Shall we look into a dictionary?)
- 19 Min: 그러자. In이 맞을거 같은데 나도 100% 확신이 없다. (Let’s do it. I’m not sure 100 per cent even if I think ‘in’ would be right.)
- 20 Jang: Particular를 찾아 보자. (Let’s find ‘particular’.)
- 21 Min: Okay.
- 22 Jang: 어:: ‘in particular’다. On particular라는 말은 없어. (Ah:: it’s ‘in particular’. There isn’t ‘on particular’.) ‘in particular’ ... it means especially.
- 23 Min: Okay, in particular.

Activity six asked learners to make a story using some of the presented cards. The pair decided the direction of the activity by exchanging their ideas in detail, and according to the topic discussed, they constructed a conversation in English. As seen in the interactive conversation in Excerpt 72, they helped each other consolidate their previous knowledge using expressions that they had learned in earlier lessons and activities.

**Excerpt 72: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 14 Jang: What’s the purpose of your visit?
- 15 Min: Ummm ... Travelling before going to New York.
- 16 Jang: I see. How long: are you going to:: stay in England?
- 17 Min: About 3 days.
- 18 Jang: Then ... are you going to New York?
- 19 Min: Yes, I’m going to New York for studying.

Jang recalled this activity was a good chance to review the previous lessons and Min regarded it as practice in English conversation. They collaboratively completed the activity, making the dialogue in English.

In the last activity, “adding a sentence”, their pair talk shows many features of *collaborative interaction*. When the pair was talking about the activity direction, Jang

suggested the first sentence related to the topic of “holiday” and Min added to the next sentence suggesting how to make a story. They tried to construct the story in English as they had done in the previous activity. Unlike activity six, however, it seemed that they not only consolidated their current knowledge but also built in new knowledge through collaborative dialogue with the highest mutuality and equality among the seven activities.

In Excerpt 73, the pair talk displays how they solved a problem with pronunciation and spelling. When Min asked how to express ‘the Champs Elysees’ in English, Jang, not sure how to say and write it in English, suggested using a dictionary (line 12). When searching in the dictionary, both learners seemed to be confused because the spelling related to French. However, in the problem-solving process, they could clearly understand the pronunciation and spelling of the words.

**Excerpt 73: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 11 Min: Umm next day, the ladies went shopping at 샹젤리제. 샹제리제는 영어로 어떻게 표현해? (How to say the Champs Elysees in English?)
- 12 Jang: 똑같이 샹젤리제 아냐? 잘 모르겠어. 사전 찾아보자. ... 샹젤리제 ... 이상하네. (Isn't it the same? I don't know. Let's look it up in the dictionary. ... the Champs Elysees ... It's odd.)
- 13 Min: 왜? (Why?)
- 14 Jang: 스펠링이 내가 생각한 거랑 전혀 달라서. (The spelling is totally different from what I thought.)
- 15 Min: 뭔데? (What is it?)
- 16 Jang: 봐봐 (Look)
- 17 Min: 완전 예상 밖인데. 발음기호는? (It's totally unexpected. What about phonetic symbols?)
- 18 Jang: 우리가 말하는 샹젤리제야. (It's the same pronunciation that we say in Korean.)
- 19 Min: 음:: 발음이랑 스펠링이 매치가 안되네. (Um:: The pronunciation doesn't match with the spelling.) The ladies went shopping in the Champs Elysees.

Excerpt 74 illustrates how they resolved the pair's disagreement over the grammatical choice. In line 36, Min did not agree to Jang's suggestion. He pointed out the past progressive tense via other-repetition rather than imposing his views. As Ohta (2001)

mentions, the repetition of an erroneous utterance could provide Jang with an opportunity to reflect on and work to repair his own utterance. Jang explained why he chose the tense form and, after a few seconds, requested a confirmation of his other suggestion (line 37). In response to Jang's request, Min agreed to the suggestion with an elaborative explanation (line 38). After saying the sentence but changing the verb form to past tense, Jang accepted the resolution (line 39). The excerpt shows that the pair tried to resolve their disagreement by offering explanations and justifications in order to support their own view and persuade their partner.

**Excerpt 74: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 35 Jang: On on on the way home, I was:: thinking about my next holiday.  
 36 Min: Was thinking? 갑자기 과거진행형? (Suddenly past progressive?)  
 37 Jang: 어:: 돌아오는 길에 생각하고 있었다라는 의미인데 ... 단순과거형인가? (Ah:: I mean I was thinking on the way home ... Is this simple past?)  
 38 Min: 그냥 생각했다라는 의미로 thought을 쓰는게 맞지않나? 난 그런거 같은데. (As the meaning of simply thought, isn't it correct to use 'thought'? I think so.)  
 39 Jang: 음:: 그래? (Um:: Is that so?) I thought about my next holiday. 음:: 그런거 같다. (Um:: It seems right.) 과거형으로 하는게 좋을 거 같다. (It's better to use simple past.) Okay. I thought 결정. (Decided to say 'I thought'.)

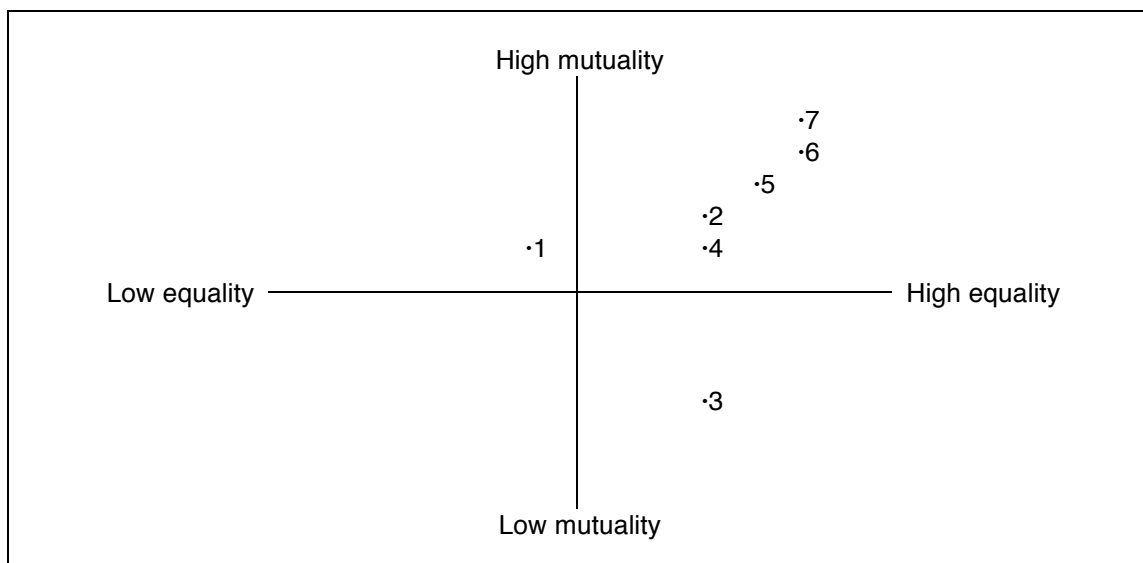
Excerpt 75 illustrates the pair talk including the repetition. In line 34, Min repeated some part of Jang's utterance in a relatively low voice without any requests and then continued to make the next story. In line 41, Jang also repeated some part of Min's utterance adding a compliment. It seems that both learners made the expressions their own through other-repetition. DiCamilla and Anton (1997) propose that other-repetition may facilitate acquisition of new forms as well as consolidate structures that have already been learned. Min recalled the moment he repeated Jang's utterance: he could understand the expression when he heard it but rarely used it because of infrequent exposure to it. Thus, other-repetition may provide an opportunity for learners to improve and enhance their own vocabulary.

**Excerpt 75: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 33 Jang: At night we:: boarded a small ship in the: Seine River.  
 34 Min: Board a ship (with low voice). It was my first experience.  
 ...  
 40 Min: We spent really a great time in Paris. Sometimes I miss the last holiday.  
 41 Jang: 마무리 잘했는데 (wrap up well). Miss the last holiday. Good good.

**5.2.3. Pair 3: Mia and Sung**

Figure 5.3 shows that the interactions between Mia and Sung were diverse while performing the seven activities. The pair interactions were found mostly in quadrant 1 as being of a *collaborative type*, but different types of pair interaction, such as *expert/novice* and *cooperative*, were also discovered.



**Figure 5.3. Mia and Sung's interactions in the seven activities**

In the activity one, Mia and Sung displayed an *expert/novice relationship*. Mia seemed to lead the performance when suggesting how to approach the activity. When Mia started the activity, she did not explain how to approach the activity in detail. Rather, she simply said to match the given words with the blanks in the given dialogue. Her utterance seemed not to be clear for Sung. In Excerpt 76, Mia suggested suitable words for the blanks, such as round-trip and open seats, reading the sentence in the

given dialogue (line 10), but she did not explain why she chose the words. Sung seemed not to follow her. He asked to wait so he could think about the answer. After taking his time, he continued to read the next sentence, in which there was no blank to fill in (line 11). Then, Mia suggested a different procedure for doing the activity because she noticed her partner's difficulty in following (line 12). With a different activity procedure, they could continue the activity.

**Excerpt 76: Pair talk in activity 1**

- 10 Mia: 'I'd like to book a' umm 'round-trip ticket to London. Please see if you have any ... open seats for this Saturday.'
- 11 Sung: 잠깐만 (Wait) ... okay. 'I'm sorry, sir. All seats are booked up for the Saturday, but we have seats available for Sunday.'
- 12 Mia: 해석도 같이 할까? (Shall we translate them together?)
- 13 Sung: 그래. 난 니가 바로 답을 넣어서 문장을 읽으니깐:: 해석을 먼저하고 같이 답찾자. (Yes. Because you read the sentence and filled in the answer:: : Let's translate them first and find the answer together.)
- 14 Mia: Okay.

Even if Sung did not actively engage in deciding the activity direction and merely followed his partners' suggestions, he actively co-constructed to solve the problem as seen in Excerpt 77. In line 24, Mia explained how to find the suitable word for the blank in the sentence translated by Sung and then Sung suggested the suitable expression, requesting confirmation from Mia. Agreeing, Mia read the sentence adding the missing expression (line 26). Their co-construction shows that both learners actively engaged with each other: co-construction can occur when an interlocutor chimes in to provide a continuation of what their partner has said (Ohta, 2001).

**Excerpt 77: Pair talk in activity 1**

- 23 Sung: “그러면 나를 토요일에 머머에 넣어주세요. 그리고 나를 일요일로 예약해 주세요.” (“Put me on your blank for Saturday and book me for Sunday, please: Korean translation”)
- 24 Mia: 토요일은 예약이 다 찾는데 넣어달라고 하는거 보니깐 = (Saturday is fully booked but asking to reserve =)
- 25 Sung: = ‘waiting list’ 맞지? (Is ‘waiting list’ correct?)
- 26 Mia: I think so. ‘put me on your waiting list for Saturday.’

27 Sung: Right.

Even if Sung had engaged in the problem-solving processes at a similar level to Mia, he did not involve himself in the decision about how to approach the activity. Mia decided the direction of the activity and Sung merely accepted her suggestions. Thus, the type of their interaction is found in quadrant 4, an *expert/novice relationship*.

In the third activity, the pair talk illustrates the features of a *cooperative relationship*.

They tended to contribute at a similar level to the activity but rarely engaged with each other's contribution. After discussing the activity direction, the pair hardly discussed how to solve the problems. It seems that each took sole responsibility for one part of the problem. Excerpt 78 illustrates this feature. In the process of answering three questions relating to the given text, they merely suggested each answer without providing any explanations or seeking confirmation. In response to a suggested answer, the partner simply agreed to the suggestions (lines 11 and 13) or did not become involved at all (line 11).

**Excerpt 78: Pair talk in activity 3**

- 9 Mia: 1번. (number one) “승객들은 100미리 이상의 액체를 담은 용기들로 무엇을 해야합니까?” (“What should passengers do with containers with more than 100 ml of a liquid?: Korean translation”)
- 10 Sung: Check the container in their luggage.
- 11 Mia: Right.  
Question two, less than 100ml of a liquid. The answer is ‘passengers must carry the container in a plastic bag’.
- 12 Sung: “승객들은 비행기에 휴대할 수 있습니까 100미리 보다 큰 무슨 아이템들을” (“What items bigger than 100ml can people carry on flights?: Korean translation”) 마지막에 나온 (It's the last part.) ‘medications and baby foods for use during the flight’.
- 13 Mia: Yes, good.

Except for activities one and three above, pair talks on five activities were identified as a *collaborative type* of pair interaction even if the level of mutuality and equality was not the same.

In the second activity, pair talk revealed how to assist when the peer interlocutor was struggling as seen in Excerpts 79 and 80. In Excerpt 79, Sung was struggling to complete the sentence. After taking time to think about the problem, he asked help from his partner (line 14). Mia assisted her partner by providing explanations and Sung could complete the sentence with Mia's assistance.

**Excerpt 79: Pair talk in activity 2**

- 14 Sung: Then, What's the time difference between:: ... 여기랑 거기랑을 뭐라 말하지?  
(How can I say here and there?)
- 15 Mia: 음: 그냥 here and there 쓰면 될거 같은데. (Um: I think it's just 'here and there'.)
- 16 Sung: 아 그렇구나 (Ah right.) between here and there?
- 17 Mia: I think so.

In Excerpt 80, Mia was struggling with her preposition use. With Sung's assistance, she could complete the sentence. By assisting each other, this pair could complete the second activity.

**Excerpt 80: Pair talk in activity 2**

- 25 Mia: 4시간 시차. (Four hours time difference) Seoul is four hours ahead: ... of(?)  
of가 들어가나? (Should I add to 'of'?)
- 26 Sung: Yeah. Ahead of, behind without of.
- 27 Mia: Okay, then, Seoul is four hours ahead of Mexico.

Their approach to the fourth activity was very similar to the process for the activity three, translating the given text alternately and then finding out the answer. However, unlike in activity three, in which the problems were solved individually, each tried to provide the explanations to involve the other to solve the problem.

Excerpt 81 shows the pair discussion to find out the sequence of two jumbled dialogues. Mia asked Sung's opinion about the first sentence of each dialogue (line 14). Sung did not merely suggest his idea but asked his partner to confirm his suggestion (line 15). At Sung's invitation, Mia agreed to his idea by providing her understanding of each dialogue (lines 16 and 18).

**Excerpt 81: Pair talk in activity 4**

- 14 Mia: 몇번이 쟈 먼저 시작되는 부분일 거 같아? (Which number should be first?)
- 15 Sung: 'Excuse me'로 시작하는 7번이랑 9번 아닐까? (Isn't it number seven and nine which start with 'excuse me'?)
- 16 Mia: 그럴겠지. 7번으로 시작하는 dialogues는 떨어져 앉게 되는 자리를 같이 앉게 해달라는 요구 같고 = (Right. The dialogue starting with number seven seems to ask seats together =)
- 17 Sung: = 어. 1번이 그런 요구야. (Yes. Number one is such a request.)
- 18 Mia: 9번으로 시작되는 dialogue는 창가쪽 자리를 요구하는거 같다. (The dialogue starting with number nine seems to ask about a window seat.)

Even if interactive episodes in this pair work did not display a high level of involvement but one closer to medium level, the pair tried to invite each other to join in the process of activity direction and in the problem-solving process. Thus, with moderate mutuality and moderate to high equality, this pair talk was of the *collaborative type*.

In the activity five, "reconstruction of text", this pair's engagement with each other was relatively more active than previously, so this pair work was identified as being *collaborative type* with moderate to high equality and mutuality. The pair seemed to prompt each other and pool knowledge via dialogic interaction.

Excerpt 82 illustrates evidence of co-constructive assistance through collaborative dialogue. This activity asked the learners to reconstruct the given text. When Sung translated the given text, he noticed the verb form 'complete' did not need to be changed in this sentence (line 26). Then, Mia noticed the oddity in the adverb (line 27). After repeating the adverb, Sung took his time to think about it and noticed the incorrect meaning in the context (line 28). Accepting Sung's suggestion, Mia requested her partner's confirmation for the use of 'however' (line 29). By repeating Mia's utterance again, he agreed to her suggestion (line 30). Recalling the moment (Excerpts 83 and 84) revealed that both learners had not noticed the error at first, but they came to notice it via dialogic interaction. Ultimately, through verbalising their thoughts, they found the



solution. As Ohta (2001) mentions, these learners could build competence via co-construction.

**Excerpt 82: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 26 Sung: 음: (Um:) “그리고, 결혼한 커플은:: 18살 이하의 아이들과 함께 여행하는 결혼한 커플은 ... 하나의 양식만 작성한다.” (“Moreover, married couple travelling together with children under the age of 18 years only complete one form: Korean translation”) 또 complete가 나왔지만:: 여기선 고칠게 없네. Complete가 맞지? (Again, there is ‘complete’, but:: there is nothing to change. Is ‘complete’ correct?)
- 27 Mia: 어:: 그렇지. 주어가 사람이니까 능동이지. 그냥 complete. 근데, moreover가 좀 이상하지 않아? (Yes:: Right. The subject is a person so that it’s an active form. Just ‘complete’. Then, isn’t ‘moreover’ odd?)
- 28 Sung: Moreover? ... 음:: 의미가 앞문장이랑 다른데:: “그러나”라고 써야지 않아? (Um::: the meaning is different from the previous sentence:: shouldn’t we use “however: Korean translation”?)
- 29 Mia: However라고 써야겠지? (Should we write ‘however’?)
- 30 Sung: However? ... 그치. However에 그러나라는 뜻이 있지. 어. (Right. ‘However’ includes the meaning of opposite.) However. ...

**Excerpt 83: SRI**

- 28 Sung I didn’t know ‘moreover’ was wrong. By the way, on re-reading the sentence connecting with the previous one, I noticed the meaning is strange. ...[ ] ...

**Excerpt 84: SRI**

- 26 Mia When I saw the sentence, I thought ‘complete’ was wrong again. However, after listening to the translation by Sung, I knew the word was used correctly. At the time I didn’t notice what was wrong.
- 27 Mia When saying to Sung, I noticed ‘moreover’ was wrong. I was thinking which one was incorrect if ‘complete’ was used correctly and noticed the connection between two sentences was odd.
- 29 Mia After discussing with Sung, I thought it was correct to change to ‘however’.

In activity six, “making a story”, at first this pair discussed how to construct the story. In the process, Mia disagreed with Sung’s idea, but they came to an agreement adding explanations and ideas. After deciding the direction of the activity, they tried to make a conversation in English in order to construct the story. In the meantime, the learners worked collaboratively assisting each other to solve the problems.

Excerpt 85 shows how Sung and Mia solved the grammar-related problem. Sung had a difficulty expressing his idea in English and asked Mia about it (line 20). In response to the question, Mia produced the sentence in English (line 21). However, Sung did not understand the use of ‘must have had’ and suggested another expression (line 22). Challenged, Mia elaborately explained why her suggestion should be accepted (line 23). As a means of agreeing to the suggestion, Sung expressed his understanding of the explanation (line 24). Both learners recalled that they came to clearly understand the meanings of the two expressions owing to Sung’s other-suggestion (Excerpt 86 and 87). Webb (2002) says that explainers can be encouraged to clarify and reorganise material to make it understandable to others in the process of formulating explanations, and receivers can correct their own misconceptions and strengthen connections between new information and previous knowledge in the process of receiving the explanations. Thus, the act of providing and receiving the explanation may be beneficial of both learners.

**Excerpt 85: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 20 Sung: Wow. Umm ... ‘너 정말 좋은 시간을 보냈겠구나’라고 표현하고 싶은데, 어떻게 하지? (I would like to say “you must have had a great time: Korean translation”. How do you say it?)
- 21 Mia: Um ... you must must ... have had a great time.
- 22 Sung: must have had(?) 그냥 you had a great time이라고 하면 틀려? (If you just say ‘you had a great time’, is this wrong?)
- 23 Mia: 어:: 내가 알기로는 must have plus p.p.의 의미가 “과거에 뭐뭐 했음이 틀림없다”라는 뜻이거든, 그러니까 여기서 you must have had a great time이라고 해야 할거야. ... [ ] ...  
(Ah:: As far as I know, the meaning of ‘must have plus p.p.’ is to indicate that you believe that something was happening in the past. So, you need to use ‘you must have had a great time’.)
- 24 Sung: 어. 그래서 you must have had a great time이라고 하는구나. (Right. So I can say that ‘you must have had a great time’ Okay. )
- 25 Mia: Good.

**Excerpt 86: SRI**

- 23 Mia When I heard Sung’s question, I wondered whether I was wrong. By verbalising the meaning of ‘must have p.p’, I thought it was right. While explaining it, I could organise my thoughts.

**Excerpt 87: SRI**

23 Sung At first, I didn't understand why she used 'must have had', but Mia explained it well. After listening to it, I could know the meaning.

In the last activity, “adding a sentence”, the pair talk displayed the highest equality and mutuality among the seven activities. When they started the activity, they discussed the story they would make and then tried to continue the story in English as they had done in the previous activity. When they had some trouble expressing their idea in English, the partner actively involved in solving the problem or they mutually helped to find the solution. Excerpt 88 shows evidence of co-construction through dialogic interaction.

When Mia tried to continue the story, she was struggling to express what she intended to say (line 19), but Sung could not assist to resolve the problem. As a solution, Sung suggested using a dictionary. The problem was solved by finding the word in the dictionary and Mia could make the intended sentence using the word (line 23).

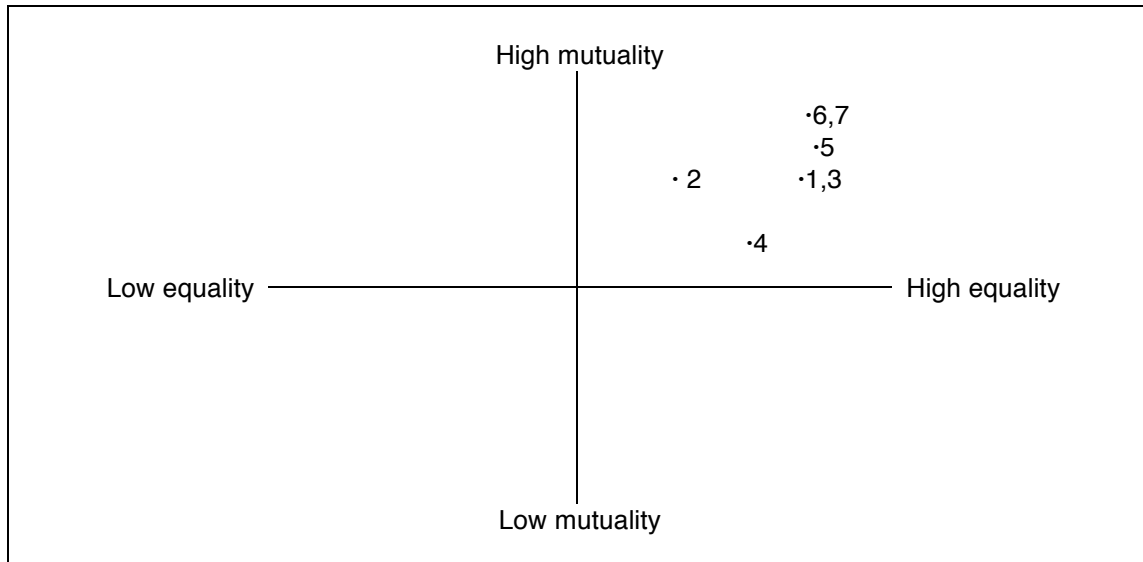
However, the sentence made by Mia had an error relating to the omission of an article. Sung noticed the omission. He provided an opportunity for his partner to consider the utterance and self-correct, rather than saying the correct form (line 24). Eventually, with Sung's assistance Mia was able to add the article.

**Excerpt 88: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 19 Mia: It was very ... ummm ... “기억에 남을 만한” 이란 말을 어떻게 표현하지? (How can you say “memorable: Korean translation”?) Memory?
- 20 Sung: 음:: ... 잘 모르겠네. 사전 찾아볼까? (Um: ... I don't know. Shall we look into a dictionary?)
- 21 Mia: 어. “기억”을 찾아봐. (Yes. Look into “memory: Korean translation”.)
- 22 Sung: 음:: ... 여기 memorable (Um:: ... here ‘memorable’)
- 23 Mia: 아, memorable이라 말이 있구나. (Ah, it is ‘memorable’.) Okay, memorable. 음 ... 그럼, it was very memorable sight.
- 24 Sung: 어 ... 근데, sight가 단수잖아. 그러면 관사가 필요 하지 않아? (Ah ... by the way, ‘sight’ is singular. Then doesn't it need an article?)
- 25 Mia: 관사? 아, 그러네. (Article? Ah, right.) It was a very memorable sight. Memorable에 신경을 쓰다보니 관사를 빼먹었네. (I was thinking about ‘memorable’ so that I missed the article.) Okay.

### 5.2.4. Pair 4: Young and Jimin

As seen in Figure 5.4, Young and Jimin displayed a *collaborative type* of pair interaction in all seven activities. Although there was some movement within the quadrant 1, the type of interaction was fairly stable to *collaborative*.



**Figure 5.4. Young and Jimin's interactions in the seven activities**

What is most interesting about this pair is their frequent use of the target language, English: they read all texts written in English and their communication was mainly made in English. In addition to the activity instructions on how to perform the activities given by the lecturer, the learners set their own shared goal of what they would like to achieve, which was to practice speaking English together in class. With this goal, they tended to talk to each other in English while performing the activities. For them, activity performance meant not only solving problems as instructed but also providing an opportunity to practice speaking - their shared goal.

Both learners contributed to complete most activities at a very similar level except for activities two and four. While performing activity two, Young slightly led the pair work when suggesting his idea about how to make the dialogue related to the different time zones: his idea was about small talk including the time difference. Furthermore, he led

the conversation by asking questions of his partner. Excerpt 89 shows how Young led the dialogue. Both learners spoke in English to produce the dialogue: Young asked Jimin about the imaginary situation (lines 17 and 19) and Jimin answered the questions (lines 18 and 20). Young tried to elicit more conversation (line 19), but as recalled in Excerpt 90, Jimin seemed to expect a question about the time difference rather than a new question. Young's recall implies that he wanted to continue speaking in English (Excerpt 91). As Philp et al. (2014) suggest, providing language practice opportunities that promote fluency can be one of the advantages of peer interaction, and Young seems to regard pair work as an opportunity for further language use.

**Excerpt 89: Pair talk in activity 2**

- 17 Young: Why did you go there?  
 18 Jimin: Um? Uh:: On vacation, I, I went there with my friend!  
 19 Young: How was it?  
 20 Jimin: Again? Okay. Uh: It was:: it was good, not bad.

**Excerpt 90: SRI**

- 20 R: Why did you say 'again' then?  
 Jimin: Ah: I expected the question and answer about time difference, but Young continued to make a story. Of course, I like to practice speaking English with asking and answering. I didn't dislike it, but:: I don't know. Maybe, it was different from the question that I expected so that I said 'again' in confusion.

**Excerpt 91: SRI**

- 20 Young: I wanted to continue the conversation because I like to speak in English, but, Jimin said 'again?' Maybe he didn't so. (laugh) So, I thought it was time to make a question related to 'time difference'.

In the activity four, in comparison with the activity two, equality of both learners increased, but mutuality decreased to moderate. In the process of sequencing the jumbled dialogues, they tended to engage more loosely with each other. The interesting thing in this pair talk was Young's elicitation of a related word, as seen in Excerpt 92. When Jimin read and translated the sentence including the words, 'window seats', Young suddenly asked how to say an 'aisle seat' in English, which was a word

related to window seat and learned during the lesson (line 4). Jimin answered, seeking confirmation (line 5). Then Young asked for the spelling of the word and with Young's assistance Jimin came up with the correct spelling (lines 8 to 12). This activity did not ask the learners to think about extra vocabulary. However, Young brought added vocabulary into their pair work.

**Excerpt 92: Pair talk in activity 4**

- 4 Young: 그럼 복도자린? (Then, aisle seat?)  
 5 Jimin: [aɪ] [si:t]? 발음 맞아? (Is this pronunciation correct?)  
 6 Young: [aɪ] [si:t] right.  
 7 Jimin: 이 단어 발음이 늘 헷갈려. (The pronunciation of this word is always confusing.)  
 8 Young: 그럼 스펠링은? (Then what is the spelling?)  
 9 Jimin: Um:: a-i-l-e  
 10 Young: a-i-l-e?  
 11 Jimin: 아난데 s가 들어가는데 s가 묵음인데 ... 아, a-i-s-l-e [aɪ] 맞지? (No. It has 's' and 's' is silent syllable... Ah, a-i-s-l-e [aɪ] right?)  
 12 Young: Right. a-i-s-l-e

Excerpt 93 illustrates Young's intention to ask about the words, 'aisle seat' and the following excerpt shows how Jimin reacted to his partner's sudden question: even if he did not expect the question, it was a good opportunity to review the pronunciation and spelling of the word.

**Excerpt 93: SRI**

- 4 R: Could you explain why you asked the word?  
 Young: It flashed across my mind. Window seats and aisle seats are used in the same situation. And the pronunciation of the word includes the silent syllable. So, the spelling makes me confused and in order to check it for myself, I asked to Jimin.

**Excerpt 94: SRI**

- 11 Jimin: Here, aisle seat. Even if I have learned it in the lesson, the pronunciation and spelling of the word is confusing. I didn't expect Young to ask me about the word because it didn't come in this text. But, he asked it and it was a good chance to think about the word again. I always confuse the spelling and pronunciation.

It seems that both learners' vocabulary was consolidated via dialogic interaction, starting from Young's elicitation of the vocabulary.

Except for activities two and four, Young and Jimin were equally involved in all aspects of activity completion, but activity engagement differed slightly from a moderate to a high level. The following excerpts will illustrate some interesting points of *collaborative pair interaction*.

Excerpt 95 displays how learners expand their vocabulary. After checking the words in the text provided, Jimin asked his partner for the opposite of 'round-trip ticket' (line 4) and Young explained it. As Jimin recalled the moment in Excerpt 96, it seems that Jimin could add the new word to his vocabulary with Young's assistance.

**Excerpt 95: Pair talk in activity 1**

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 4 | Jimin: | One question. I know round-trip, but when I take a plane, but don't come back. In case =                       |
| 5 | Young: | = I think you mean a one-way ticket or: a single ticket.   |
| 6 | Jimin: | 이게 “편도티켓”이란 말이야? (Does this mean “a single ticket: Korean translation”?)                                       |
| 7 | Young: | 어. 편도 티켓이 a one-way ticket이나 a single ticket이라고 해. (Yes. You can say ‘a one-way ticket’ or ‘a single ticket’.) |
| 8 | Jimin: | One-way or single. Okay. Thanks.   |

**Excerpt 96: SRI**

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 8 | Jimin | Here. I was wondering how to say one-way in English when I saw the word, 'round-trip'. So, I asked it to Young. I learned the word from Young. |
|---|-------|--|

For Young, the dialogue seems to consolidate his vocabulary while he was explaining the question:

**Excerpt 97: SRI**

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 4 | Young | This kind of question seems helpful. With an unthought-of question, it was an opportunity to think and speak the word. Such a question seems helpful for both questioner and receiver. |
|---|-------|--|

Another example of collaborative dialogue is seen in Excerpt 98: the pair co-constructed the story, extending then preceding utterance. In the process of making the

story using the presented cards, Jimin suggested a sentence with his idea (line 24). However, Young asked him to clarify the meaning of the sentence. In response to the request, Jimin clarified the meaning of the sentence (line 26) and, based on it, Young extended the sentence originally made by Jimin (line 27). By repeating the extended part of the sentence, Jimin agreed to Young's suggestion (line 28). The collaborative construction of sentences can occur in conversation through which different learners become co-creators of a turn at talk (Ohta, 2001). That is, the co-construction implies the learners' collaborative interaction.

**Excerpt 98: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 24 Jimin: Then:: you must be busy to: to prepare.
- 25 Young: Ummm prepare what?
- 26 Jimin: What? 출장준비로 바쁘겠지. (Busy to prepare for the business trip.)
- 27 Young: 그럼 you must be busy to prepare for the business trip.이라고 하는거 어때?  
(Then, how about saying 'you must be busy to prepare for the business trip'?)
- 28 Jimin: 오:: 그래 그게 더 좋겠다. (Oh:: right. It's better.) Prepare for the business trip.  
Okay.

In the last activity, both learners show the feature of self-correction: when they tried to make a sentence in English, each corrected their own mistake by themselves. In Excerpt 99, Young intended to make the sentence in the past tense, but he used the present tense. As soon as he noticed the error, he immediately changed the tense to the past by himself.

**Excerpt 99: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 17 Young: = Right. Eventually. Ummm ... Yes, eventually I found my bag, but ummm it it take no took two weeks.

Excerpt 100 shows Jimin's self-correction. Jimin intended to make a past tense negative question, but he started it with a subject, not a verb form. After realising his mistake, he changed the position of the subject and verb, but still did not use the negative form. Again, he self-corrected it and was able to use the correct form. Jimin also recalled the moment, as seen in Excerpt 101.



**Excerpt 100: Pair talk in activity 7**

20 Jimin: You: no did you:: no didn't you: lose anything in your bag?

**Excerpt 101: SRI**

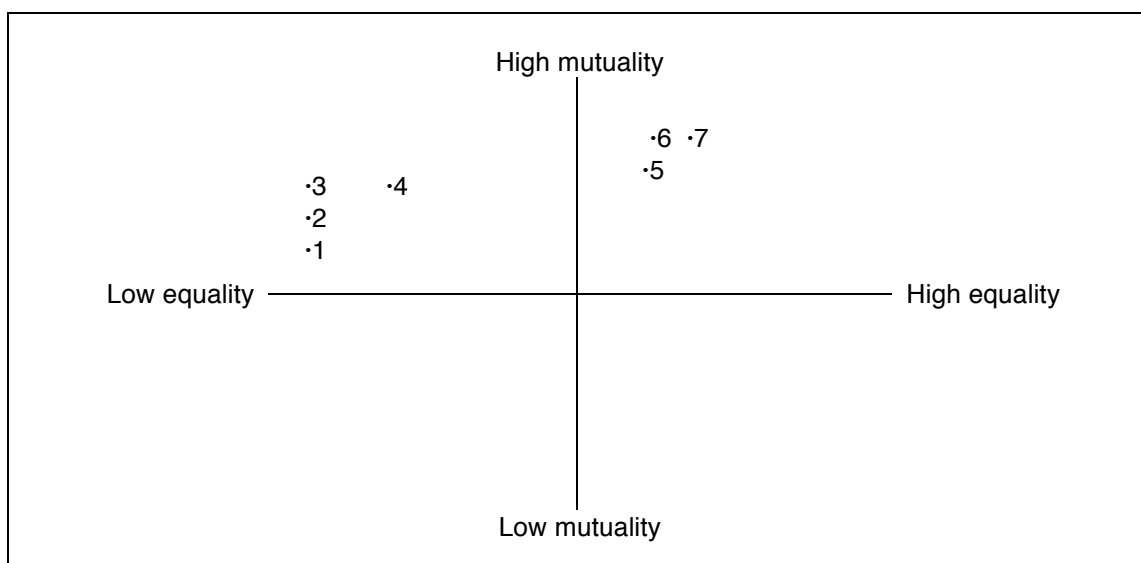
20 R: Here. Could you explain why you said 'no' and how you corrected the sentence?

Jimin: I heard Young said 'no' and corrected by himself. I thought not to make a mistake and if I did so, I decided to correct by myself like Young did. When I was saying the sentence, I knew it was incorrect. So, I corrected the sentence by slowly thinking about it. Um: I wanted to say it without making a mistake.

It seems that both learners learned to monitor and self-correct their own performance through collaborative pair work rather than relying on their partner as pair one did. Ohta (2001) argues that such experience cannot only build learners' confidence in producing successful utterances but also promote self-correction.

**5.2.5. Pair 5: Sun and Jina**

As shown in Figure 5.5, pair interaction was displayed in quadrant 4 as *expert/novice* and in quadrant 1 as *collaborative*. After completing four activities, the pair engagement and both learners' contributions were enhanced. Eventually, this pair displayed the type of *collaborative interaction* when they performed the last three activities.



**Figure 5.5. Sun and Jina's interactions in the seven activities**

At the beginning of the pair work, Sun and Jina clearly displayed the relationship of expert and novice. Jina who had the role of an expert led their pair work by encouraging her partner to participate in and contribute to their pair work and by helping Sun's difficulties with language, whereas Sun as a novice heavily relied on Jina in the process of problem solving, seeking help with her language difficulties from her partner. The following excerpts illustrate the features of their relationship.

In Excerpt 102, Sun had a difficulty with finding suitable words for the blanks after reading the given text (line 23). To assist her partner, Jina elaborately explained what the words should be (line 24), but she did not provide the all of the words. After listening to Jina's explanation, Sun suggested the proper word for the first blank but asking for confirmation (line 25). Then, by way of confirmation, Jina repeated the suitable words for the blanks (line 26). Sun's suggestion in line 25 shows that she understood Jina's explanation and could solve the problem for herself. Receiving elaborated explanations from her partner seemed to benefit Sun.

**Excerpt 102: Pair talk in activity 1**

- 23 Sun: 'Certainly(?), sir. What about the blank? Do you have a blank in mind or do you want a blank?' or가 오니까 다른 의미의 단어가 나오겠는데, 잘 모르겠다. (It might be the word with a different meaning because of 'or', but I don't know well.)
- 24 Jina: 대답 보시면 'an open ticket please' 그럼 질문에 open ticket이 나와야 겠네요. 그리고 다른 대답은 fixed date in mind가 될거 같은데요? (If you see the answer, 'an open ticket please', the question would include 'open ticket'. And the other answer may be 'fixed date in mind'?) "생각해놓은 지정된 날이 있나요 아님 오픈 티켓을 원하나요?" ("Do you have a fixed date in mind or do you want an open ticket?: Korean translation")
- 25 Sun: 그럴겠다. 그럼 그 전에 나올 말은 아마도 ... return date(?) 맞나? (Right. Then the answer before the sentence may be ... 'return date(?)', right?)
- 26 Jina: 저도 그렇게 생각했어요. (I think so.) Return date, fixed date, open ticket. ...

On the other hand, Excerpt 103 shows that assistance did not lead to self-correction.

Sun made an error involving a part of speech when forming the sentence in English (line 30). Jina noticed the error and provided proleptic assistance (which was explained

in Section 5.2.1), explaining how to correct the error (line 31). However, Sun seemed not to notice how to use the hint, simply repeating it with a rising tone. Eventually, Jina directly corrected the error (line 33). As Webb (2002) noted, the help receiver is unable to correct their own error if explanations are not sufficiently elaborated, so even though Jina provided an opportunity for Sun to solve the problem, her assistance was not sufficient for Sun.

**Excerpt 103: Pair talk in activity 2**

- 30 Sun: How about the time different?
- 31 Jina: different는 형용사인데 시차는 명사니깐 ... time? ('Different' is an adjective and time difference is a noun. So ... 'time'?)
- 32 Sun: 명사? (Noun?)
- 33 Jina: 네, time ... difference죠. difference 가 명사니까 How about the time difference? 라고 표현해야죠. (Yes, 'time' .... 'difference'. 'Difference' is a noun so that is the correct expression, 'how about the time difference?')
- 34 Sun: 그렇구나. (Right.) time difference.

Excerpt 104 illustrates how Jina completed the answer suggested by Sun. While performing activity three, "information", the pair translated the given text and tried to find answers to the three questions relating to the text. For the last question, Sun suggested the answer by reading the phrase in the text (line 40). Adding a subject and a verb to Sun's suggestion, Jina completed the sentence (line 41). Sun seemed to acknowledge Jina's ideas about the form (line 42).

**Excerpt 104: Pair talk in activity 3**

- 39 Jina: 그럼 답은? (And answer is?)
- 40 Sun: 여기 (Here) ... Medications and baby foods for use during the flight.
- 41 Jina: 네. 주어동사도 넣어주면 (Right, if you add a subject and verb,) They can carry medications and baby foods for use during flight.
- 42 Sun: 그래 문장으로 답해야하니까 주어동사를 넣어줘야지. 알겠어. (Right. We have to answer as the form of a sentence so that subject and verb need to be added. I got it.)

For the first three activities, Sun asked Jina to start the activity and participated after Jina's turn. However, in activity four, Sun declared she would start first after deciding

how to approach the activity with Jian. Sun recalled why she changed her attitude in this activity:

**Excerpt 105: SRI**

3 Sun ...[ ] ... To be honest, I thought I relied on Jina too much. Of course, I didn't know well, but ... Um::: I decided myself to more actively participate in the activity.

With Sun's changed attitude towards the activity, her contributions to the activity increased in comparison to the previous activity: she seemed to try to actively participate in sequencing the jumbled sentences even if she still had difficulties with language and sought help from her partner. Excerpt 106 illustrates Sun's active participation. As Jina explained which sentence would follow (line 32), Sun interrupted Jina's utterance and suggested the next sequences of the sentences, with an explanation (line 33). Jina's agreement is shown by her repetition of Sun's suggestion (line 34). While performing some activities in pair, Sun's responsibility in the activity completion increased and she tried to avoid relying totally on her partner.

**Excerpt 106: Pair talk in activity 4**

32 Jina: 아까 9번 다음에 2번이 왔으니까 ... 자리가 없다고 말하니까 도움 내용을 물어= (Previously, number two is followed by number nine ... saying there weren't any seats left and asking about help =)

33 Sun: = 8번? 다른 요구사항이 있는지 물어보고 6번에서 없다고 답하고 ... 4번에서 죄송하다고 = (= number eight? Asking any other helps and number six is about answering ... number four is about apologising =)

34 Jina: = 그러네요. 8 6 4번이 이어서 나오네요. (= Right. Number eight, six and four follow in succession.)

In the fifth activity, "reconstruction of text", both learners' engagement in and contributions to the activity were significantly increased compared with their performance in the previous activities because of Sun's increased contributions. At the beginning, Jina showed anxiety because it was a grammatical activity, whereas Sun showed her confidence as seen in Excerpt 107.

**Excerpt 107: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 1 Jina: 문법은 약한데. (I'm weak in grammar.)
- 2 Sun: 난 그래도 문법이 쫄 자신 있는데 ... 우리때는 문법 위주의 수업이었어. 그치만 공부를 안한지 너무 오래되니 잘 할지 모르겠다. (I'm confident about grammar ... At my age, it was grammar-focused lessons. However, I'm not sure that I can do it well because I haven't studied it for a while.)

With her confidence, Sun actively engaged in the activity and contributed to complete the activity, noticing the grammatical errors in the given text and suggesting how to change them. Excerpt 108 illustrates Sun's active involvement in this activity. When translating the given text, Sun noticed the error in the plural form and suggested adding 's' to the singular form (line 6). She also suggested changing the verb form to the passive, explaining the reason for the error (line 8). The reformulations made were repeated as a means of showing acceptance by Jina (lines 7 and 9).

**Excerpt 108: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 6 Sun: “입국카드는 모든 승객들에” (“The immigration card by all passengers: Korean translation”) ... 우선 all passenger에 s를 붙여야 하지? (At first, should we add 's' to 'all passenger'?)
- 7 Jina: 아:: 그러네요. 복수 (Ah:: right. Plural.)
- 8 Sun: 그리고 be동사 다음에 동사원형이 올수 없으니 ... 주어가 사물이니까 수동태. 그럼 be completed. 맞지? (And be verbs should not be followed by the infinitive of a verb ... the subject is something so that it should be passive form. Then is it correct to say 'be completed'?)
- 9 Jina: 음:: ... 그렇죠. 수동태. (Um:: ... right. The passive form.)

Even if Sun had difficulties in translating the given text because of her lack of vocabulary and was helped by Jina to find out the meaning of some words, it is possible to say that Sun considerably contributed by noticing the grammatical errors in order to complete this activity. Jina commented on interaction with her partner in her post-activity interview:

**Excerpt 109: Post-activity interview with Jina**

This activity was led by Sun. So, the pressure about grammar I felt at the beginning of the activity was decreased. Um:: she found grammar errors and it was good that we corrected them together. Owing to work together, the fear of unknowns was decreased and we could help each other, so that I thought it was good.

As Ohta (2001) claims, all learners have strengths and weaknesses that may be complementary to each other. Jina tended to provide assistance to Sun in the earlier activities, but she received some help from her partner in this activity. Both learners seem to be complementary to one another in completing the activity. Therefore, the features of this pair talk can be classified as *collaborative interaction* with a moderate to a high level of equality and mutuality.

In the sixth activity, “making a story”, Sun performed the activity with a more active engagement, suggesting a activity approach strategy for making a story based on expressions learned in previous activities and lessons. Until that activity, Jina had suggested how to do the activity and Sun agreed to her suggestions without making any challenges. Excerpt 110 illustrates how they decided the direction of this activity. Sun suggested the topic for the story that would be made with her partner (line 3) and Jina extended Sun’s idea (lines 4 and 6).

**Excerpt 110: Pair talk in activity 6**

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 1 | Sun:  | 배웠던거를 토대로 해도 되나? (Is it okay to do based on what we've learned?)   |
| 2 | Jina: | 괜찮을거 같은데요. (I think it would be fine.)   |
| 3 | Sun:  | 그럼 비행기 티켓 예약하는게 어떨까? 여기나오는 'flight, aisle seat, destination, business class, New York, make a reservation'이런 단어 다 쓸 수 있을거 같아. 그러면 5개단어 이상 쓸 수 있겠는데. (Then, what about booking a plane ticket? We can use the words 'flight, aisle seat, destination, business class, New York, make a reservation'. Then we can use more than five words.) |
| 4 | Jina: | 그렇게 하죠. 한사람은 예약자, 다른사람은 항공사 예약부로 해서 하면 될거 같아요. (Let's do so. One person is one who reserves the ticket, and the other is a staff.)   |
| 5 | Sun:  | 괜찮아? (Is this fine?)   |
| 6 | Jina: | 네. 좋아요. 음 ... 전화로 예약하는거로 해요. (Yes. I like it. Um ... let's do this using the situation of a reservation by phone.)   |
| 7 | Sun:  | 그래. (Okay.)  |

Sun’s idea about the direction of the activity was continued in the process of making the story. As seen in Excerpt 111, Jina encountered trouble when suggesting an idea

for continuing the story and asked Sun how to continue it (line 16). In response to her question, Sun suggested her idea (line 17) and the pair could continue with the activity (line 18).

**Excerpt 111: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 16 Jina: 이제 어떻게 하죠? (Then how to continue the story?)  
 17 Sun: 돌아오는 티켓도 물어야 하지 않을까? (Doesn't it ask about a return ticket?)  
 18 Jina: 맞다. 그럼, (Right. Then,) What about the return date?

Excerpt 112 displays Jina's assistance with Sun's difficulty on expression. Even if Sun had an idea for continuing the story, she was struggling to express it in English and asked her partner how to say it (line 13). Jina suggested an expression relating to a previous activity (line 14). Seeming to understand the word, 'available', when she heard it, Sun repeated the word and then the whole sentence (line 15).

**Excerpt 112: Pair talk in activity 6**

- 13 Sun: 좌석이 있습니다를 어떻게 말하지? (How to say that we have seats available?)  
 14 Jina: 음:: (Um::) We have seats available. 이렇게 하면 되지 않을까요? (Why don't you say it like this?)  
 15 Sun: 아 맞다. available이란 단어를 썼었지. 그래. (Right, there is a word 'available'. Right.) We have seats available.

As seen in Excerpts 111 and 112 above, each learner contributed differently to perform the activity: Sun's contribution consisted of constructing the story and Jina assisted with Sun's language difficulty. Again, their interaction seems to verify Ohta's argument that learners can complement one another using different strengths, as mentioned above. Therefore, it can be said that the relationship between this pair changed from *expert and novice* to *collaborative*.

In the last activity, the pair engaged with each other most actively. As in the previous activity six, Sun was actively involved in making the story and, as usual, Jina assisted

Sun when she encountered trouble in finding English expressions. However, it was an interesting interaction in the process of assistance as shown in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 113 shows Jina's assistance to Sun, who was struggling to express her ideas in English. When Sun asked about an English expression meaning 'suggestion', Jina suggested the entire sentence that Sun intended to make in line 8. However, Sun complained that she did not ask for the whole sentence, as she expressed in the stimulated recall interview (Excerpt 114). She seemed to know how to say the rest of the sentence except for the expression 'would you like to' and to desire to express it for herself if possible. Vygotsky's ZPD (1978) indicates that premature cues can impede a learner's development by providing assistance with what the learner is able to notice, correct, and improve unaided. It seems that Jina's assistance was premature and possibly prevented Sun from consolidating her knowledge.

**Excerpt 113: Pair talk in activity 7**

- 7 Sun: 계획이 없으니까 같이가고 제안하면 되겠다. 어: ... 'No.' 제안 어떻게 하지? (Then we can suggest going together because there is no plan for the holiday. Ah: ... How to say suggestion?)
- 8 Jina: 음:: (Um::) Would you like to make a plan ... together? 이렇게 하면 되지 않을까요? (Why don't you say it like this?)
- 9 Sun: 맞아. (Right.) Would you like to 그래 이게 제안할때 쓸 수 있는 표현이었지. (This is the expression to say suggestion.) Would you like to ... make a plan "계획을 짜다"는 말이지? (Does this mean "make a plan: Korean translation"?)
- 10 Jina: 네. (Yes.) make a plan

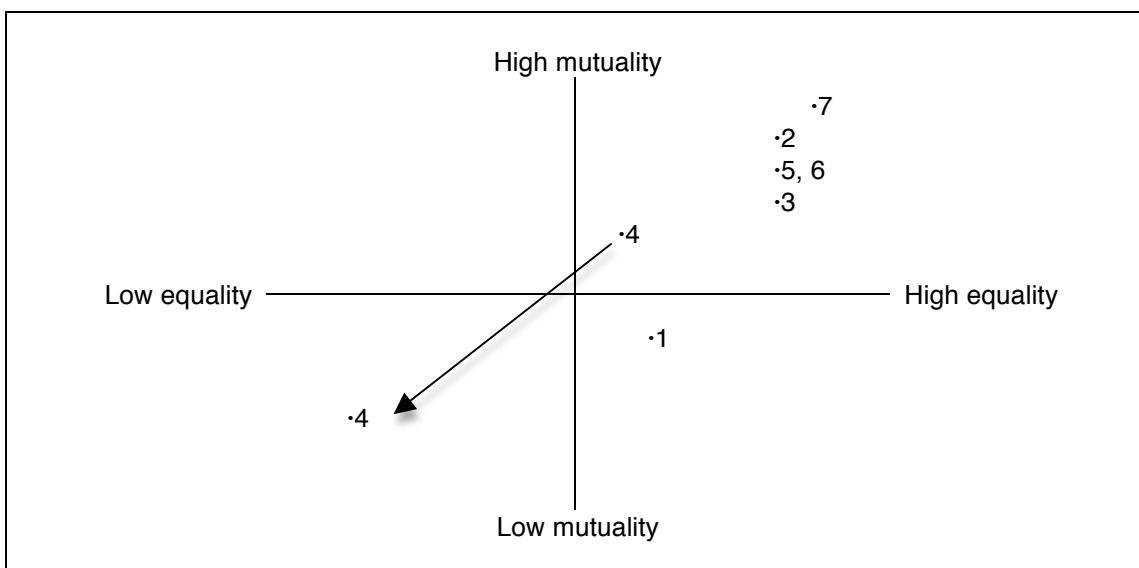
**Excerpt 114: SRI**

- 8 Sun: At the time ... I asked how to suggest, not the whole sentence
- R: You mean you know how to say 'make a plan together'?
- Sun: Yes. I didn't know exactly how to express the suggestion. Clearly I asked about it. ... I didn't want to rely on Jina all the time after deciding to work actively. I wanted to do it by myself if possible, but I missed the opportunity.



### 5.2.6. Pair 6: Mijin and Chang

Figure 5.6 shows diverse types of interactions between Mijin and Chang during the seven activities. Even if their pair interaction was predominated by *collaborative type* as shown in quadrant 1, *dominant/passive* and *cooperative types* were also found. In the case of activity four, pair interaction changed to dominant/passive from collaborative type, indicating that the level of mutuality and equality declined to lower level while performing in a single activity.



**Figure 5.6. Mjin and Chang's interactions in the seven activities**

While performing the first activity, this pair manifested the features of a *cooperative relationship*. Without a dominant leader, they displayed similar involvement in all aspects of the activity completion. However, it was hard to find any discussion about understanding the given dialogue and resolving the problems. Unlike the other five pairs was their activity approach strategy: the other pairs tended to read the given dialogue or translate it into Korean. However, this pair seemed to focus on filling in the blanks of the given dialogue with a suitable word or words presented rather than understanding the dialogue. Without reading or translating the dialogue in order to understand the content, they instantly suggested each answer and the suggestion was

frequently accepted with a phatic utterance such as ‘yes’, ‘right’, and ‘okay’ without any comment on it.

In Excerpt 115, Mijin suggested suitable words for the first and second blanks, but she did not explain why the words would be proper in those blanks and simply presented them (line 5). Even if she translated a part of the dialogue, it seemed that it was self-directed speech. After Mijin’s monologue, Chang merely replied with the phatic utterance of ‘right’ (line 6).

**Excerpt 115: Pair talk in activity 1**

- 5 Mijin: 처음 빈칸은 round-trip ticket이겠지머. (The first blank is ‘round-trip ticket.’)  
 “왕복티켓 예약하고 싶다. 자리 있습니까?” (“I would like to book a round trip ticket. Do you have any seats available?: Korean translation”) 자리 ... open seats가 그 다음이겠고. (Seat... ‘open seats’ would be the next.)
- 6 Chang: 그래. (Right)

Pair talk reflect that the pair gave more weight to activity completion than to activity progress: even though the pair completed the activity with correct answers, they focused on filling in blanks individually, rather than working them out collaboratively.

In the second activity, this pair interaction changed completely to a *collaborative type* with relatively high equality and mutuality. The distinguishing features were the high level of negotiation and co-constructive assistance in order to complete the activity, which was completely different from the process in the first activity.

Excerpt 116 displayed evidence of co-constructive assistance through dialogic interaction. In order to make the sentence, ‘how long does it take to London by plane?’, the pair mutually assisted each other. In the process of making the sentence together the two learners were puzzling over a choice of a proper subject (lines 4 to 10) and prepositional phrase (by plane: lines 11 to 19). They did not achieve the answers simply through individual reflection. Rather, they consistently talked about the difficulties and eventually found the solutions. Mijin’s questioning triggered Chang to

find the proper subject (line 8) and by verbalising each possibility and trying it out (lines 11 to 19), this pair ultimately solved their problem (line 19). As Swain (2000) argues, through reciprocal verbalisation in trying to produce the sentence correctly, they came to reflect on the language form, identify their knowledge gaps and finally find solutions.

**Excerpt 116: Pair talk in activity 2**

- 3 Mijin: 비행기로 런던까지 얼마나 걸리나요? (How long does it take to London by plane?)
- 4 Chang: How long:: take to London?
- 5 Mijin: 어: 주어가 빠지지 않았냐? (Ah: doesn't it miss the subject?)
- 6 Chang: 주어? (Subject?) Flight? How long does flight(?) ... take to London?
- 7 Mijin: 비행기로니깐, 비행기가 주어는 아닌데... (By plane, plane is not the subject ...)
- 8 Chang: Okay okay. 시간이니까 IT ('IT' because of time)
- 9 Mijin: 그래 it지. (Right. It) How long does it take to London?
- 10 Chang: Right.
- 11 Mijin: 근데 비행기로는 어떨하지? (Then how to say by plane?)
- 12 Chang: 맞다. 그건 머라하지? ... 일단 비행기 flight (Right. How do we say it? ... at first plane is 'flight')
- 13 Mijin: 머머 로는 ... 어 ... 수단이니깐... 전치사 by아냐? ("by: Korean translation" ... Ah ... it's means so ... isn't it 'by' as the preposition?)
- 14 Chang: 맞는거 같아. 근데, by flight은 뭔가 이상하다. (It seems to be right. Then, 'by flight' seems to be odd.)
- 15 Mijin: 비행기는 plane 이자너. 그니깐 by plane ("plane: Korean translation" is plane. Then 'by plane'.)
- 16 Chang: 그러네... 그럼 flight은 무슨 뜻이지? (Right ... then what is the meaning of 'flight'?)
- 17 Mijin: fly는 동사고, flight은 명사. 그러니깐:: ... 뭐지? ('Fly' is the verb, 'flight' is the noun. Then:: ... what is it?)
- 18 Chang: 아:: 비행이구나. "비행" (Ah:: "Journey by plane: Korean translation")
- 19 Mijin: 비행? 그런가. ... 비행기는 plane. Okay. 그럼 첫문장은, (Journey by plane? "Plane: Korean translation" is plane. Okay, then the first sentence is,) How long does it take to London by plane?
- 20 Chang: Okay.

Mijin recalled the process of producing the sentence:

**Excerpt 117: SRI**

- 5 Mijin I knew the subject in the sentence made by him was missing, but I didn't know how to correct it.
- 9 Mijin When he said 'it', I knew 'it' was correct. Then we made the sentence to

		London, but we puzzled to how to say by plane.
14	Mijin	As soon as I heard 'by flight', the expression of 'by plane' occurred to me.
17	Mijin	In order to think about the reason that 'flight' could not be used, I talked about verb and noun. However, I can't think why.
19	Mijin	I wasn't sure about it even if I heard about the journey by plane, but after considering it more, I thought it would be right. So, the sentence could be completed.

Chang also recalled the moment:

<b>Excerpt 118: SRI</b>		
7	Chang	When Mijin said the plane was not the subject, the word 'it' occurred to me.
11	Chang	I solved the subject, but I didn't know how to say 'by plane'.
13	Chang	I thought the preposition 'by' suggested by Mijin would be correct. But, I didn't know which noun would follow.
16	Chang	At that moment, I knew 'by plane' suggested by Mijin was suitable. Then I didn't understand why 'flight' was wrong.
18	Chang	After considering Mijin's talk about the verb and noun, I knew 'flight' as a noun meant the journey by plane.

Their recall displayed that listening to their partners' comments triggered their own thoughts and achieved solutions to the problems. Therefore, their recall verified that producing the sentence was reached through the dialogic interaction of co-construction. As the excerpts showed above, their pair work in the second activity was highly *collaborative*.

A similar feature was discovered in the third activity, as seen in Excerpt 119. Chang tried to translate the first question into Korean, but he had trouble translating part of the given question (line 1). Mijin subsequently attempted to translate the part that Chang did not know, but she also could not understand the meaning of the phrase, 'more over' (line 2). Chang's guess in line 3 seemed to be triggered by Mijin's talk. As Wells (2000) points out, not only by saying and responding but also by listening to someone provides opportunities for developing a student's own understanding. Chang's comments explained how he could guess the meaning of the phrase in Excerpt 120: while listening to Mijin's utterance, he could guess the meaning of the phrase (line 3)

and be convinced that his guess was correct (line 4). Via the processes of co-construction, they could understand the meaning of the first question in the given text.

**Excerpt 119: Pair talk in activity 3**

- |   |        |  |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Chang: | 어디보자. 질문이:: ... “승객들은 무엇을 하나?” ... 뒤에 해석이:: (Let’s see. The question is:: ... “What do passengers do?: Korean translation” ... the next translation is::)                    |
| 2 | Mijin: | “용기들” ... “액체의 100밀리:” ‘more than’ more than을 어떻게 해석하지? (“containers: Korean translation” ... “100ml of liquid: Korean translation:” How do you translate ‘more than’?)      |
| 3 | Chang: | 혹시 “100밀리보다 더 큰 용기들” 아닌가? “머머 이상” 이런말 아닌가? (Maybe isn’t it “containers with more than 100ml of a liquid: Korean translation”? Isn’t it “more than: Korean translation”?)     |
| 4 | Mijin: | 그렇겠다. 말 되네. “승객들은 액체류의 백밀리보다 더 큰 용기들을 어떻게 해야하나요?” (Right. It makes sense. “What should passengers do with containers with more than 100ml of a liquid?: Korean translation”) |
| 5 | Chang: | 그렇지. 좋아. (Right. Good.)  |

**Excerpt 120: SRI**

- |   |       |  |
|---|-------|--|
| 3 | Chang | I was thinking while listening to Mijin’s talk. I know the meaning of ‘more’ is a greater amount of something than before. So, I guessed the meaning of ‘more than’. |
| 4 | Chang | When I heard that Mijin translated the whole sentence based on my comments, I knew my ideas about the meaning of the words were right.                               |

Unlike in the previous two activities, this pair displayed a different type of pair interaction in the fourth activity. Like pair one’s changed attitude observed in activity three, this pair displayed two different types of pair interaction when they changed from *collaborative* to a *dominant/passive type*, which was the only occasion this type appeared among the six pairs across seven activities. The talk began collaboratively in the problem-solving process with a discussion of the meaning of a word, then continued by translating each sentence in the given dialogues into Korean and sharing their understanding of the two dialogues. However, when they started sequencing the jumbled dialogues, Mijin tended to appropriate the activity and proceeded to complete it on her own, as seen in Excerpt 121. In response to Chang’s question (line 27), Mijin went into a long monologue where she sequenced another jumbled dialogue (line 28)

without involving Chang in the process. Chang did not contribute to or challenge Mijin's suggestions. Rather, he became a silent listener to his partner's utterances.

**Excerpt 121: Pair talk in activity 4**

- 27 Chang: 그럼 다른 하나는? (What about another dialogue?)
- 28 Mijin: 우선 썰 처음엔 7번같아. 자리가 떨어져 있으니 같이 앉게 해달라는 1번. 그리고는 찾아보니 뒤쪽에 자리가 있다는 10번. 그리고 남은게: 3번 5번. 그 순서네. 3번 괜찮냐고 묻고 그렇다고 답하는 5번. (At first, the first sentence is number seven. Number one that is about asking to seat together because their seats are separate. Then number ten is that after searching it, there are seats available at the back of the cabin. And the numbers left: are numbers three and five. That's the order. Number three is asking whether it's okay and number five is answering it's fine.)
- 29 Chang: Okay. Good. 잘 찾는군. (You found well.)

Chang explained his role as a careful listener rather than a passive learner at the time as follows:

**Excerpt 122: SRI**

- 29 Chang: Mijin found the sequences left in the dialogue. I thought I didn't need to cut in because she was doing well. So I was listening to her. After finding the theme of the dialogue, it's not difficult to find the sequence.
- R: Were you listening to whether Mijin was finding the answers well?
- Chang: Yes. There was nothing to help. I wasn't sitting with a passive attitude, but listening to her very carefully.

Unlike Chang's thoughts, in her post-activity interview, Mijin revealed that their interaction was limited because she had solved the problem too quickly on her own and did not give any opportunities to her partner. Moreover, in the observation notes, the researcher observed that it was Mijin who seemed to do most of the talking and Chang was rarely involved in completing the activity. Even if Chang insisted he was a careful listener, he seemed to assume the role of a passive learner based on pair talk and observation notes: when sequencing the jumbled sentences, this pair's engagement was rarely found and contributions to completing the activity were not equally established because a dominant partner assumed the overall initiative during the activity. Whether Chang's role was as a careful listener or a passive learner, he was not involved in any part of the problem-solving process. It was not clear that this

attitude would benefit his learning in that other researchers suggest fewer benefits for low-participation learners, including observers on language learning (McDonough, 2004; Philp & Iwashita, 2013).

In the last three activities, Mijin and Chang tended to work collaboratively to complete them. In order to reconstruct the text in activity five, the pair mutually assisted each other to solve the problems. As Excerpt 123 shows, it seemed that the learners lacked expertise in language form. However, as equal novices, they consistently offered suggestions and sought confirmation from each other. Thus, they could reach the correct grammatical decision through the dialogic process (line 18).

**Excerpt 123: Pair talk in activity 5**

- 9 Mijin: Complete는? Be complete이렇게 쓰일 수 있나? (How about 'complete'? Can we say 'be complete'?)
- 10 Chang: Complete가 정확히 무슨 뜻이야? (What is the meaning of 'complete'?)
- 11 Mijin: 사전사전. (Dictionary dictionary)
- 12 ...
- 13 Chang: 음 ... 형용사 동사 다 있네. (Um ... It can be used as an adjective and verb.)
- 14 Mijin: 동사에 여기 봐봐. “기입하다. 작성하다”라는 뜻이 있네. (Let's look into the verb form. It means “write the answers or information asked for in it: Korean translation”)
- 15 Chang: 근데 사람들이 작성하는거니까 수동태로 써야하는거 아냐? (Then shouldn't we use the passive form because it is written by people?)
- 16 Mijin: 수동태? (the passive form?) Be plus p.p.?
- 17 Chang: 그치. 그럼 be completed? (Right. then 'be completed'?)
- 18 Mijin: 그런거 같다. “입국 카드는 작성되어야 합니다.” (It seems to be right. “The immigration card must be completed: Korean translation”) Okay.

At the post-activity interview, Chang's reply reflects their naive position on language form:

**Excerpt 124: Post-activity interview with Chang**

While performing this activity, Mijin and I didn't insist which one should answer. Rather we asked for agreement with each other. In the process, we could work together more collaboratively. Even though we could not find one error, which was a shame, I think we could find the other eight errors because we worked together. So I think we interacted with each other very well.

As Chang's response reveals, both learners collaboratively performed the activity, but they ended the activity by finding eight errors and giving up finding one error. Even though they did not find all nine errors, both learners agreed they were able to find eight answers with collaborative interaction: if they had performed the activity individually, they believed that it would have been hard to even find eight answers.

In the sixth activity, the pair decided to make a story based on what they had learned in previous lessons. Excerpt 125 shows evidence of assistance and self-correction. When Chang suggested an idea to continue the story (line 8), Mijin tried to make a sentence based on Chang's idea (line 9). However, Mijin had difficulty in using the correct verb form and sought her partner's assistance. Chang became a help-provider offering an elaborate explanation (line 10). The explanation seemed to be sufficiently elaborate to enable Mijin to solve the difficulty. As Webb (2002) explains, elaborated explanations can be expected to benefit the help-receiver. Moreover, Mijin noticed the plural form of the noun and self-corrected it (line 11). With Chang's assistance, Mijin could successfully suggest the intended sentence.

**Excerpt 125: Pair talk in activity 6**

- |    |        |  |
|----|--------|--|
| 8  | Chang: | 그리고 자리 없다고 할까? (How about saying that seats are not available?)  |
| 9  | Mijin: | 그래. (Okay.) I'm so sorry, but ...umm all window seat ... occupy 아닌데 뭐였지? (It's wrong. How to say it?)                              |
| 10 | Chang: | 전에 했잖어. 사물이 주어여서 자리가 다 채워진 상황이잖어 = (We've done it before. Object is the subject, so it is the situation that seats are occupied =) |
| 11 | Mijin: | = 기다려. 나 알어. (Wait, I Know.) Ummm all window seat 아니 (no) seats: are occu occupied. Right?   |
| 12 | Chang: | Perfect!   |

In the activity seven, "adding a sentence", the pair decided to make a story about a romantic holiday, spending relatively more time to discuss the activity direction. They seemed to have more opportunities to use unfamiliar expressions in that the topic of their story was not related to the themes of the lesson. In the process, they met several challenges. Via dialogic interaction, they could solve the difficulties and complete the



activity, showing their highest level of equality and mutuality among the seven activities.

Excerpt 126 shows how the learners assisted each other to co-construct the unclear question suggested by Chang. Chang could not complete the question so he sought help from his partner (line 18). By verbalising part of the question, it seemed that the expression that they had learned in the previous lesson occurred to Mijin (line 19). Then Chang retried making the question, using the expression. However, Mijin pointed out, in line 21, that he omitted using a preposition before the place. By adding the preposition, he successfully completed the question (line 24). It seemed that verbalisation triggered Mijin to think about the expression ‘spend time with somebody’ and his partner’s elaborated help enabled Chang to solve the problem.

**Excerpt 126: Pair talk in activity 7**

- |    |        |  |
|----|--------|--|
| 18 | Chang: | I know. I went to Paris: before. Umm then ... did you::: 파리에서 그 남자랑 같이 있었냐고 어떻게 묻지? (How do you say whether you spent time with him in Paris?) |
| 19 | Mijin: | Did you ... 시간을 보내다가 spend time with 누구라고 전에 배운거 같은데. (I think we've learned 'spend time with somebody' in the lesson.)                        |
| 20 | Chang: | 맞다. 그럼: (Right. Then:) Did you spend time with: the guy Paris?   |
| 21 | Mijin: | 파리에서니까 파리앞에 ... 전치사가 와야하지 않아? (It's in Paris, so before Paris ... doesn't it include preposition?)   |
| 22 | Chang: | In이지? (Is 'in' correct?)   |
| 23 | Mijin: | 응 맞는거 같아. (I think so.) in Paris   |
| 24 | Chang: | Okay. Did you spend time with the guy in Paris?  |

### 5.3. Discussion and Summary

According to the Vygotsky's sociocultural theory that learning is essentially social, this section investigated the first question of this study: how learners interact with their partner in language learning activities. Using a qualitative approach to the analysis of the pair talk, the different types of pair interaction were investigated and revealed when

the learners worked in pairs in the classroom setting. Five different types of pair interaction were found. Table 5.1 displays the type of pair interaction for each pair in the seven activities.

An *expert/novice* type of pair interaction was found in pair one and five in most activities and the type was developed to *collaborative* type in the last activity for pair one and in the last three activities for pair five. Expert learners took more control over an activity, but they invited or encouraged the novice to participate, providing proleptic assistance in order to provide an opportunity for the novice to correct their own errors. They might also say 'well done' or 'good' when the novice suggested a solution to the problem. In the early activities, the expert tended to provide unidirectional assistance to the novice. However, from the activity five, the pair talks illustrated that partners provided mutual assistance to each other. As Ohta (2001) claims, interactive activities provide an opportunity to pool learners' different knowledge. It implies that novice learners took greater responsibility for activity completion and more actively participated in activity performance after performing several activities.



In *collaborative interaction*, which was predominantly found in most pair interaction, learners tended to work together on all parts of the activity, including deciding the activity direction and the problem-solving process by engaging in the activity with equal or similar involvement. In the problem-solving process, learners pooled their resources via collaborative dialogue, such as frequent requests, questions and elaborative explanations. When disagreements arose, they negotiated the problem to reach consensus. In the case of both novices, they reached resolutions accepted by both through verbalising the problem reciprocally, not through individual reflection. The resolutions in language-related episodes were resolved not only through assistance provided by one learner but also through a process of mutual assistance. As Donato (1994) has shown, learners are able to offer each other assistance regardless of their linguistic abilities. Sometimes, they provided co-constructed solutions beyond their current knowledge. Collaborative learners display joint problem-solving processes. Moreover, at the end of the activity collaborative learners are able to self-correct without any assistance from others. As mentioned in the previous section, learners seem to learn how to monitor and correct their own performance without relying on another's assistance in the process of collaborative interaction.

Four cases of a *cooperative type* of pair interaction were found in pairs two, three and six. In this type, the learners tended to contribute to activity completion at a similar or equal level, but they rarely engaged with each other. It is hard to find occasions when the learners invite their partner in the process of problem solving or seek assistance from each other. Rather, they tend to resolve the problems individually.

*Expert/passive* and *dominant/passive types* were found only in the case of pair one in activity three and pair six in activity four. Both types changed during a single activity performance: *expert/passive* changed to *expert/novice*, whereas *dominant/passive*

changed from being *collaborative*. This implies that learners can change their attitude during an activity, even if working with same partner.

In the case of the *expert/passive type*, the expert tended to invite the partner to participate in the activity like the expert in the *expert/novice type*, whereas the passive one seems not to be interested in participation or in contribution to the activity. With low level of interaction, their interaction could not continue further because the passive responded with simple phatic utterance or uncertainty for partner's request. However, this type changed to *expert/novice* owing to the expert learner's persistent efforts. With a partner's persistent invitation and encouragement, the passive one seems to change their own attitude to become active. On the other hand, in the case of the *dominant/passive type*, both learners changed their attitude from collaborative interaction during a single activity: one became dominant and the other became passive. In the process of finding answers, the dominant learner solves the problem themselves with long monologues in the form of self-direction, whereas the passive learner seems to become a listener, accepting the resolution by the dominant, offering little or no challenge. Both types of pair interaction, *expert/novice* and *dominant/passive*, were found once respectively and even then the types changed to/from other types during a single activity. This implies that both types may be not common in pair work.

As can be seen, only one pair among the six displayed the same type of pair interaction across the seven activities, the others showing more than two types of pair interaction even if *collaborative type* of pair interaction was predominant. Furthermore, in the case of pairs one and pair six, the types of pair interaction changed to *expert/novice* from *expert/passive* and to *dominant/passive* from *collaborative* during a single activity performance. Even if pairs showed the range of types of pair interaction, most pairs illustrated relatively higher equality and mutuality on the last three activities

and all six pairs eventually showed a *collaborative type* of pair work on the last activity, showing their highest level of equality and mutuality among seven activities. This indicates that learners may become more collaborative over time but before then, their interaction may not be stable.

Another aspect of the findings is the range of mutuality and equality as presented in Figure 5.1 to 5.6. Most pairs displayed different levels of mutuality and equality across activities in the same type of pair interaction, except for pair 5 who displayed enhanced mutuality and equality over time across activities. For example, even though pair 4 displayed only one type of interaction, which was *collaborative*, their levels of mutuality and equality did not show any obvious patterns across activities. It indicates that the established type of interaction was not stable across activities. This suggests that the relationship between the type of activity and pair interaction needs to be considered.

The comparison of the levels of equality and mutuality of each pair across activities shows some patterns across activities. Most pairs show relatively lower engagement in activities one and four but relatively higher engagement in activities five, six and seven. The learners illustrate various levels of engagements in activities two and three, indicating that pair interaction may be related to the type of activity.

Unlike the finding in this study, Storch's study (2002a) suggested that the types are fairly stable over time across activities: the three types of activities used in her study were grammar-focused: joint composition, editing and text reconstruction. However, activities in this study not only focused on grammar. As described earlier in Chapter 3, the intention and type of each activity differed, and the focuses of the activities varied from preselected, specific language required for learners to use to learners' independent use of their own language resources. Learners seemed to show higher engagement with open activities, such as activities six and seven in comparison with closed activities, such as activities one and four. Even though activity two was

classified as an open activity, it presented detailed information in the form of dialogue and some learners simply duplicated the form. In a way, the activity could be regarded as having a low degree of openness. Thus, it could be possible that learners interacted with varying levels of mutuality and equality in activity two according to the degree of openness. Furthermore, the evidence of the relationship between closed activities and learner interaction can be found in the type of pair interaction on the activities. As seen in Table 5.1, a non-collaborative orientation of pair interaction, such as in *cooperative*, *dominant/passive* and *expert/passive* types, is found only in activities one, three and four, all classified as closed activities. This implies that the type of activity is likely to affect the nature of interaction that takes place.

In the case of activity five, classified as a closed activity, six pairs displayed relatively high mutuality and equality. The reason for the high engagement on the activity might be related to the focus of the activity, which was grammar-based. Learners tend to express difficulties regarding grammar-related activities. Nowadays, the focus of language learning and teaching is on communication rather than grammar, and students tend to feel that grammar is difficult. For this reason, learners seem to be more engaged with each other, even though it is a closed activity, implying that learners' perception of activity difficulty may relate to pair engagement.

In order to understand pair interaction more deeply, learners' perceptions regarding pair interaction needed to be investigated. Thus, the second subsidiary research question arises: 'how do learners perceive their peer interaction?'. It is also important to investigate what factors affect the learners' interaction in order to more deeply and precisely understand the pair interaction investigated in this chapter. The next chapter attempts to answer the question, by looking at the learners' talk as the form of interview data. Then, investigation of the relationship between pair interaction and language learning follows, based on the data from pair talk and interviews.

## Chapter 6

### **Data Analysis and Findings: Learners' Perceptions about Pair Work**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

The previous two chapters investigated the answer to the first research question: namely, how do learners interact with their partner in language learning activities? Based on the findings of the first question, this chapter addresses the second subsidiary research question: how do learners perceive their peer interaction? As mentioned in Section 3.6.2, in order to better understand peer interaction, it is important to investigate the learners' perceptions about their peer interaction, such as what they think about peer interaction, what affects their behaviour during the interaction, how the interaction can help their learning. Given that this study was conducted within a constructive research paradigm, which is constructed by individuals who experience the world from their own points of views, listening to the learners' voices through a series of interviews would obtain more direct evidence of the learners' interpretations of this topic.

The following sections describe the process of data analysis used in this investigation and discuss the relevant findings.

#### **6.2. Process of Analysis**

The main source of data used to address the second subsidiary research question was the learners' interview transcripts. Post-activity interviews (Appendix B) were conducted individually after completing activities in pairs, which aimed to gain the learners'



reflections on their experience of working in pairs on each activity. Alongside the post-activity interviews, final interviews (Appendix C) were conducted individually at the end of this study that aimed to obtain general feedback about pair work experienced over seven weeks. All interviews, which were conducted in Korean, the first language for all participants and the researcher, were audio-recorded and then transcribed (see Chapter 3 for a full description of the process).

The interview data was to be used in two ways. First, in order to uncover how the learners thought about their pair interaction while performing each activity, post-activity interview data were used. The different types of pair interaction over the seven activities revealed in the previous chapter were noted, catalogued and interpreted by the researcher. In relation to learners' thoughts about the interaction, however, based on the responses to the semi-structured interview questions, this chapter focuses on the learners' interpretations, such as what they say they think about their participation and contribution while performing each activity and what factors they say influence their pair interaction. Then, the analysis focused on exploring why pairs differently performed each activity and how they thought about each activity, in relation to how pair work was classified according to types of pair interaction in Chapter 5. Results from the post-activity interviews will be presented for each pair.

Second, in order to discover more general perspectives on pair work experienced for seven weeks, final interview data were used. With a qualitative approach, the participants' reactions to their own pair interaction were investigated. Themes describing the learners' perceptions on pair work were grounded in the collected data. In the process of reiterative reading of the data in relation to the objectives of the semi-structured interview questions, it was possible to extract common themes and features. The interview data across the twelve learners were analysed for the learners' attitudes

towards working in pairs, their degree of participation and contribution, and the factors affecting their degree of participation and contribution.

### **6.3. Learners' Interpretations of Pair Interaction**

In the previous two chapters, pair talk data was investigated in order to understand how learners worked together. As presented in Table 5.1 in Chapter 5, *collaborative type* of pair interaction was predominant in all six pairs, but other types such as *cooperative* and *dominant/passive types* were also found. Only one pair displayed *collaborative type* across all seven activities, whereas others showed more than two types of interaction.

The descriptive findings in Chapter 5 cannot explain clearly why the pairs showed different types. In order to understand why learners changed their attitudes while performing with the same partner across the seven activities, this section will present data showing how the learners regarded pair work while performing each activity, and results from the post-activity interviews will also be presented for each pair.

#### **6.3.1. Pair 1: Hyuk and June**

Hyuk and June who dominantly displayed the expert/novice nature of pair interaction seemed to recognise their roles as being those of an expert and a novice. When June talked about pair interaction, he mentioned his partner's assistance as follows:

I think Hyuk led me very well. He helped me when I had a difficulty or suggested wrong answers. [Interview after activity two]

His comments provide evidence that he regarded Hyuk as the leader or helper in pair work. On the other hand, Hyuk frequently said 'encouraging June to participate' in stimulated recall and post-activity interviews. In order to lead the pair work successfully, it would seem that he also felt a responsibility for June's participation. His

encouragement of his partner made their interaction change positively, especially on activity three.

June reluctantly and passively participated in the activity at the beginning because he felt it was too difficult for him but later he changed his attitude to become active, as he explains:

I didn't do well. Umm I thought it was quite difficult for me. When I read the first word in the first sentence, I didn't know the meaning. At the time I felt frustrated and didn't want to work. However, with Hyuk's assistance, I tried to work hard later. He helped me a lot. Um, he made me participate in this activity. Owing to Hyuk's assistance, I think it was possible to complete the activity together.

[Interview after activity three]

Robinson (2001) explains that affective variables such as anxiety, confidence and motivation may be changeable and temporarily 'affect the size of resource pool availability' (p.32), which are the resources learners can draw on in responding to the demands of tasks. It seems that June's anxiety about the activity difficulty temporarily reduced his resource pools and affected his attitude to be passive. However, the anxiety seemed to be removed by Hyuk's efforts: he consistently invited June to participate in the activity. Hyuk commented about their interaction as follows:

I tried to encourage June to participate in this activity ... [ ] ... This activity should be completed by both of us. So, I think I have a responsibility to encourage my partner's participation in order to complete the activity. [Interview after activity three]

Hyuk's comments reflect his thoughts about the meaning of pair work - that both learners should work together in order to complete the activity. As mentioned by both learners, therefore, it can be said that Hyuk's encouragement to his partner facilitated June's active participation and led them to complete the activity successfully. In other

words, the activity difficulty seemed to negatively affect June's attitude to approaching the activity, but his partner's encouragement led to his active, positive participation.

After activity three, this pair's levels of mutuality and equality were consistently enhanced and eventually became *collaborative interaction* on the last activity. Unlike in the case of activity three, June's affective variables such as confidence and responsibility seem to expand his resource pools. He explained the reason for his own active participation and increased contribution to activity completion as follows:

I didn't like this kind of activity because there were too many ways to make a story. But, it was different this time. It was fun and I strongly wanted to do this activity well and frequently expressed my opinions to make the story. Um:: I think: um: the more I did pair work, the more responsible and interested I became.

[Interview after activity seven]

As Tavakoli (2009) claims, when a given activity is more enjoyable, it may positively influence a learners' perception of activity difficulty and consequently affect activity performance. June's increased interest in and responsibility for pair work seems to have made him able to overcome his feelings about activity difficulty that he had previously experienced to stimulate his active participation, leading to considerable contributions to activity completion. His partner Hyuk defined their interaction as collaborative work as a result of June's increased participation and contribution.

It seems that June's affective variables positively impacted on their pair work and consequently led to elaborative engagement between the two. Therefore, pair end up as *collaborative type* of pair interaction.

### **6.3.2. Pair 2: Min and Jang**

Min and Jang displayed *collaborative type* of pair interaction in most activities, but for two activities (activity one and activity four), they showed a *cooperative type*.

Interestingly, for activity one, which was categorised as being of a *cooperative type*, both learners recalled that they interacted with each other fairly well and helped each other. The recorded pair talk showed that they rarely discussed or engaged with each other except during the activity direction episode. Rather, they merely suggested answers without supplying any additional explanations or requests. However, the learners regarded their interaction as *collaborative work*, differing from the researcher's interpretation.

Min explained how he felt about the interaction with his partner and how pair work helped:

We tried to find answers actively and besides finding answers, we practiced reading the dialogue. Working together tends to stimulate my participation. If Jang found answers well, I had some kind of challenge in my mind. Also, when had I done the activity alone, I might have not read the dialogue in English. However, pair work made it possible to practice reading a dialogue in English. It was a really good time to practice English with my partner. [Interview after activity one]

Jang also noted their interaction in a similar manner to Min's thoughts:

I think we interacted very well. We presented answers respectively and after that, we had a chance to read the dialogue in English. It helped me to practice English. I think this is enough for active interaction. [Interview after activity one]

Both learners seem to be considerably satisfied with having an opportunity to read the given dialogue aloud. As Coughlan and Duff (1994) and Ohta (2001) point out, the activity designer's intentions may well be different from the learners' interpretations of the activities assigned to them; learners' demands made by the activities seem to be related to their learning goals. The activity instruction was to fill in the blanks using given words, but the pair seemed to set other learning goals: rather than discussing or negotiating the process of finding answers, they seemed to give more weight to speaking English in an EFL context where learners have limited exposure hours to the

target language. According to their own learning goal, they were satisfied with their own pair interaction. Therefore, the reason for the differing interpretation of pair interaction by the researcher and the learners can be explained by the learning goals set by the learners themselves.

In addition to activity one, the pair displayed a *cooperative type* in activity four. They started the activity by reading the given two jumbled dialogues individually and then worked together to find the correct sequence for the dialogues. Jang regretted this, saying that it was the wrong approach to do the activity:

When we completed the activity, I thought we should have worked together at the beginning of the activity. If we had worked together, we would have changed to reading the dialogues. What we did was just to focus on finding answers.

[Interview after activity four]

Working individually seemed to lead to more focus on finding the sequences rather than the *process* of finding the sequences. Min also mentioned they focused more on finding answers, but sought the reason from the level of the activity:

I think our interaction went well. Umm but, we focused more on finding answers. We could have read the dialogues, but we merely checked the answers. Maybe I think the activity was a bit easy for us. Unlike what we expected at the beginning of the activity, it wasn't difficult at all for me. So, that's the reason why we merely checked the answers. [Interview after activity four]

Min noted the feature of cooperative work saying 'we merely checked the answers': the pair tended to resolve their own problems individually. To explain why they each took their own responsibility for the activity, Min pointed out the level of the activity, perceiving the activity to be easy. His comments imply that the perceived level of activity might affect activity performance. Thus, based on the learners' interview data related to the reason to designate a *cooperative type* for activity four, it can be said that

the manner of the activity approach and the perceived level of the activity may influence learners' performance to focus on activity outcomes.

Except for these two activities, both learners noted that they collaboratively completed activities by helping each other and engaging with each other. Especially, they showed the highest level of mutuality and equality on activity seven. Both learners explained how the challenging activity was related to their performance:

It was the most challenging activity because there was so much freedom to make a story. However, it was really good to make conversation in English and I think it was a good opportunity to make new expressions based on what was learned. Even if it wasn't easy to express my thoughts, I could overcome the difficulty of lexis and grammar with Min's assistance. It was really fun and beneficial to learning. [Jang, interview after activity seven]

At the beginning of the activity, I was a bit worried about how to approach this broad topic. However, with Jang, it was really fun to do this activity. We could do whatever we wanted. So, doing such an activity gave me an opportunity to use diverse vocabularies and to learn new vocabularies from my partner. [Min, interview after activity seven]

The last activity gave them freedom to construct the story using various expressions from their language resources. With that freedom, they seemed to enjoy performing this activity. With regard to the difficulty of lexis and grammar to express their own thoughts in English, Jang notes that he could build new lexis and structure with his partner's assistance. In contrast with Long's (1989) concern that learners may treat topics of open tasks briefly and give up when faced with challenges, both learners seem to enjoy the challenge, to take their freedom to construct the story seriously and to make an effort to do quality work. Therefore, the learner interview data suggest that a more challenging activity that has no predetermined solution may influence their engagement with the activity and with each other.

### 6.3.3. Pair 3: Mia and Sung

Mia and Sung displayed an *expert/novice type* in activity one and a *cooperative type* in activity three. Except for these activities, they showed they were otherwise collaborative in their pair work. In activity one, both learners seemed to be unclear about how to work together as seen in following comments:

It's not easy to work together. Even if we are friends, I don't know his learning style. It made me difficult to do pair work at the beginning of the activity because he didn't offer his opinion about how to do this activity. I started the activity in my way, but it seemed that he didn't follow me. So, I suggested another way and finally we could go well together. [Mia, interview after activity one]

Um:: I'm not used to work with others. I didn't know how to do activity direction when I worked in a pair because I didn't know her learning style. I should've suggested my own idea, but I couldn't. I just agreed to her suggestion. Even if it took time to make harmony, we worked together to solve the problems. [Sung, interview after activity one]

Both learners pointed out the other's learning style. It seems to be difficult to know another's learning style even if they are friends. In order to know it, they need to discuss their own ideas about the way to approach an activity and negotiate in order to concur with each other. However, because of their lack of prior experience of pair work, they seem not to be accustomed to discussing and negotiating about how to work together. As an undergraduate class in an EFL context, according to their previous comments before starting this study, participants were not used to doing pair work. They told me even if they had some experience, it was not consistent and rare to do pair work in lessons. The lack of experience of pair work may have affected Mia's unidirectional suggestion related to the way of doing the activity and Sung's passive attitude to Mia's suggestion.



While performing activity one, the pair seemed to learn how to work together in that a *collaborative type* of pair interaction was found in the rest of their activities except for activity three. Both learners admitted that their pair work went on well, with helping each another to learn. As Sung mentioned:

With discussing with each other, I think our interaction went on well at this time. When we didn't know something well, we sought assistance from each other, who provided the assistance. In doing so, we complemented each other. While performing the activities, we could understand each other's learning style and finally achieved harmony. [Interview after activity two]

Sung pointed out that it took time in order to develop the relationship with his partner. Philp and Mackey (2010) discuss the ways in which peer interaction changes depending on partner familiarity, and Donato (2004) points out that time is required to establish and develop social relations. That is, over time, familiarity from working with the same partner seems to affect their performance. These findings suggest that pairs need time to establish a collaborative relationship and perhaps modelling by their teacher to develop effective interaction strategies. As many researchers (Kim and McDonough, 2011; Sato and Lyster, 2012; Sato and Viveros, 2016) suggest, the effect of modelling or coaching learners can help them develop effective collaborative interaction strategies.

Even though the pair achieved harmony, they showed less cooperative work during activity three. In the case of Mia, the reason things were different seems to be related to the level of the activity. She explained that the pair focused on finding answers rather than discussing the process of finding answers because the activity was perceived to be easy:

We just answered each question respectively. Rather, I think it would have been better for us if we had added an explanation about related contents. Except for explaining Sung's question about the meaning of a word, this time we focused on

finding answers. We might have done this because the activity was easy for us. It was like doing the activity individually. [Interview after activity three]

The easy activity seemed to make Mia focus on outcome rather than process. She seems not to know how to work together for the activity because she was able to solve the problem by herself. Instead of sharing her working process, she took responsibility for each part. Her perception that the activity was easy seemed to affect her activity performance. On the other hand, Sung found the explanation for how they operated from his partner's attitude. He explained that his partner's fast tempo doing the activity affected his own performance:

Mia worked very fast. Sometimes she didn't translate the given text into Korean, but read it in English and suggested only answers without any additional explanation. In order to make a balance with her fast tempo, I worked like her. It was sort of competition. I should haven't done so, but I just worked like her. [Interview after activity three]

His partner's attitude doing activity seems to have influenced Sung's own attitude. Mia's fast tempo of activity performance made Sung follow her working style and consequently led the pair to focus on product, not process. In sum, in this case the pair displayed *cooperative interaction*.

For activity four, Sung brought up the issue of his partner's fast tempo again. However, this time he directly addressed the problem to her rather than performing the activity as she did: he asked Mia to keep a balance with him, but it seems that Mia had not been aware of what was worrying Sung until he told her:

I didn't realise my tempo was fast before Sung told me about it. I was glad that he told me about it. In order to work together, we need to talk to each other. I mean if we have some trouble with our partner, we should talk about it to each other and find the solution to work together. That's pair work. I think so. [Interview after activity four]

Sung's request made Mia change her attitude; she began to talk about her thoughts and listen to her partner. With respect to her changed attitude, Sung explained that it led their interaction to become more collaborative:

... [ ] ... None of us went ahead. Both of us listened carefully to our partner's talk. So we could complete the activity with collaboration. I'm glad Mia accepted my request. [Interview after activity four]

As Watanabe (2008) suggests, when both pair members attempt to talk and listen to each other, their interaction can be more collaborative. After the direct request from Sung, the pair tended to work collaboratively together, explaining their opinions and providing mutual help. This implies that the pair could learn from each other about how to collaboratively work together after performing several activities. Through the experience of pair work, the pair collaboratively worked together with relatively high mutuality and equality for the remaining activities (activities four to seven).

#### **6.3.4. Pair 4: Young and Jimin**

Unlike other pairs, Young and Jimin consistently showed a *collaborative type* of pair interaction during all seven activities. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the level of equality and mutuality was not stable. The different levels can be related to the different types of activity, which were open or closed activities, and the level of activity.

In activity four, the pair showed their lowest level of mutuality among the seven activities: the engagement with each other was not relatively elaborated. As the cause, Young suggested the level of activity:

Um:: I think it's a bit easy. If I worked alone, I might not think about the level of the activity. But, working together with a partner, I suddenly thought that we could do better if the activity was more challenging. [Interview after activity four]

As other learners have suggested, Young found the explanation for loose engagement from the level of the activity. He seems to expect the activity to be more challenging and difficult beyond his current level of language knowledge when he does pair work. It implies that collaborative work might make the learners have more confidence in their work and willingness to do more challenging work than if working individually.

On the other hand, the pair expressed their enjoyment while performing the last activity:

It was really fun to make a story with Young. If I had worked alone, I definitely would have made an easy story. I mean: simple sentences with using easy words. But, with Young, we could make more complicated sentences. Um:: because of this kind of conversation activity um: I think we could more engage with each other and could do better quality work. [Jimin, interview after activity seven]

It was a bit challenging but very fun to do. Like real conversation, we made English conversation. We had to think about the meaning of the story and at the same time care about grammar. It was very challenging, but in the process, I think I could more engage with my partner. [Young, interview after activity seven]

The activity that required learners to make a story seems to be challenging and to lead them to be more engaged with each other. In order to solve the difficulties of making a story using free conversation, the pair tended to actively discuss the problems and assist one another. As Jimin mentioned, the pair could present good quality work using complex expressions. This is consistent with Tong-Fredericks' (1984) and Brown's findings (1991). Tong-Fredericks found that learners used more complex language when they were engaged in open tasks, which allow learners to freely decide on the solution. Brown also found that learners used more complex language in open tasks in comparison with closed tasks. This suggests that a challenging activity with no predetermined solution may influence their elaborative engagement and consequently lead to better quality work.

### 6.3.5. Pair 5: Sun and Jina

Sun and Jina started pair work with an *expert/novice* relationship. While completing the seven activities, their pair engagement and contributions to the activity were gradually enhanced and, eventually, the pair showed a *collaborative type* of interaction for the last three activities.

Sun, who assumed the role of novice, seemed to realise the relationship between Jina and herself. She expressed how much she relied on her partner:

I felt Jina was like my personal tutor. Every time when I asked questions, she answered them, and if my answers were wrong, she corrected them. With her help, we could complete this activity. [Interview after activity three]

Sun's comment proves that she relied heavily on her partner. The reason can be explained by her affective factors, especially her lack of confidence in English. After completing activity two, she expressed her frustrations with her activity performance:

I felt such an idiot. Even if I knew some expressions, I couldn't express them in English. Every time I just asked Jina. I worried that she might feel sick of my too many questions. I think I totally lost my confidence. [Interview after activity two.]

Sun's lack of confidence can be related to her prior learning experience. She had not studied English for the last 20 years since graduating from high school. Insufficiency of exposure to the target language for a long time probably influenced her lack of confidence. For this reason, she tended to depend heavily on her partner.

On the other hand, Jina in the role of expert, seemed to recognise her partner as a novice and realised her partner's difficulty in performing the activity and how much her partner depended on her:

I think this activity was a bit difficult for Sun. So, she kept asking me to check whether the answers suggested by her were correct or wrong. Um: I think: ah: her

attitude made me have more responsibility for activity performance. I tried to help her and to work together. [Interview after activity two]

Sun's dependency on Jina seems to stimulate Jina's responsibility for their pair work. However, Sun's attitude was considerably changed in activity four. Until activity three, the greater part of the contributions to the activities had been made by Jina, but Sun's contributions to, and engagement in, activity four noticeably increased. As for reason of Sun's changed attitude, she explained her enhanced confidence as follows:

After several activities, I felt frustrated. I totally relied on Jina. I didn't understand my attitude to activity performance. So, before starting this activity, I decided to actively participate in the activity. I intentionally tried to express my thoughts. Even if I can't say my opinion in English, I could say it in Korean. With my mind changed, I think I actively participated in this activity in comparison with previous activities. [Interview after activity four]

Sun's changed attitude was noticed by Jina:

Compared with previous activities, Sun participated in this activity very actively. Her changed attitude had impacted on my attitude to do the activity. I think I also participated more actively in this activity. It was quite fun. [Interview after activity four]

Both learners' comments note that pair interaction was enhanced by Sun's changed attitude to be more active, but the pair work remained a relationship between novice and expert. However, activity five, which was the grammar-related activity, brought about the different change in the collaboration. The learners show totally opposite attitudes to this activity: Sun approached it with increased confidence, whereas Jina started it with decreased confidence. They explained how confidence influenced activity performance:

When Jina said she was weak in grammar, I thought I had to lead this activity because I was good at grammar. ...[ ]... It was the first time that Jina sought confirmation in response to her suggestion. As I actively participated in this

activity with confidence, I think Jina's attitude changed a bit. I felt she became my partner, not my personal tutor, on this activity. Even if my English proficiency is still very low compared with Jina, I think the reason I felt we had become partners was my confident participation. So, I decided to do pair work with confidence next time. [Sun, interview with activity five]

I felt confidence was very important in the process of problem solving. I lost my confidence when I knew this activity was about grammar and couldn't solve the problem even if I knew what it was. ...[ ]... Sun actively involved herself in the activity with confidence. As she found the grammar errors, we could correct them and eventually completed the activity. [Jina, interview after activity five]

The grammar-related activity seems to impact on both learners' confidence and consequently influenced their performance. Jina had difficulty with the activity and it made her lose her confidence. On the other hand, Jina's lost confidence seemed to trigger Sun's active participation and to give her more confidence and responsibility for activity performance. Like Robinson's argument (2001) mentioned above, Sun's increased confidence as a greater affective factor seemed to make her become a more frequent contributor in finding and correcting the presented errors. On the other hand, Jina's resource pools seem to have been temporarily affected, limiting the affective factor of confidence. With opposite attitudes from each learner, the type of pair interaction moved from that of *novice and expert*, becoming enhanced as *collaborators*. In the following activities six and seven, the pair continued to *collaborate*: Sun continuously participated in the activities with confidence and Jina collaborated with Sun to complete the activities with recovered confidence.

To sum up, this pair's interview data shows that one of the factors that influence pair work might be learners' affective variables, especially their confidence. A lack of confidence tends to reduce learners' resource pools to perform activities, whereas increased confidence seems to make learners become more active participants. With the novice learner's enhanced confidence, this pair could perform the last three

activities with full *collaborative type* of pair interaction.

### 6.3.6. Pair 6: Mijin and Chang

Mijin and Chang predominantly displayed a *collaborative type* of pair interaction, but a *cooperative type* and a *dominant/passive type* were also found. An especial point is that among the six pairs, they were the only pair who ever displayed a *dominant/passive type*.

For their first activity, that was categorised as *cooperative type* of interaction, Mijin explained that they focused too much on finding answers:

We suggested answers respectively and rarely discussed them. Um:: I think the activity wasn't difficult for us. I didn't mean it was easy, but it wasn't difficult enough to discuss the process of finding answers. Maybe that's the reason we focused on only suggesting answers. [Interview after activity one]

She found the reason for focusing more on outcomes rather than the process was because of the level of the activity. The activity seemed not to challenge her. The level of the activity can affect pair interaction: she seemed not to know how to engage with her partner because she did not need any help in the process of finding answers. A similar perception about the level of the activity was found in activity four, which was the occasion for the *dominant/passive type* of pair interaction. Until they translated the given jumbled dialogues, they worked together. However, when starting to find the order of jumbled sentences, Mijin dominantly proceeded to sequence large portions of them on her own without involving Chang. Mijin explained the reason for her behaviour:

I didn't mean to work alone, but ... when I started finding the sequence, it just happened. There was no problem finding the sequence by myself. Also, Chang didn't say anything. He was nodding when I suggested answers. So, I think I just sequenced the two jumbled dialogues. [Interview after activity four]



Her comment that she did not need any additional help while sequencing the jumbled sentences implies that she perceived the activity to be easy: rather than seeking any assistance or agreement, she solved the problems on her own. Like activity one as mentioned above, the level of activity may affect activity performance. Furthermore, as she mentioned, her partner's attitude cannot be discounted. According to Chang's sudden changed attitude to a passive engagement in the activity, Mijin seemed to feel more responsibility for completing it, while dominantly engaging in the problem-solving process. Thus, Mijin's comment implies that both factors, the level of the activity and partner's attitude, had an influence on her dominant role. Likewise, Chang talked about the activity's level:

At the last part of the activity, Mijin suggested all of the answers, but I also knew them. It was quite easy to find out the answers. [Interview after activity four]

Chang seemed not to feel any necessity to involve himself in the process of finding answers because the activity was easy and Mijin successfully suggested the correct answers. His comment implies that the easy level of activity had an influence on his behaviour: when he perceived the given activity was easy for him, he displayed only slight engagement with his partner.

On the other hand, when both learners perceived the given activities were difficult, they tended to show active engagement with each other. For example, when in activity two they displayed considerable *collaborative type* of interaction, Mijin mentioned the activity difficulty as the stimulus for active engagement:

It was difficult to make a dialogue in English. I needed my partner's assistance to complete this activity. We helped each other with correcting wrong expressions and stimulating our partner's thoughts. In the process, we could complete this activity. [Interview after activity two]

As Mijin mentioned, the level of the activity appears to have influenced the type of their pair interaction. Especially, when talking about activity five, the grammar-related activity, both learners mentioned the activity difficulty:

It was difficult. Um:: activities about grammar are always difficult for me, but I could do well with Chang. [Mijin, interview after activity five]

The process of finding errors was very difficult. I'm very weak in grammar. Um:: I think I could do this activity because I worked with my partner. We were very tightly engaged with each other while performing this activity. [Chang, interview after activity five]

Both learners mentioned the relationship between the difficulty of the grammar-related activity and their collaborative work. The grammatical demands of the activity seemed to make the learners perceive the activity as be difficult because of their previous experiences with grammar. Their perceptions seem to have had a positive influence on their pair work: in order to cope with the difficulty, the pair tended to solve the demands together, with a high level of mutuality and equality. That is, their comments imply that their perceptions of activity difficulty that emerged with regard to grammatical difficulty might have had an impact on their engagement with one another and with the activity.

Another example of the relationship between the perception of activity difficulty and the level of engagement is found in Chang's comments on activity seven. He notes that the activity difficulty that emerged from the freedom in activity performance contributed to engagement with his partner:

It was enjoyable even if it was difficult. Because of my lack of vocabulary and grammar, it was difficult to add to the sentence. However, I felt very much satisfied with our work. We could successfully make the intended sentences in English by assisting each other. If I had worked on this activity alone, I would have made very simple easy sentences because for me, this kind of activity is something I am a bit unwilling to do. However, with Mijin, it was fun. Um: I think working together stimulated me to try a bit complex and difficult sentences

because I believed I could successfully made the sentence with Mijin. [Interview after activity seven]

Chang's comment implies that such an activity, when learners are free to compose their story, was difficult for him, but challenging to work in pairs. Long (1989) argues that open tasks sometimes make learners give up when faced with a challenge and they pursue less difficult topics. Although his argument may be correct in the case of individual work, as seen from Chang's talk, pair work may be different. Unlike individual work, pair work seems to make the learner enjoy such the activity and make an effort to attain a much higher quality outcome. Therefore, Chang's comment suggests that learners' perception of activity may influence the learners' engagement and consequently affect activity quality in pair work.

In summary, as seen in Chang and Mijin's comments on activities, learner perceptions about whether the level of an activity is easy or difficult may impact on pair engagement. The activities that were not challenging seem to lead the learners to manifest a lack of engagement with each other because they did not feel a need to give or receive any assistance. On the other hand, the activities that were perceived as difficult and challenging seem to make learners strongly engage with each other in order to overcome the difficulty. In addition, a partner's attitude might affect the pair interaction, as seen in activity four. If one learner passively performs an activity, the other might take ownership of the activity and dominantly complete it.

#### **6.4. General Perspectives on Pair Work**

After completing the seven activities, the 12 participants were asked to reveal their thoughts about pair work experienced over seven weeks using scheduled semi-structured interviews. An examination of the interview transcripts reveals learners' overall perspectives on pair work. There were four themes that emerged from the

interview data: the attitude to pair work, the degree of participation and contribution, factors affecting the degree of participation and contribution, and the relationship between pair work and learning. The following sections will describe the features of the first three themes in detail and the last theme will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### **6.4.1. Attitudes to Pair Work**

The interview data provide explanations for their attitude to pair work that the learners experienced. When asked during the final interviews how the learners felt about pair work, all learners, even if Sung and Sun included some negative aspects of pair work, expressed a clear preference for pair work rather than for individual work, adding their reasons for this preference. These findings concur with Storch's findings (2004) which reported about learners' preference for pair and group work.

Learners' comments on their attitudes towards pair work can be related to the strengths and weaknesses of pair work. They explained why they prefer pair work and some of them suggested more than two reasons. The comments can be divided into four categories: availability of immediate feedback, pleasure in the process of pair work, opportunity for communication and exposure to the target language.

Most learners who gave their reasons for preferring pair work responded to the availability of immediate feedback. The learners noted that pair work provided opportunities to give and receive immediate feedback on grammatical, lexical or phonological errors or language difficulties. June explained how he was pleased to receive assistance from his partner:

I was really happy to get some assistance from Hyuk. Owing to his help, I could participate in the activities more actively. Even if I suggested wrong expressions, my partner helped me to correct the errors. Thus, the help made me more comfortable to participate in the activities.

Given that June assumed the role of novice in most activities, his comment shows approval for how he relied on his partner and how his partner's assistance affected his participation. On the other hand, Hyuk, who was June's partner, also said that he was pleased to be able to offer assistance to June:

I sometimes provided help to June when he had difficulties in the given activities. It was quite fun to explain my thoughts in order to assist June's difficulties. In the process, I could organise my thoughts. Um:: I think it also helped my learning because it could give me the opportunity to make my thoughts clear.

Hyuk's comment indicates that providing elaborative explanations as a form of feedback could enhance his own learning via verbalisation of his own thoughts. Another example of this feedback effect can be found from Mijin and Chang. They noted their mutual assistance:

Mijin: I think several times we solved problems that we couldn't do alone. Through adding to Chang's idea or my idea, we could complete the activities. And: sometimes, with his help or my help, we could find solutions. I think it was really helpful for my learning

Chang: I didn't expect that I could help Mijin and she could help me as well. But it happened in pair work. With assistance to each other, we could complete activities and I believe the quality of our outcome was improved.

Their comments show that they saw pair work as providing the opportunities to co-construct their knowledge to help each other. As Foster and Ohta (2005) explain, co-construction can allow learners to participate in problem-solving processes that they cannot complete individually, constructing language skills with the mutual assistance. Furthermore, as Chang comments, pair work via such mutual assistance can lead to the improvement of learners' performance.

Half of the participants, including June, Jang, Min, Mia, Jimin, and Chang, mentioned pleasure in the process of pair work. They regarded pair work as a more interesting way

of working, compared with boring individual work. Min explained the benefits of pair work:

When I work individually, I tend to focus on product. However, this time while working together, I felt pleasure in the process of the work.

Jimin also expressed a positive attitude to pair work based on his experience during seven weeks:

When I worked alone, I was obsessed with finding answers. However, I focused more on the process of finding answers in pair work. ...[ ]... It was the first time that I felt it was fun to do activities. It was very good for me.

A similar response was found in Chang's interview:

The more I worked with my partner, the more fun I felt. When I worked alone, I focused on the product. However, I didn't like doing that. The process was more fun because of working together. So, I think we made better product. Um:: so, I felt pleasure in collaborative work.

Their responses show they became more focused on the process of learning rather than on the product while working in pairs, and in the process of pair work they could feel pleasure in doing activities. Their comments can be connected with Dweck's (1986, 2006) distinction between learning goals and performance goals. According to Dweck, learners guided by learning goals seek to increase their understanding or competence whereas learners guided by performance goals seek positive judgement on their performance. The learners' comments imply that pair work might make learners focus more on the learning process in comparison with individual work.

A few learners, including Jang, Mia, Jina and Mijin, mentioned that pair work provided the opportunity for communication and could lead to learning via the process. While working together, learners had many chances to talk and listen to their partner. Whether they spoke their first language, Korean, or the target language, English, they could

explain their knowledge of language via verbalising or could listen to different perspectives from their partner. Pair work made it possible to communicate with one another. Ohta (2001) comments that interactive tasks are similar to conversation in that learners become a speaker and a listener at the same time. In Mia's case, she specifically mentioned about verbalisation of her knowledge of language:

I liked to have an opportunity to speak. There were good opportunities to explain what I thought to my partner. I think: um:: the pair work made me think more deeply. I prefer pair work.

As Swain (2005) advocates, the process of verbalisation can allow learners to become aware of their knowledge limitations, to predict linguistic needs and to set goals for further learning. In the process, learners can engage in explaining, reflecting and describing to solve linguistic problems.

In addition to the verbalisation, Jina and Hyuk explained that pair work made it possible to listen to another's knowledge of language and gain a different perspective:

Jina: I like to listen to my partner's ideas. Sometimes, the ideas helped to expand my thoughts and enhance my English expressions.

Hyuk: Sometimes, I was surprised by my partner's suggestions. Owing to my partner, I could expand my English vocabulary. I think it is really worthwhile to listen to other's thoughts. Pair work makes it happen.

Their comments show how they regarded listening to each other. It is especially interesting that both learners played an expert role in most activities. Even if they frequently provided assistance when their partner had difficulties with the target language, and contributed considerably to completing the activities, their comments confirmed that they considered their partner's talk to be valuable and to affect their own learning as well. Ohta (2001) emphasises that the role of a listener consists of working to understand what has been said and mentally mapping along with the utterance.

Thus, the peer listeners can have resources available for thinking immediately and more broadly about production (Ohta, 2001).

In relation to her reasons for preferring pair work, Mijin commented on both verbalising her knowledge of language and listening to her partner:

While doing pair work, I could say what I was thinking. In the process, my thoughts became clearer. Also, it gave me an opportunity to listen to my partner's thoughts. Through listening to him, I could learn new things.

These learners' comments suggest that pair work seems to lead the learners to communicate with each other and they regarded the process of communicating their own knowledge of language and listening to their partner's knowledge of language as the benefit of pair work.

Some learners, including Jang, Min, Young and Jimin, explained that pair work, compared with individual work, provided them with more opportunities for exposure to the target language. Jang explained that one of the benefits of working with a partner was a chance to speak the target language:

If I work alone, I never read a text aloud. Rather I just read it with my eyes. Also, I could talk to my partner in English. I love it. I think it is really important to practice English and the pair work made it possible. I like it.

Jang's comment implies that he regarded a main benefit of pair work for language learning was the opportunities for talking and reading in the target language. A similar response was given by Young. He pointed out the importance of pronunciation:

Pair work gave me more opportunities to speak English. The process of the command of language can help to enhance learning, but pronunciation cannot be neglected. When I work alone, I tend not to read a text aloud thereby neglect the pronunciation. However, in pair work, I paid more attention to pronouncing.



Given that, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Young and his partner tried to speak in English all the time and read aloud in turn all the English text while doing pair work, his comments show how important he thought speaking in English is in the context of EFL where learners have few opportunities to use the target language. Thus, pair work can be a good opportunity for them to be exposed to the target language and to use it. Even though all the learners said they preferred pair work to individual work, some learners, including Sung and Sun pointed out some negative aspects. They expressed some difficulties about work with their partner. In the case of Sung, he pointed out his partner's attitude:

Pair work should be conducted by two learners. In order to do so, there were some difficulties for me. Um: I think it's about skill. I didn't know how to work in a pair and neither did she. That's why I felt frustrated at the beginning. At that time, I thought I would prefer to work alone. But, now I'm totally happy with pair work. Um:: because we could make good quality outputs and assisted each other.

According to his previous experience of pair work, which was rare, at first Sung was not used to work with a partner. Lacking the ability to work together made it hard to establish a social relationship with his partner. For that reason, he was reluctant to participate in pair work and desired to work independently. However, in the process of doing some activities, his comments imply that he learned how to work with his partner and realised how pair work could help his learning. As other researchers argue (e.g. Donato, 2004; Storch, 2002a), it takes some time to build a social relationship between learners in order to collaboratively work together.

Sun also mentioned some negative aspects of pair work as follows:

When I did activities one and two, I really wished to work on the activities alone. Jina is really good at English, but I'm not good at it. I thought the gap in our proficiency was too big and:: it made me lose my confidence. I was frustrated.

The proficiency gap between the pair negatively affected Sun's confidence and the lack of confidence made her wish to work alone. However, her preference for individual work in the early activities changed to an overall preference for pair work:

After I experienced pair work over seven weeks, I had a strong preference for pair work. I noticed I've changed while working with Jina. I participated in activities more actively and became more confident with English. Although some activities were quite difficult for me, I could complete them with Jina and in the process, I learned many things such as expressions, some vocabulary and so on.

During pair work, she seems to have overcome the problem of lack of confidence and notice some of the potential benefits of pair work. As in Sung's case, this suggests that Sun needed time to take advantage of the proficiency gap with her partner and to get used to collaborative work.

Even though Sung and Sun suggested that there were negative aspects to pair work at the beginning of the activities, overall they had a positive attitude towards pair work because they overcame the negative aspects while performing the seven activities with their partner and saw some potential benefits to be had from working in pairs - benefits occurring from producing more quality outputs and learning English from another.

In short, even if two learners expressed some negative features of pair work, all learners expressed a clear preference for pair work rather than for individual work. Their final interview data suggest that they perceived the potential benefits of pair work in providing language learning opportunities such as the access to immediate feedback, pleasure in the process of work, opportunities for communication and exposure to the target language, English.

### 6.4.2. Degree of Participation and Contribution

Learners' responses to the questions concerning the overall degree of their own participation in and contributions to pair work were analysed: the learners evaluated themselves regarding how hard they worked with their partner and how much they contributed to complete activities.

Most learners except June and Sun responded that they worked hard to do pair work and in the process, they contributed considerably to activity completion. June and Sun, who assumed novice roles in most activities, explained that they actively participated, but their contributions to activities were relatively lower in comparison with their respective partner, Hyuk and Jina.

June: Um: my contribution was a bit low. But, comparing with working alone, I participated in activities very well. Um:: sometimes, I didn't do well, but I think the more I did pair work, the more I actively participated in activities.

Sun: Contribution:: I think I didn't contribute very much. I tried to participate, but I didn't know so much: I didn't contribute well.

Both learners' comments are related to their level of equality in pair interaction as analysed in the previous chapter. As novice learners for most of the activities, they recognised that their overall contributions to activity completion was relatively lower than their partner's.

This finding is not surprising in that most of the learners predominantly showed *collaborative type* of pair interaction. However, an interesting point is that some of the learners compared their level of participation between pair work and individual work. Even though the learners were asked about their participation and contribution in pair work, not about a comparison between pair work and individual work, some learners, including June, Young and Chang themselves, offered a comparison as follows:

Chang: I tried to work hard in pair work compared to when I worked alone because I didn't want to upset Mijin. Umm, sometimes I wanted to be more slipshod, but I couldn't because I should do pair work. So, I think I didn't participate passively.

Young: Ah:: I actively participated. I think I worked harder than when I worked alone. I tried to discuss and collaborate with Jimin for completing all activities.

It seems that both learners regarded pair work as working together with their partner and that perception led to their active participation. These responses suggest that further research is needed comparing activity performance and outcomes of pair work and individual work.

### **6.4.3. Factors Affecting the Degree of Participation and Contribution**

The learners' responses to questions concerning the factors affecting the degree of their own participation and contribution in pair work were analysed and a variety of responses from individual learners was noted. The interview data reveal that learners' willingness to participate in activities is affected by the activity itself, including the level and type of activity, and by social considerations such as their partner's attitude and proficiency level. As in the previous section, some learners presented more than two factors.

#### **6.4.3.1. The Perceived Level of Activity**

As mentioned in Section 6.1 above, some learners noted the level of the activities that were perceived to be easy or difficult as factors affecting their engagement. When they perceived the activity to be easy, their engagement tended to lessen; when they perceived the activity to be difficult or challenging, their engagement tended to increase.

For example, Min and Mia both mentioned that when an activity was comparatively easy for them, it tended to make them work less closely:

Min: When an activity was easy, I didn't know how to discuss it with my partner because I already know the answer. It was just cross-checking with my partner. I think the level of activities needs to be a bit difficult. I think such an activity could lead to more active discussion in solving a problem.

Mia: It was the level of activity. When the activity was too easy, I didn't know how to do it. Anyone could have done such an activity and I didn't know how to complete the activity in pair work. When I felt something was a bit difficult and interesting, I became more engaged in the activities.

Their comments note that their perception that an activity was easy negatively affected their interaction with their partner, whereas perceiving an activity as difficult positively influenced their engagement with their partner. Their expectations regarding activity work level in pair work seems to be slightly higher than their current level of language proficiency. Jang added a reason for expecting more difficult activities in pair work:

When I thought the activity was a bit challenging, it stimulated me to participate more actively. Um:: and: I think such an activity provided me more opportunities to learn new vocabulary or grammar.

His comment suggests that there were more chances to negotiate facing problems and to solve difficulties with his partner when the given activity was perceived to be challenging or difficult. Consequently, frequent opportunities might lead him to build new language knowledge. This implies that learners expect to discuss and solve activity difficulties with their partner in pair work rather than explaining their thoughts about known answers. In the process of explaining their own thoughts, learners can consolidate their current knowledge, but what they expect from pair work seems to go beyond their current knowledge to building new knowledge.

Seemingly, in comparison with pair work, learners prefer to avoid difficult activities in individual work. They mentioned that they focused more on activity completion in individual work than in pair work. As an explanation, Jang mentioned that he has confidence in being able to complete an activity with a partner in pair work, whereas he becomes concerned about activity completion in individual work because then he has solo responsibility. Therefore pair work seems to increase learners' confidence as their responsibility for the activity is shared. This confidence seems to lead the learners to focus more on learning processes than learning outcomes and consequently the desire to do more challenging work in pair work.

In relation to the level of activity, learners explained which activity seemed easier or more difficult: the last activity of "adding a sentence" was the most difficult, whereas the first one of "filling in the blanks" or the fourth one of "jumbled dialogues" were relatively easy. In their explanations, learners mentioned the different levels of linguistic demand:

Mia: The first activity was related to the textbook we used. I didn't need to think about different vocabulary from what we learned in the lesson. However, the last one required various vocabulary Um:: grammar as well. In order to express my ideas relating to the topic of holiday, I needed more vocabulary and grammar.

Min: On the last activity, I couldn't anticipate how my partner would add to the previous sentence. It was like free conversation. In order to add to the sentence presented by my partner, sometimes I had to discuss the unknown vocabulary. Unlike this activity, um:: the activity 'jumbled dialogues' was easy because it only required me to understand the sequence. In order to do this activity, I didn't need to add any language.

Their view of activity difficulty can be related to Skehan's notion of task difficulty. As one factor contributing to task difficulty, Skehan (1996) explains cognitive complexity in terms of how tasks demand to be processed and whether learners are able to use relevant schematic knowledge. Robinson's task complexity might also explain the learners' perceived level of activity. Robinson (2001) predicts a greater amount of peer

interaction when the task is more cognitively demanding. Learners were perceived to be in difficulty when they were allowed to have the freedom to choose the content under the given topic and in the process of performing the activity, they were required to use diverse vocabulary and grammar to express their own ideas. The learners tended to struggle when they did not know certain vocabulary items or structures to express their thoughts. On the other hand, learners seem to perceive the activities to be relatively easy when the activities supplied the learners with most of the necessary language and did not require additional language in order to reach the single, correct solution. That is, learners tend to perceive less cognitively demanding activities to be easy, while perceiving more cognitively demanding activities to be difficult. This finding is consistent with those of Tavakoli (2009), in which learners perceived that less structured tasks requiring more cognitive demands were more difficult than structured tasks. Furthermore, the perceived level of activity can be linked to learner engagement in pair work. A *cooperative type* of pair interaction was found only in activities one and four where learners perceived these activities to be easy. This implies that when a learner perceives the level of activity to be easy, this might lead them to work individually and only check their answers with their partner because they have had no difficulties in completing the activity alone. Therefore, in view of learners' perceptions of the effect of activity on their interaction, the level of activity as an important variable for peer interaction necessitates further research that will investigate the impact of different activity levels on learner engagement in pair work.

#### **6.4.3.2. Partner's Attitude**

Some learners mentioned their partner's attitude as one of the factors affecting their own participation and contribution. They demonstrated that a partner's response to their own talk had a great impact on their own willingness to engage in activities - which

could be a positive or negative impulse. In the case of Sun, it seems that her partner's attitude had a positive influence on her:

At the beginning of pair work, she tried to invite me into the activity and listened carefully to my talk. Even if I'm not good at English, I could actively participate in activities owing to her encouragement and consideration. Without her help, I would've become more passive to activity performance.

Owing to her partner's constructive attitude, Sun, although assuming a novice role in the first four activities, was able to actively participate in the activities, consequently leading to her own contributions to activity completion. She eventually became a collaborative partner in the last three activities but otherwise might have given up trying to be an equal contributor. Furthermore, both Min and Jang as a pair also mentioned the importance of their partner's attitude:

Jang: My partner's attitude used to stimulate me. When Min actively participated in activities and contributed to solve the problems, it stimulated me to more actively participate in the activity. Sometimes, I felt a kind of competition with him. Not on the wrong side ... I mean: if he suggested a good idea, I felt I would like to do so next time. It was a kind of good influence. I should say stimulation, not competition.

Min: Best of all, a partner is the most important factor. I think doing pair work should be done by both persons. In order to do so, the pair have to work together and share own thoughts. If the partner doesn't do so, I think it's very difficult to work together. In our case, Jang and I gave positive motivation to each other. His active participation stimulated mine.

Their comments indicate that their active engagement provided motivation for each other and led to a positive influence on their performance. In addition, Min's comment about how pair work should be performed reflects the social-affective aspects of pair work: he viewed it as a social activity where the pair should share their learning goals and rely on each other in order to do pair work successfully.



It can be said that learners regard their partner's attitudes as the positive impulse that stimulates their willingness to participate actively via their partner's encouragement to them to participate in activities or their partner's own active participations and contributions and as important factors in doing successful pair work. However, a few learners pointed out that their partner's attitude could not only have positive effects but also negative influences on activity performance.

For example, Sung explained how his partner's attitude affected his willingness to engage in activities:

When my partner did not agree to my suggestions or ignored my suggestions without any concern, I felt frustrated. Sometimes I wondered whether my partner regarded me as a partner. However, when she encouraged me by complimenting me on my suggestions or ideas, I felt great. Then, I could focus more on the activity and:: I think I became more active learner.

His comment shows that his partner's disagreements about his own talk without much consideration negatively affected his activity performance and it made him doubt their relationship. On the other hand, his partner's interest and encouragement seemed to stimulate his active participation, as mentioned by other learners. Negative points were also mentioned by Mijin:

When my partner cared about the activities, I tended to work harder and participate more actively. However, when he didn't do so, I didn't know what to do. At that time, I think I worked alone because I didn't know what to do. It wasn't pair work. It was more like individual work.

Classified as a *dominant/passive type* of pair interaction in activity four in Chapter five, Mijin's response shows that she dominantly contributed to activity completion when her partner did not engage in the activity. As Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995) point out, unlike in tutoring situations, peers need not take responsibility for helping one another or for

facilitating each other's development in pair or group work - Mijin might not have taken any responsibility for her partner's learning.

In a similar vein, Watanabe and Swain (2008), who conducted research about the perception of the partner's language proficiency in a pair work setting, state that learners seem to recognise an effective partner as one who attempts to engage in collaborative dialogue by sharing their own opinions regardless of their partner's proficiency. That is, their findings reveal how important learners consider their partner's attitude towards working together to be, which is consistent with this study. In this study, five out of 12 learners pointed out their partner's attitude as an important factor in encouraging or discouraging their own willingness to engage in activities.

#### **6.4.3.3. Partner's English Proficiency**

Even if Watanabe and Swain's findings (2008) suggest that proficiency differences do not seem to be the crucial factor in affecting pair work, learners in this study commented about the different levels of English proficiency of their partner as a factor affecting pair interaction. They expressed different opinions about their partner's English proficiency, which could encourage their willingness to engage in activities or discourage it. For example, June explained how a more proficient partner influenced his engagement:

Hyuk's English proficiency is very high compared with mine. His higher proficiency helped me to be able to actively participate in activities because I could trust my partner. If I suggested wrong answers, I knew he could help to correct my errors.

June seems to rely considerably on, and to build trust with, his more proficient partner who was able to assist his own lack of language knowledge during pair work. With his trust in his partner's assistance, he could actively participate in activities with suggestions and by sharing his opinions. As Stone (1993) highlights, for successful collaborative learning, learners need to respect one another's perspectives. In order to

have this respect, he insists that the learners need to trust each other's opinions and to be considered as playing a legitimate role while working together. In the case of June, his trust in his partner was based on his partner's higher proficiency.

Unlike June, who highlights the positive effect of a more proficient partner, Sun pointed out some negative effects of having a higher proficiency partner:

Umm:: occasionally, the big difference in proficiency had a negative influence on me. I mean:: when I asked her about something I didn't know again and again, I thought she might have become sick of it. I felt embarrassed and at the same time was sorry to her. Ah: I thought it could upset her learning. So: at the beginning of the activities - it wasn't so often - but I pretended to understand even if I didn't know. Even if I considerably relied on her and sought her assistance during pair work, the proficiency gap sometimes made me be passive.

As mentioned in the previous section, Sun appreciated her partner's efforts to assist her difficulties in the process of doing pair work and was positively influenced by her partner's kind attitude. However, the proficiency gap between the pair seems to have a negative influence on her. Sun seems to be frustrated and embarrassed about her consistent and repeated language difficulties, which might be insignificant problems for her partner. The conflicting emotions seemed to lead her to pretend to know things that she was not entirely sure about. Foster and Ohta (2005) state that learners who partially understand what someone is saying may avoid interrupting to request clarification of unclear things because of fear of losing face. The emotional factors sometimes found in large proficiency differences may potentially demotivate task performance and not facilitate language learning (Foster and Ohta, 2005).

On the other hand, Jina, who was Sun's more proficient partner, explained that her partner's low proficiency triggered her active engagement:

My partner wasn't good at English. I realised that when she became my partner. So: I had more responsibility for completing activities and to provide assistance to her as well. I think it stimulated me to become a more active participant.

Here, her less proficient partner seems to facilitate Jina's taking on more responsibility and as an expert to encourage and lead her partner in most activities.

Interestingly, the three learners who commented about their partner's proficiency level are ones who were classified as having an *expert/novice type* of pair interaction, implying that a large gap in proficiency influences enhancing or reducing a learner's willingness to engage in an activity. In order to work successfully, Yule and Macdonald (1990) suggest that each learner play an appropriate interactive role. They found when the lower proficiency learner was actively engaged in and contributed to the task, there were more negotiations about meaning and successful resolutions. Furthermore, that study suggests when the higher proficiency learner respects the lower proficient learner's opinion, different proficient pairs can do successful pair work. On the other hand, if the higher proficient learner played the dominant role, there were few negotiations and the learner tended to ignore the lower proficiency learner's contributions. Thus, as Yule and Macdonald (1990) and Stone (1993) highlight, it might be important to do successful pair work whereby learners play appropriate interactive roles and respect one another's perspectives and trust each other's opinions, regardless of their proficiency.

## **6.5. Summary**

This chapter explained how 12 learners perceived pair work based on their experience for seven weeks. All the learners show a clear preference for pair work over individual work, which is consistent with the work of Storch (2004) that similarly presented learners' preference for pair and group work. In my own research, four features were suggested as explanations for this preference, including availability of immediate feedback, pleasure in the process of pair work, opportunity for communication and exposure to the target language.

Learners perceived peer feedback as useful for learning in that they could immediately reflect on the feedback about their errors. In pair work, learners considered that the process of activity performance was fun, compared with individual work, because working together provided them with having comfort and relaxing. Furthermore, opportunities to participate in communication through conversation were regarded positively because learners could verbalise their language knowledge and listen to the other's knowledge of language. Through the opportunities, learners may consolidate their knowledge and build new knowledge. In the EFL context where learners have limited L2 resources and little time to build them up, learners believed that pair work provided opportunities of exposure and practice in the target language for them, which would be crucial for language learning. Therefore, the learners view these features as the potential benefits of pair work to facilitate their language learning.

These findings point to the diverse factors that can influence pair work including the nature of the activities, individual differences and social factors. Learners' comments reflect the influence of activities on pair interaction. As seen in these data, cognitive demands of activities seem to relate to learners' perceptions of activity difficulty. For a more cognitively demanding activity, learners tend to perceive it as a challenging or difficult one, whereas for less cognitively demanding activity, they tend to regard it as an easy one. Furthermore, the perceived activity difficulty seem to affect learners' affective variables, such as their confidence in activity completion or their interest in an activity. Learners may lose their confidence and consequently have difficulty in utilising their language resources to perform the activity when they perceive it to be difficult. Therefore, the findings through learners' perceptions suggest that learners' perceived activity difficulty and their affective factors do not work independently in pair work but interdependently influence it.

Moreover, as Foster and Ohta (2005) point out, the social dimension cannot be

neglected in that interaction is both a language-learning activity and a social activity as well. The findings show that when learners were accustomed to working with the same partner and knew and understood each other's learning style, interlocutor familiarity tended to have a positive impact on pair interaction. In other words, through the experience of pair work over time, the learners seem to have solidified their social relationship. The analysis of pair talk data suggests the similar conclusion, as all six pairs show the relatively higher mutuality and equality on the last three activities. Furthermore, a partner's English proficiency and attitude to pair work need to be taken into account. Learners tend to have a trust in the knowledge of English of more highly proficient partners whereas they tend to have more responsibility for completing the activity if their partner is less proficient. Besides proficiency, a partner's approach to activity performance seems to influence pair interaction. Learners tend to prefer a partner's active engagement because the active participation stimulates their own engagement and eventually helps to lead to active pair interaction. That is, during pair work, learners' English proficiency or their attitude to one another and to the activity also influence pair work. Therefore, it can be said that activity-based, personal and interpersonal factors interdependently promote or reduce learners' willingness to do pair work and consequently influence the nature of pair work.

The findings of this study have pointed to variability and complexity that influences pair interaction. As suggested by Philp et al. (2010), when examining those factors that foster a focus on form in activity-based interaction, the findings of this study suggest that activity features alone may not predict incidence of pair interaction. What the learners themselves bring to the activity cannot be neglected: activity expectations and the partner relationship might be also important factors that influence pair work.

## Chapter 7

### **Data Analysis and Findings: The Relationship Between Pair Work and Learning Opportunities**

#### **7.1. Introduction**

This study has so far shown how learners interacted with their partner while performing language learning activities and then how they perceived their interaction. This chapter addresses the third research question: how does the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relate to language learning opportunities?

Some research on group or pair work as discussed earlier in Chapter 2 suggests that after investigating the relational aspect of peer interaction, certain types of interaction may be more conducive to learning than others. For example, Donato's (1994) study indicates that through collaborative scaffolding, collective groups tend to create more opportunities for learning than loosely knit groups. Furthermore, Storch (2002a) has illustrated that a collaborative orientation (collaborative and expert/novice) affords more opportunities for learning than a non-collaborative orientation (dominant/dominant and dominant/passive). This research suggests that the reason for the greater gains is that pairs with collaborative orientation are actively engaged in pair work in comparison with pairs with a non-collaborative orientation that involves little interaction.

In order to find out the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities, this chapter will discuss whether the findings of such previous studies are also found in this study, or whether any other factors influence opportunities for language learning.

## 7.2. Process of Analysis

Two steps were used to find out how pair interaction influenced language learning opportunities. First, post-activity and final interview data were used to analyse how learners thought about language learning through pair interaction after completing each activity and how they generally thought about the learning based on the experience of all their pair work. As a qualitative inquiry, this study focuses on the process of pair work and opportunities for language learning, depicting how learners engage with each other in pair work and presenting learners' perceptions of their experiences. As Patton (2002) explains, for studying process, the perceptions of participants themselves are a key process consideration. It is important to capture learners' experiences in their own words because the experience of process cannot be the same for different learners. There will be no measurements of learning gains, only the perceptions of participants and the teacher/researcher's perception (my own). In order to capture learners' perceptions, the interview data across the 12 learners were analysed with regard to their learning via pair work. In the process of iterative reading of the data collected from the semi-structured interview questions across all the participants, common themes and features emerged.

In addition to learners' interview data, pair talk data also were used to support learners' perceptions and to investigate the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities. In order to find out the relationship, many researchers have attempted to suggest evidence for language development via peer interaction by comparing results of pre- and post-tests. As Storch (2002a) points out, however, it is hard to match language items presented in post-activities performed by individuals with the items that are focused in pair work. In order to deal with the difficulty, some researchers developed dyad-specific post-tests that include language items mentioned and discussed by the pair (e.g. Swain and Lapkin, 1998). However, in the context of a



classroom-based naturalistic study, it is hard to develop meaningful individualised tests. Thus, this study uses a process-product approach to investigate the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities that is based on Storch's (2002a) work.

Storch used the approach to examine links between patterns of pair interaction, opportunities for learning created by the pair and subsequent individual uptake of what was learned during pair work on a similar version of a task. She used language-related episodes (LREs) to identify opportunities for learning and the items that learners focused on in LREs as potential tracers for a transfer of knowledge. The presence of these tracers in individual performance on isomorphic tasks was examined as evidence for the take up of the learning opportunity.

Like Storch's study, the process-product approach in this study was used to find out the relationship between pair interaction and opportunities for language learning. The opportunities for language learning were operationalised, following Swain and Lapkin's (1998) LREs. LREs were interpreted as segments of dialogue that illustrate what learners attend to and then the process with which they resolve the linguistic problems that arise via interaction. As Kim and McDonough (2011) note, this interpretation implies diverse interactional features used by learners, ranging from implicit interactional feedback moves to metalinguistic discussions, and these features have been claimed to encourage L2 learning. Using LREs as a unit of analysis makes it possible to trace the L2 learning that occurred during the LREs. Therefore, as Swain and Lapkin (1998) argue, an LRE can be said to be a helpful unit for understanding the L2 learning process and product. Such an episode can be seen as representing opportunities for language learning (Swain, 1998; 2000).

As a unit of analysis for a process-product approach, pair talk data were analysed in the first instance for episodes in which learners were engaged in language items, that is,

LREs. The language items learners focused on and resolved interactively in these LREs were used as tracers. For example, when learners discuss grammatical structure, such as the use of the passive form for the subject affected by the verb, the whole dialogue including the notice of the problem and the processes for resolving of it can be categorised as an LRE and the focused grammatical structure can be regarded as a language item that learners focused on and resolved. Then, the language item became a tracer for whether the knowledge was transferred to the individual learner.

In order to trace language items dealt with learners in LREs, this study did not design any individual activities but used the subsequent activities performed by the pairs. The seven different types of activity used in this study were closely related to the course syllabus, and last two activities, especially, provided opportunities for learners to use their language resources, including their prior knowledge or experience and new knowledge gained via previous pair work or lessons, in order to accomplish the given activities. Thus learners' independent performance, without any external assistance while performing in pairs on subsequent activities, was analysed for the presence of the tracers.

Following Storch (2008) and Frenandez Dobao (2016) clarification of the meaning of learning, learning in this study is understood as both new knowledge acquisition such as new grammatical forms or new lexis - and consolidation of existing knowledge or the extension of existing knowledge to new contexts (Swain and Lapkin, 1998). In terms of sociocultural perspectives of learning, the learning process means that knowledge co-constructed via pair interaction is internalised by individual learners and then subsequently re-used without any help. Based on this meaning of learning and the learning process, three cases were identified and labelled: opportunity for learning, missed opportunity for learning and opportunity for accuracy.

The opportunity for learning describes instances where the language items focused on by both learners in LREs are successfully used by learners without any assistance from their partner in the activities that followed. The opportunity is divided into two possibilities: knowledge consolidation and new knowledge building. Knowledge consolidation describes the cases where language learning is enhanced or expanded, based on learners' existing knowledge of the item; new knowledge building is where new language items are added to learners' language resources via pair interaction. A missed opportunity for learning describes instances where learners cannot themselves correctly use the language item focused on with their partner during prior activities, but they can complete it with minimal assistance from their partner. That is, when knowledge about the language item constructed during pair interaction has not yet been internalised by the learner, the learner thus still requires some degree of assistance to successfully express the item. The opportunity for accuracy is related to the opportunities of knowledge consolidation and missed opportunity in that learners already had some knowledge of the language item but frequently made mistakes to express it correctly. However, in this case, unlike these opportunities, learners explicitly know the rule governing the language form, but either they used it correctly or they made an error while performing the activities. The reason for the error might be related to the fact that learners have had few opportunities to use the form in an EFL context, resulting in inaccuracy in the use of something seemingly already acquired. Thus, such instances are categorised as opportunities for accuracy.

The following sections illustrate how the data from interviews and pair talk were analysed and present the findings from the three types of category.

### **7.3. Language Learning Opportunities Through Pair Interaction**

In post-activity interviews, learners revealed how interaction with their peer influenced language learning while performing each activity. Most learners engaged in *collaborative* and *expert/novice* relationships with a collaborative orientation. They were generally positive about their language learning through pair interaction, reporting that they felt they had more opportunities to learn a range of vocabulary or structures, to identify areas of own weakness, to negotiate difficulties with a peer, to resolve the difficulties for themselves and then gained confidence in using English. In particular, interview data about language learning reflect LREs. Learners tended to believe they had more opportunities for language learning when they were actively engaged in LREs, which can support Swain's argument that LREs can be regarded as opportunities for language learning. They seem to believe that these opportunities result in consolidating their current knowledge or building new linguistic knowledge. On the other hand, in the case of engaging in *cooperative* or *dominant/passive types* of interaction that have a non-collaborative orientation, the learners tended to think that the pair work did not considerably help or promote their learning. The classification based on learners' interview data seems to be generally related to the level of engagement with each other in pairs, but other factors relate to language learning development, such as learners' affective factors or current linguistic knowledge. More detailed findings will be presented in the next sections.

#### **7.3.1. Opportunity for Learning: Knowledge Consolidation**

In post-activity interviews, some learners commonly mentioned that pair work helped to enhance their current knowledge and extend it to different contexts in that they could verbalise the language for themselves and listen to their partner. As Swain (2006)

argues, learners are enabled to become aware of their limited knowledge and to notice what their linguistic needs are in the process of putting their thoughts into words. It is an important part of the learning process. In this study, learners seem to realise the importance of verbalisation as a process that can lead to learning.

In the interview after completing activity five, “reconstruction of text”, Young and Sung recognised that pair work enhanced their current knowledge:

Young: When I found out an error, I explained the reason of the error to my partner in order to share my thoughts with him, whether he already knew it or not. In the process of explanation, I could clearly organise my thoughts and reflect on what I said. Thus, it helped my learning.

Sung: When I explained why it was wrong, I felt more convinced by myself. In order to express my thoughts to others, it is important to explain them clearly. In the process, I can enhance my learning.

Their comments reflect that when learners engage in explaining, reflecting and describing to others in order to solve linguistic problems, the process can lead to constructing or consolidating their knowledge.

Another example comes from Sun and Jina’s data. Sun explained how one aspect of pair work reminded her of a language form while engaging in the text reconstruction activity:

It was a good chance to reflect on grammar rules. When I saw the content, I wasn’t sure whether it would be wrong. But, when I explained my thoughts to my partner, I was able to convince myself of the answer. Just in case, I requested Jina to confirm it. Pair work makes me clearly understand some grammar rules.  
[post-activity interview after activity five]

Her words can be verified in the pair talk in Excerpt 127. Sun noticed the problem of verb form and, adding an explanation, suggested changing it to the passive (line 8). Jina agreed to Sun’s suggestion by repeating it (line 9). The process of transforming

inner thoughts to external knowledge enabled Sun to organise her thoughts and to consolidate her knowledge of some language forms.

**Excerpt 127: Passive form (Pair 5 in activity 5)**

- 8 Sun: 그리고 be동사 다음에 동사원형이 올수 없으니 ... 주어가 사물이니까 수동태.  
(And after verb, the infinitive of a verb cannot come ... the subject is an  
object, so passive form.) 그럼 (then) be completed. 맞지? (right?)
- 9 Jina: 음:: ... 그럴죠. 수동태. (Um:: ... right. Passive form.)

Using the passive form can be seen again in the following activity. Sun used a passive form for herself, 'you are confirmed on the flight', in order to continue the story suggested by Jina. Sun had, and used the opportunities to consolidate her existing linguistic knowledge about the passive form through verbalising her thoughts while engaging in pair work.

For Mia, pair work seemed both to enhance her vocabulary and help her to clarify knowledge:

This pair work helped me expand my vocabulary. When we started the conversation, Sung used the words 'on vacation', but I was thinking to use 'on holiday'. I knew they had the same meaning. ... Umm:: when I tried to use the expressions of 'ahead' and 'behind', I realised that I didn't clearly understand them. The pair work with Sung helped me to reinforce my deficient or uncertain knowledge. [post-activity interview after activity two]

As an example of vocabulary expansion, Mia mentioned 'on holiday' as a synonym when Sung said 'on vacation'. The process of suggesting different words may enable both learners to enhance their vocabulary and expand it.

Furthermore, Mia seemed to have an awareness of the status of her own knowledge, i.e. what she did or did not know while engaging in pair work. Her deficit seemed to be made good with her partner's assistance, leading as such to her learning enhancement. Her comments can be found in the situation of the LRE as seen in Excerpt 128. Mia was hesitating to use the preposition 'of' after 'ahead' and asked her partner (line 25).

Sung clearly answered, adding a clarification regarding the opposite expression ‘behind’ which did not need ‘of’ (line 26). Then, Sung was induced to use the expression ‘ahead of’ by changing the subject to Mexico (line 28). With emphasising ‘behind’ in a new context, Mia completed the sentence and gave herself the practice she needed (line 29).

**Excerpt 128: Passive form (Pair 3 in activity 2)**

- 25 Mia: 4시간 시차. (four hours time difference) Seoul is four hours ahead: ... of(?)  
of가 들어가나? (Do I need to insert ‘of’?)
- 26 Sung: Yeah. Ahead of, behind without of.
- 27 Mia: Okay, then, Seoul is four hours ahead of Mexico.
- 28 Sung: Mexico를 먼저 쓸 수 있지. 그럼, (We can use ‘Mexico’ at first. Then,) Mexico  
is =
- 29 Mia: = four hours BEHIND Seoul.
- 30 Sung: Right. Behind Mexico.

The expressions of ‘ahead’ and ‘behind’ were taught in the lesson and the point was to carefully use the preposition ‘of’ after ‘ahead’. Mia seemingly had yet to acquire the expression when she tried to make the sentence for herself as seen in line 25. However, Sung’s assistance with her difficulty and his elicitation relating to different expressions seem to enhance Mia’s uncertain linguistic knowledge in pair work.

Sung also explained how pair interaction helped his learning after completing activity two:

While making the story, I could learn something from my partner. Umm: I knew the expressions suggested by Mia, but hardly used them myself. It reminded me of how to use the expression.

His response implies that pair interaction helped to consolidate his current knowledge, and the following excerpt supports his words as an evidence of an opportunity for learning.

Mia and Sung suggested their ideas for making a story. When Mia suggested a sentence based on her idea, Sung complimented her on the expression ‘with my family’

(lines 11, 12). At the end of the story, Sung simply said ‘have fun’, but Mia expanded it to ‘with your family’ (line 31). It seems that the expression was known to Sung, but he was not accustomed to using it. For Mia, the interaction consolidated her existing knowledge of the expression ‘with one’s family’.

**Excerpt 129: With somebody (Pair 3 in activity 2)**

11 Mia: = I’m going to Mexico with my family.

12 Sung: with my family 좋다. (good)

... [ ] ...

30 Sung: Have fun.

31 Mia: Have fun with your family.

Later on, in activity six, Sung added the expression ‘with my friend’ to the end of the sentence (line 14) when he continued to make the story, as seen in the following excerpt:

**Excerpt 130: With somebody (Pair 3 in activity 6)**

13 Mia: Did you travel alone?

14 Sung: Umm ... No, I I travelled umm with my friend. How about you?

The above excerpt shows that Sung could use the expression originally suggested by Mia in activity two in a new context. As he complimented Mia on the expression instead of requesting the meaning of it in activity two, it is assumed that he already knew the meaning. However, he seems not to be using the expression. Thus, what pair interaction seems to have achieved is that when he had opportunity to be exposed to the expression more frequently, he was then able to use it. In other words, this suggests that his knowledge about the expression has been consolidated and pair work gave him an opportunity to use that knowledge.

Besides lexis, Sung also explained how his linguistic knowledge about language form could be enhanced in pair work:



I learned how to use ‘must have’ plus p.p. from Mia [i.e. that the phrase ‘must have’ is followed by a past participle]. I must have learned it before, but I wasn’t sure how to use it. I think I can’t forget it owing to Mia’s kind explanation. [post-activity interview after activity six]

The F-LRE mentioned by Sung was excerpted in Chapter 5 as an act of providing and receiving assistance. While performing pair work, Mia suggested the sentence ‘you must have had a great time’ and Sung requested to explain the reason for not using the simple past tense, ‘you had a great time’. At her partner’s request, Mia elaborately explained the reason for using a form of participle. Repeating the whole sentence suggested by Mia, Sung confirmed his understanding. In the process of pair interaction, he could recall his old memory and consolidate the knowledge.

As seen in these examples, learners’ perspectives and interactive talk suggest that pair interaction can consolidate learners’ current linguistic knowledge. Another opportunity for learning classified as new knowledge building will be explained in the next section.

### **7.3.2. Opportunity for Learning: New Knowledge Building**

In post-activity interviews, some learners commented that they learned new expressions and unfamiliar grammar rules in pair work. For example, Sung explained how his partner’s assistance affected his learning:

I could learn the new word owing to my partner’s very detailed explanation. [post-activity interview after activity four]

As seen in Excerpt 131, Sung asked Mia about the meaning of ‘re-sealable’ (line 4) and Mia provided an elaborative explanation for him (line 5). With her explanation, Sung could understand the meaning of word and this understanding may lead to him acquiring the new word.

**Excerpt 131: Meaning the word 're-sealable' (Pair 3 in activity 3)**

- 4 Sung: re-sealable' 뭐라고? (What does 're-sealable' mean?)
- 5 Mia: Seal이 “봉하다”라는 뜻이야. 앞에 re가 붙어서 “다시 봉하다”라는 말인데, sealable형용사니까 “다시 봉할 수 있는”이란 뜻이 되는거지. 비닐 지퍼백같은 걸 말하는 거야. ('Seal' is “seal: Korean translation”. With adding 're' to it, it becomes “re-seal: Korean translation”. 'Sealable' is adjective, so it means “re-sealable: Korean translation”. It's like a zipperbag.
- 6 Sung: 아 지퍼백. (Ah zipperbag.) Okay 이해 했어. (I got it.)

On the other hand, Chang explained how he co-constructed unknown words with his partner:

When I don't know the meaning of word, I usually use a dictionary to find the meaning. But, with Mijin, it was really good to try guessing the meaning before using the dictionary. In doing so, I think I could understand the word more clearly. [post-activity interview after activity three]

As the pair guessed the meaning of the phrases, 'more than' and 'less than' through pair interaction based on pair talk data, it seems that verbalisation of their thinking can serve as a tool for reasoning and would assist in building new lexis. Another interview from Chang shows how pair work was helpful in acquiring new vocabulary:

As we guessed the unknown words with Mijin on the previous activity, we also did so this time. I believe that it would be very helpful in remembering the new words and to use them later. [post-activity interview after activity four]

His comments can be verified by their pair talk in LREs. The following excerpt shows the process of learning the meaning of 'occupy'. When they tried to translate the sentence 'all window seats are occupied today', Mijin guessed the meaning, but was unsure of it (line 7). By using a dictionary (line 8), they could confirm the meaning of the word and understand the meaning of the sentence (line 11).

**Excerpt 132: Using the word 'occupy' (Pair 6 in activity 4)**

- 6 Chang: 음 ... “창가자리가:” (Um ... “window seat is: Korean translation”)... occupied? 이게 뭐지? (What does this mean?)
- 7 Mijin: 'I'm sorry'가 앞에 나온거 보니까 자리가 없다는 뜻 같은데: 잘 모르겠어. 사전 볼까? (The sentence starts with 'I'm sorry', so I think it means there are no

		seats available: I'm not sure. Shall we use a dictionary?)
8	Chang:	니 말이 맞을거 같은데: 그래도 정확히 찾아보자. (I think your guess would be right: but let's check it for accuracy.) Occupied
9		...
10	Mijin:	'Occupy'는 ... "차지하다. 점령하다."라는 뜻이야. (it means "occupy: Korean translation")
11	Chang:	니가 생각했던게 맞네. 여기서 "모든 창가쪽 자리가 다 찻습니다."라는 말이네. (Your guess was right. It means "all window seats are occupied: Korean translation")
12	Mijin:	Okay.

Evidence of constructing new knowledge of the word can be found in the following excerpt. Chang suggested making the same sentence dealt with in the previous excerpt (line 8). Agreeing to his suggestion, Mijin suggested the sentence using the word 'occupy', but then she noticed something wrong (line 9). Chang explained that it should be changed to the passive form, but did not directly correct Mijin's error (line 10). When Mijin reconstructed the sentence, she noticed another error and added 's' to the countable noun 'window seat' (line 11). After then, she changed to the passive form by herself (line 11).

<b>Excerpt 133: Using the word 'occupy' (Pair 6 in activity 6)</b>		
8	Chang:	그리고 자리 없다고 할까? (Why don't we say that all seats are occupied?)
9	Mijin:	그래. (Okay.) I'm so sorry, but ...umm all window seat ... occupy 아닌데 뭐였지? (No, what was it?)
10	Chang:	전에 했잖어. (We did it.) 사물이 주어여서 자리가 다 채워진 상황이잖어. (It is the situation where something is the subject and the seats are occupied.)
11	Mijin:	= 기다려 (Wait). 나 알아 (I know). Ummm all window seat 아니 (no) seats: are occu occupied. Right?
12	Chang:	Perfect!

Even if Mijin could not successfully suggest the whole sentence at the first time, she could use the word 'occupy' without any assistance that earlier in activity four was not familiar to her. Chang also seems to have acquired the word since he explained how to change the verb form. That is, it would appear that unfamiliar vocabulary co-constructed during the earlier interaction had become internalised by both learners. Therefore, the

suggestion made by Mijin and the explanation by Chang was taken as evidence of building new knowledge resulting from pair interaction.

A similar case can be seen with Jimin and Young. In the L-LRE in activity one, which was excerpted in Chapter 5, both learners were engaged in collaborative dialogue. Jimin asked Young how to say 'a single ticket' in English. Even though the question was not directly related to the activity, Young suggested the expressions 'a one-way ticket' and 'a single ticket' in response to the question. In the process, Jimin had an opportunity to acquire the new expressions. Later on, in activity six, Jimin tested out his new vocabulary in constructing a dialogue. He used the expression that asked about it in activity one (line 20). Then both learners used expressions such as 'fix the return date', 'book a round trip ticket' and 'an open ticket' that had been dealt with in activity one.

**Excerpt 134: Using acquired expressions (Pair 4 in activity 6)**

- |    |        |   |
|----|--------|---|
| 20 | Jimin: | What about:: saying I'll book a single ticket?  |
| 21 | Young: | Okay, then I think you need to explain the reason.  |
| 22 | Jimin: | Yes. Um:: because I don't fix the:: return date. Is it Okay?  |
| 23 | Young: | Ye, very good.<br>Then, um:: You can book a round-trip ticket because: you: can have: an open ticket. How about it? |
| 24 | Jimin: | Good. That's good.  |

The excerpt illustrates that pair work provides opportunities for learners to test out their knowledge constructed in previous activity engagement.

As seen in both examples of an opportunity for learning, language development occurs as learners engage with each other collaboratively: pair interactions provide learners with occasions both to enhance their current linguistic knowledge and to build new knowledge via collaborative dialogues. In other words, when learners are actively engaged in LREs with relatively high level of pair involvement, as Swain (1998, 2006) argues, such episodes can be regarded as opportunities for learning. However, all pair

interactions do not necessarily provide opportunities for language learning. The following section presents examples of missed opportunities for learning in pair work.

### 7.3.3. Missed Opportunity for Learning

A factor that influences missed opportunities for learning can be related to the types of pair interaction. Unlike the cases that learners engaged in collaborative interaction, when learners performed in a non-collaborative orientation, such as a *cooperative* or *dominant/passive* relationship, they revealed the uncertainty of their learning in post-activity interviews. For example, in the interview after Mijin performed activity one in a *cooperative type* of pair interaction, she seems to regret considerably her focus on product rather than process:

I didn't know what I did on this activity. Just focused on finding answers. I didn't remember the contents of the dialogue. We should've focused more on content and had more chances to learn some expressions rather than just finding answers.

A similar response was found in Jang's interview after activity four:

Learning:: ... Um: I don't know about it this time. What I remember is that we just did crosschecking for answers. It is hard to say I've learned something from that pair work.

Both learners' comments show that their cooperative interaction tended to focus more on activity performances or outcomes and rarely influenced their learning. This implies that their low level of engagement with their partner did not play a positive role in learning.

In addition to a learner's low level of engagement with their partner, other factors seem to affect learning. In a collaborative orientation of pair interaction, learners' comments and their pair talk demonstrate the missed opportunities for learning. For example, Sun,

who actively participated in all the activities, doubted the possibilities for learning through pair work while performing activities one and two. After an *expert/novice* relationship in activity one, she explained how pair work affected her learning:

I don't remember what I did. Even if I tried to work actively, it was hard to understand the whole dialogue. I don't know whether I could remember and use the expressions used in the given dialogue. What I did was just following my partner.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the proficiency gap with her partner and her lack of confidence appear to influence Sun's learning even when she actively engaged with her partner. Her concern is shown in their pair talk data. Unlike the examples of consolidation mentioned above, Sun provides an example of a missed opportunity for learning. Excerpt 135 shows that Sun correctly translated the given sentence and Jina confirmed it was correct.

**Excerpt 135: Using the word 'available' (Pair 5 in activity 1)**

- 19 Sun: 'I'm sorry, sir. All seats are booked up for the Saturday, but we have seats available for Sunday.' 어::: ... “죄송합니다. 모든 좌석은 토요일에 예약되었습니다. 그러나 우리는 토요일에 어: ... 이용가능한 좌석이 있습니다: Korean translation” 맞게했나? (Is this right?)
- 20 Jina: 네 잘하셨습니다. (Yes, you did well.)

Later, when the pair were engaged in activity six, Sun tried to use the word 'available', but could not do so without Jina's assistance. In Excerpt 136, in response to Sun's request, Jina suggested a sentence using the word 'available' (line 14). Then Sun realised that the word 'available' had been used in the previous activity and repeated the whole sentence suggested by Jina (line 15). Thus, this learner's affective factor, which is lack of confidence based on the proficiency gap with her partner, might have led to this missed opportunity. That is, even if Sun was able to translate the meaning of the word 'available' into Korean in activity one, this did not serve to consolidate her existing knowledge and to extend it to the new contexts in activity six.

**Excerpt 136: Using the word 'available' (Pair 5 in activity 6)**

- 13 Sun: 좌석이 있습니다를 어떻게 말하지? (How do I say if any seats are available?)  
 14 Jina: 음:: We have seats available. 이렇게 하면 되지 않을까요? (Isn't it right?)  
 15 Sun: 아 맞다. (Ah, right.) available이란 단어를 썼었지. (We used the word 'available') 그래. (Right.) We have seats available.

Engaging in this interaction with more confidence in activity six, seems to give Sun a chance to enhance her existing knowledge about using the word 'available'. In activity seven, Sun could use the word in different contexts without any help in order to add to the sentence suggested by Jina:

**Excerpt 137: Using the word 'available' (Pair 5 in activity 7)**

- 28 Jina: Let's stay in X hotel. Then ... when? =  
 29 Sun: = When are you ... available? 이렇게 해도 될까? (Is this okay?)  
 30 Jina: 그렇죠. (Yes.) When are you available?

These examples of using the word 'available' show that learning might not occur as Sun had low confidence in her own language proficiency despite active engagement in pair work, but increased confidence may facilitate learning. Thus, it suggests that learner's affective factors necessitate further research to be considered as one of the factors that influence learning.

Another example of missed opportunity for learning is found with June and Hyuk who in activity five were working in an *expert and novice* relationship. In the following excerpt, both learners were engaged in the resolution of the text reconstruction activity with active interaction, focusing on use of passive form. Hyuk noticed a problem with the verb form in the simple present (line 4) and suggested changing the form to the passive (line 6). In response to his suggestion, June changed the verb to the passive form (line 7). Later, during the same activity, it was June who pointed out the same problem (line 13). Hyuk then corrected the problem (line 14).

**Excerpt 138: Passive form (Pair 1 in activity 5)**

- 4 Hyuk: “입국카드는 모든 승객들, 아이들을 포함한 모든 승객들에 의해 작성::되어야 합니다: Korean translation” 여기 be동사가 나왔는데, complete라는 동사의 원형이 나오면 안되지. (There is the verb form, ‘be’, so, the infinitive of ‘complete’ cannot be followed.)
- 5 June: 그래? 그럼 어떻게 바꿔? (really? Then how do we change it?)
- 6 Hyuk: 수동태가 필요하니까 be plus p.p.형태가 와야지. (It should be the passive form, so ‘be plus p.p.’ need to come)
- 7 June: 그럼 (then) be completed?
- 8 Hyuk: 어. 그래서 해석이 “작성되다”가 되는거지. (Right, so the translation is “be completed: Korean translation”)
- ... [] ...
- 13 June: 어:: “입국카드는 정확히 쓸 것입니다” 이것도 좀 이상하다. (“The immigration card may complete accurately: Korean translation” It’s also strange.) 쓰여져야 합니다 아니야? (Should be completed, shouldn’t it?)
- 14 Hyuk: 방금 내가 한 부분처럼 쓰여져야 할거 같아. (It would be changed to the part I’ve done.) may complete가 아니고 must be completed가 돼야지 말이 될거 같아. (I think it needs to be change to ‘must be completed’, not ‘may complete’)
- 15 June: 그래. (Right) must be completed 어:: (Ah::)

In the following activity, June did not use the passive form in order to make the sentence ‘You are confirmed’ but suggested the simple present form (line 36). Hyuk, who noticed the error, repeated the verb with a rising intonation (line 37). However, June did not notice his partner’s hint to correct the wrong verb form. Hyuk then provided an elaborative explanation in order to remind June of the passive form. With Hyuk’s assistance, June eventually realised the need for the passive form (line 42).

**Excerpt 139: Passive form (Pair 1 in activity 6)**

- 36 June: = 어: You confirm =
- 37 Hyuk: = just confirm(?)
- 38 June: 왜?
- 39 Hyuk: Confirm의 뜻이 뭐야? (What does ‘confirm’ mean?)
- 40 June: “확정하다” (“confirm: Korean translation”)
- 41 Hyuk: 그럼 너가 확인한거야? ... 여행사 직원이 해준거니까 = (Then, who confirm? ... the travel agent confirms it, so =)
- 42 June: = 수동 (Passive form) you are confirmed. Right?
- 43 Hyuk: Ye. You are confirmed on flight KE 007



The excerpt above implies that Hyuk could consolidate his existing knowledge of the passive form through interaction. On the other hand, in the case of June, it can be said that the interaction brought the use of the passive form to his conscious attention and co-construction helped him to internalise knowledge about its use and form, but June could not yet use the passive form independently. As Storch (2002a) similarly points out in her study, the nature of his internalisation depends on his current language knowledge. Thus, this suggests that a learner's existing knowledge may also influence language learning.

In short, as in the cases of the opportunities for learning, pair interview data show that the level of learner engagement influences a missed opportunity for learning.

Additionally, data presented above show that learners' affective factors and their existing knowledge might influence learning in that examples of missed opportunity for learning were found in the *expert/novice type* of pair interaction.

#### **7.3.4. Opportunity for Accuracy**

Interview data and pair talk data indicate opportunities for accuracy. In the post-activity interview after activity seven, learners commonly explained how hard it was to speak English fluently with accuracy and how pair work assisted with this problem. Jimin commented on the benefits of pair work in relation to accuracy:

While engaging in pair work, I could reflect on my learning. Sometimes, I didn't realise my mistakes or: I didn't remember what I said. But, owing to my partner's help, I could correct my errors and speak accurately. I mean the: question 'which airplane did you take?' Through this experience, I thought I should more focus on accuracy when I speak.

His comments can be verified in F-LRE of pair talk. Excerpt 140 shows how Jimin was able to suggest the correct form of a sentence. He omitted the modal verb 'do' (line 24),

but he did not notice the omission even when Young pointed it out. Instead, he asked Young to repeat what he had said (line 28). After Young's repetition, Jimin noticed the omission of the modal verb and then accurately added the verb to the sentence (line 30).

**Excerpt 140: Passive form (Pair 4 in activity 7)**

24 Jimin: Which airplane you take?  
 25 Young: Which airplane? Before you.  
 26 Jimin: What? Before you? What do you mean?  
 27 Young: You miss one word.  
 28 Jimin: What did I say?  
 29 Young: Which airplane you take?  
 30 Jimin: Oh, DID. Ummm which airplane did you take? Right?  
 31 Young: Yeah.

Jimin must know the use of the modal verb 'do' to form questions, by putting the subject after 'do' and before the main verb, but he seemed to be giving more weight to delivering the meaning rather than accuracy when he said the sentence. This example shows that pair work can provide an opportunity for accuracy.

Similar findings can be found in Sato's (2013) study, investigating the beliefs of second language learners in terms of peer interaction and peer corrective feedback. Based on learners' interview data, Sato found that even though learners had grammatical knowledge, their speaking skills were relatively poor: they did not even notice that they would make simple grammatical errors until they received corrective feedback from their peer. As the learners in Sato's study confirmed in their interview, thus, peer interaction can provide much more opportunity to notice their errors and eventually contribute to increased grammatical accuracy.

Another example of accuracy can be seen in Mijin's case. In the interview after activity seven, she revealed how difficult she found it to express what she intended to say in English:

While doing this activity, I realised how frequently I made an easy grammar mistake. Definitely I knew grammar for making past tense, but I could not apply it for saying in English what I was thinking. I frequently said the present tense, when I should have used the past tense. It's really difficult applying a grammar rule and speaking at the same time. I think I need more practice to speak accurately in English.

Even if Mijin already acquired how and when the past tense should be used, she seemed to have difficulty using the past tense because of having few opportunities to use the form. The following excerpt provides an example where the pair dealt with the past tense. In order to continue the conversation, Mijin answered Chang's question using the simple present tense (line 25). As Chang suggested the correct form with an explanation (line 26), Mijin accepted his version by repeating it (line 27). Later, she used both past tense and simple present tense in the same sentence (line 29). When Chang pointed out the error by repeating it, Mijin immediately corrected the error to past tense (line 31).

**Excerpt 141: Past tense (Pair 6 in activity 7)**

- 25 Mijin: 음:: (웃음) (Um:: laugh) Yes, we spend time together.  
 26 Chang: 과거니까 spent 아냐? (Isn't it 'spent' because of past tense?)  
 27 Mijin: Right. Spent. Spent time together.  
 ... [ ] ...  
 29 Mijin: Ummm We went Eiffel tower together and eat delicious food.  
 30 Chang: Eat? 앞에는 went라고 잘 하고 왜 = (You correctly said 'went', but why =)  
 31 Mijin: = Ah, ate. Ate delicious food.  
 32 Chang: Okay.

Excerpt 141 shows that Mijin had difficulty in controlling her use of a grammatical form she had previously acquired and it led to inaccuracy in use, but pair interaction can contribute to accurate and fluent use of grammar rules.

A similar example can be found in the following excerpt where learners dealt with the plural form of countable nouns. This form frequently causes errors for EFL/ESL

learners. Hyuk noticed he was having a problem with a plural form and repeated the error (line 35). June responded by supplying the correct form, adding 's' to the countable noun (line 36) and Hyuk then agreed with his correction.

**Excerpt 142: Plural form of countable noun (Pair 1 in activity 2)**

- 34 June: ... Seoul is two hour: ... ahead of Bangkok. 맞지? (Right?)  
 35 Hyuk: Right, but two hour?  
 36 June: 어? (Ah?) 어 (Ah)... two hour ... 아니아니 (no no) two hours. Two가 있으니까 s. (because of two, adding s)  
 37 Hyuk: Yeah.

In activity five, "reconstruction of text", the text included an error of plural form, 'all passenger'. June found the error and suggested adding 's' to the countable noun, 'passenger'. This seems to demonstrate evidence of learning via pair interaction, but in the last activity, June made the same error again. As seen in Excerpt 144, June did not add 's' to the countable noun as he had done in activity two. When Hyuk repeated it, June corrected the error by himself.

**Excerpt 143: Plural form of countable noun (Pair 1 in activity 7)**

- 10 June: Ummm ... There is two problem.  
 11 Hyuk: Two problem(?)  
 12 June: Problems, s

June's repeated error does not mean that June does not know how to make plural forms of countable nouns in that he noticed the same error in activity five by himself and suggested the correct form of the error without any help. Rather, it indicates a lack of accuracy. While performing a grammar-related activity, he focused on the plural form errors. On the other hand, when performing activities where he is required to speak in English, he seems to be less conscious of the grammatical form and focus more on meaning.

A lack of accuracy can be found in the EFL context where learners have less opportunity to practice or use their English knowledge and limited hours of exposure to the target language. Therefore, for EFL learners who have already acquired some knowledge of grammatical forms, pair work may provide more opportunities to use accurate language.

#### **7.4. Discussion**

These findings suggest that pair work can provide opportunities for language development in the form of consolidation of current knowledge and construction of new knowledge. In particular, the language development is seen in the pair talk data and the learner interviews having a collaborative orientation. The results can be explained by reference to sociocultural perspectives, where learning is mediated first at the social level and then internalised at an individual level. First, the above finding in this study that pair talk with a collaborative orientation shows greater opportunities for learning can be explained by the mediation at the social level: language development can progress through the process of social interaction when learners become active participants (Lantolf, 2000a). As noted in Chapter 5, *collaborative* and *expert/novice types* present a higher level of learner engagement by requesting confirmation or clarification offering elaborative explanations, and then interactively resolving language difficulties. These processes of pair interaction at the social level also seem to provide more opportunities for language development.

Second, a transfer of linguistic knowledge can be explained in terms of Vygotsky's internalisation. A process of internalisation means the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal one. Once socially mediated external forms are internalised, a person can carry out actions without any apparent external

assistance and mediated assistance is internally situated (Lantolf, 2000a). In this study, the instances in the sections about the opportunities for learning, in which linguistic knowledge co-constructed in pair work was subsequently used in later activities without any external assistance, suggest that internalisation took place.

What facilitates the internalisation is language. Language is utilised as a tool that mediates cognitive activity in which learners can plan, organise and review their actions (Vygotsky, 1979). Deriving from Vygotsky's work, Swain (2006, p.98) has argued that 'linguaging' or producing language is an activity, a 'process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language'. That is, learners are using language as a cognitive tool to mediate their own thinking and others' thinking. As shown in the data of Philp et al.'s research (2010), the processes of verbalisation lead learners to focus on what they are saying and what their interlocutor is saying. In this study, data from pair talk can be taken as instances of verbalisation serving 'as a window into specific processes that might be enabling for L2 learning' (Ganem-Gutierrez & Harun, 2011, p.100): drawing the learners' attention to linguistic features, becoming aware of gaps between what they would like to express and their existing linguistic resources, and giving and receiving external assistance in order to reduce the gaps. In the processes, the findings suggest that verbalisation can serve to consolidate learners' existing linguistic knowledge or extend it to new contexts and build new knowledge. These findings are consistent with those of Swain and her colleagues (e.g., Swain and Lapkin, 1998, 2002; Swain et. al., 2009; Tocalli-Beller and Swain, 2005, 2007). They have demonstrated the positive impact of languaging on learners' learning, concluding that languaging about language is one of the ways that L2 learning occurs.

It can be hypothesised that internalisation of L2 through social interaction occurs in ZPD, describing the distance between the learner's actual level without any assistance and the potential level for development with some assistance from more capable others.

The more capable others in SLA are extended to include those language learners in pair or group work who have little or no expert guidance unlike their teachers. In this study, in the case of *collaborative* and *expert/novice types*, the extended meaning of ZPD seemed evident. Both learners in both types of pairs provided mutual assistance to each other and co-constructed in ZPD. However, in the case of an *expert/novice type*, the data from pair work and interviews illustrate that the assistance given by the expert was sometimes beyond the novice's ZPD.

As seen in the case of Hyuk and June who interacted in an *expert/novice* relationship, even if Hyuk as an expert provided elaborative explanations to June who needed assistance in order to solve a problem, the data from their pair talk indicate that the assistance did not facilitate June's internalisation and he missed an opportunity for language learning and development. This can be explained by the concept of ZPD. The assistance provided by Hyuk was beyond what June could potentially achieve in collaboration with a more capable peer: it was beyond June's ZPD.

Another explanation of missed opportunity can be related to a learner's affective factor. As explained in Chapter 6, affective factors might temporally expand or reduce learners' current linguistic knowledge (Robinson, 2001) and then influence the missed opportunity for learning. In the case of Sun, who actively participated in all activities, when she had relatively low confidence in her linguistic knowledge, language development did not take place.

Unlike Storch's findings (2002a) that non-collaborative patterns of pair interaction present some evidence for no transfer of knowledge based on pair talk data, this study cannot find significant data from pair talk based on process-product analysis in order to relate the type of pair interaction to language development, but interview data provide

the support for these findings involving a missed opportunity for learning. After engaging in cooperative interaction, learners tended to feel that they learned very little.

To account for the instances of opportunity for accuracy, EFL contexts are important. As EFL learners have few chances to use the target language outside the classroom, they have limited opportunities to use it. The pair talk data showed that even if they had some linguistic knowledge, their use seemed to depend on frequency of use. It can be said that pair work provides further opportunity for learners to improve their grammatical accuracy.

However, these findings need to be carefully interpreted in terms of language development arising from pair interactions in this study. In the analysis process, the data from pair talk used to find out the relationship between pair interaction and language learning was limited because only corresponding items with previous activities and subsequent activities were available. Another aspect is the focus of this analysis, which was to find evidence for language learning. However, when learners were asked about learning from pair work, some of them suggested that they learned a strategy for approaching activities via negotiation with their partner. The strategy can be regarded for learners as one of benefits of pair work.

## **7.5. Summary**

This chapter considered the last research question: how does the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relate to opportunities for language learning? This study, using qualitative analysis with interview data and a process-product approach with pair talk data has shown that there were three types of evidence in relation to language learning. The first set of evidence suggests that pair work with a collaborative orientation can provide more opportunities for language learning in comparison to pair



work with a non-collaborative orientation. Thus, this finding provides support for sociocultural perspectives, in which learning is regarded as essentially social.

The second set of evidence suggests that pair work with a non-collaborative orientation may have more occasions that miss an opportunity for learning because of low incidences of co-construction of knowledge. However, even in pair work with a collaborative orientation, there were incidents of missed opportunity for learning when a learner had low confidence for their English proficiency and new knowledge was beyond the learner's current linguistic cognitive. Thus, this finding suggests that language development might occur when socially co-constructed knowledge via collaborative pair work is internalised, but, additionally, other factors such as learner's affective factors and current linguistic knowledge might influence language development.

A third possibility is that EFL learners need more opportunities to use the target language in order to increase language accuracy. Even if they had some linguistic knowledge, they had few opportunities to use it outside the classroom. Pair work can provide additional opportunities for EFL learners to test out their knowledge via pair interaction.

Even if this chapter cannot provide ample evidence for the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities, the findings from this study suggest that the factor that influences language learning is not pair work per se but how to engage in such pair work. In support of Vygotsky's concept of ZPD, the data indicate that internalisation of new knowledge cannot occur if it is beyond a learner's potential level of development. In addition, the data show that a learner's affective factor might influence not only their willingness to participate in pair work, as found in Chapter 6, but also language learning.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

#### 8.1. Introduction

This final chapter is a summary of the thesis and draws conclusions about the main findings of the study. It presents a summary of the thesis, reviewing the three subsidiary research questions that guided the investigation in this study, and summarises and synthesises the main findings. This is followed by a discussion of the contributions of this study to theory and language classroom pedagogy and of limitations of this study. Then, this chapter draws conclusions with some suggestions for further research.

#### 8.2. Summary of the Study

This study investigated how pair work influences language learning in EFL lessons, in particular in a South Korean college. Specifically, the study addresses these three subsidiary research questions that guided the investigation in this study: namely, (i) how learners interact with their partner in language learning activities, (ii) how they perceive their peer interaction, and (iii) how the interactive process of accomplishing the activities relates to language learning opportunities. Therefore, as an attempt at providing a better understanding of the role of peer interaction in language learning in an EFL college setting, the aim of the study was to explore the nature of peer interaction, learners' perception of their interaction and the relationship between the interaction and language learning opportunities.

The study is based on a sociocultural theory of human cognitive development, which views social interaction as a site for knowledge construction and sees the interaction as

an important factor in facilitating development. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that higher cognitive functions first appear among people at the social level and then subsequently become internalised at the individual level. The internalisation of social interaction is mediated by language. Vygotsky's work focused on children's cognitive development with adults' assistance, but SLA researchers have applied it to peer learning contexts where peers can become experts and novices at the same time (Donato, 1994; Ohta, 2001). Thus, based on these perspectives, the first question in this study examined the nature of pair interaction and classified the different types of pair interaction in terms of the role relationship between peers during pair work in an EFL classroom context.

Along with describing the different types of pair interaction, this study attempted to understand how learners experienced the pair work. Given that from a sociocultural perspective learners are viewed as agents of their own learning, how learners view their own interactions with their partner in pair work should not be ignored in this study. An exploration of the learners' perspectives on pair interaction could explain why they behaved in a certain type during pair interaction. In other words, it would explain why different types of pair interaction arose and the explanation could lead to a better understanding of the complex nature of pair interaction, which could not be accounted for solely by pair talk in lessons.

The last research question aimed to explore the relationship between pair interaction and language learning opportunities. As some studies have demonstrated that not all peer interaction provides an opportunity for learning (e.g. Watanabe, 2008; Storch, 2002a), it was important to investigate what kind of pair interaction affords maximal opportunities for language learning. In order to explore this aspect, a process-product approach was adopted. This approach attempts to identify opportunities for learning that occur in learners' pair work, investigating whether the language items learners focused on and resolved interactively in LREs were successfully used by learners independently

without any external assistance from their partner during pair work in subsequent activities.

This study resides within a constructivist research paradigm that is associated with naturalistic inquiry and, following this paradigm, this study did not pose any hypotheses as in a more positivistic study. The research was implemented in a naturalistic classroom-based context: six pairs of students in my own English courses worked on seven different activities that formed part of the regular class work and related to the course syllabus. Two different research tools were mainly used to gather data: transcripts of audio-recorded pair talk as the participants completed seven different activities and a series of interviews: individual post-activity interviews including stimulated recall and final interviews. Besides these two tools, in order to capture any noticeable features of pair interaction and salient non-verbal behavioural features, observation notes were made by the researcher. In order to analyse the collected data, an approach based on grounded theory was adopted.

The following section will present a summary and synthesis of the main findings according to the three research questions that guided this study.

### **8.3. Summary and Synthesis of the Findings**

This study found five different types of pair interaction according to two dimensions of equality and mutuality: *collaborative*, *cooperative*, *dominant/passive*, *expert/novice* and *expert/passive*. However, only three types of pair interaction were dominantly displayed in 42 cases of pair work (six pairs' work for seven activities): *collaborative*, *cooperative* and *expert/novice*. The other types, *dominant/passive* and *expert/novice*, were found only once and even these types changed to other types while performing an activity.

Thus, although it cannot be said that these types are significant, it is necessary to see why the types changed during a single activity performance.

In the case of the *collaborative type* of pair interaction, both learners similarly contributed to complete the given activities and were actively engaged with each other to decide activity direction and resolve LREs. When one partner was struggling or produced an error, the other provided assistance, pointing out and correcting the error. In the process of providing and receiving assistance, learners can monitor and correct own performance. Over time, on the last activity with the highest level of equality and mutuality among seven activities, self-correction without any external assistance was found. Through the experience of monitoring their partner's performance and providing assistance during pair work, learners seemed to learn how to monitor their own performance and correct their own utterances, not relying on others to correct them, as Ohta (2001) argues. Therefore, the ability to self-monitor and self-correct might help learners improve language accuracy.

A process of co-construction was also found in the *collaborative type* of peer interaction. As what Donato (1994) describes as mutual scaffolding, in the *collaborative type*, learners provided scaffolding to one another by pooling their knowledge and providing mutual assistance in order to resolve disagreements or uncertainties. That is, learners dialogically co-constructed their knowledge. Some of the jointly constructed knowledge was then internalised as seen in evidence from interview data and process-product analysis. The findings can be explained by the sociocultural perspective that learning is essentially social. Using language as a cognitive tool mediates learners' thinking and other's thinking and then facilitates cognitive development. Thus, the knowledge co-constructed between learners via social communicative speech can be internalised by the learners.

In the case of the *expert/novice type* of pair interaction, the expert learner with more responsibility for activity performance and completion tended to invite and encourage the novice partner to participate in the activity. In order to resolve LREs, unidirectional assistance was provided from the expert to the novice with elaborative explanation. This does not mean that the novice was a passive learner. As Damon and Phelps (1989) point out, pair work may make the novice feel more comfortable about acknowledging their own uncertainties and then able to ask for help from their partner. The novice's active engagement gave more confidence, and over time pair work changed from *expert/novice* to *collaborative type*: pair 1 changed to being *collaborative* in the last activity and pair 5 from the fifth activity to the last one. Pair talk data illustrates that assistance from expert learners gradually decreased and initiations and resolutions of the LREs by the novice steadily increased. When novice learners' confidence and responsibility for the activity increased, they were no longer novices, but became collaborative partner.

The study found that engaging in pair interaction could provide benefits to both experts and novices. There were many cases where the expert learner provided more assistance to their novice partner, but as seen in previous research the expert learner can also benefit from the assistance of the novice (i.e., Donato, 1994; Ohta, 1995, 2001). As Hyuk (pair 1) explained, providing an explanation to his novice partner enabled him to reflect on and enhance his own language knowledge in the process of verbalising his own thoughts and knowledge. Furthermore, both experts, Hyuk and Jina, explained the importance of listening to their partner's opinion. The expert may have resources available to think more broadly about production from an idea suggested by a novice learner in pair interaction (Ohta, 2001). The resources can help increase the quality of the production. This seemed to be based on respect for and trust in a partner's knowledge of the target language. If the learners did not respect their partner,

they would not regard their partner's contribution as being valuable. Therefore, both learners are able to benefit from pair interaction, having opportunities for language learning: knowledge co-constructed by both expert and novice through providing and receiving assistance and offering opinions can be internalised, as seen in interview and pair talk data.

However, there were some missed opportunities for learning in an expert/novice relationship. In the case of Sun (pair 5), an affective factor related to confidence interfered with her performance. At the beginning of this study, she was lacking in confidence regarding her target language proficiency. Even if she chose her partner precisely because of her relatively higher English proficiency, the gap in proficiency negatively affected Sun's confidence. This affective factor prevented her from consolidating her existing knowledge and extending it to new contexts. On the other hand, in the case of June (pair 1), his lack of sufficient existing knowledge impeded his learning. Even if his expert partner provided elaborative explanation, pair talk data showed that the assistance did not facilitate June's internalisation. As Storch (2002a) argues, internalisation might depend on current language knowledge. As suggested by the concept of ZPD, the assistance offered was beyond what June could potentially absorb. Thus, the findings of this study showed that missed opportunities for learning can be found in an *expert/novice type* of pair interaction even when learners are actively engaged with each other, because of affective factors and current levels of knowledge.

There is an important point to make about this expert/novice relationship, concerning the role of an expert. In this study, the role of expert was not assigned to learners. Rather, they assumed the role. This can be related to their interpretation of the meaning of pair work. Hyuk and Jina believed that pair work should be done with their partner. That belief seemed to result in taking responsibility for activities and their partner's participation. Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995) are uncertain whether learners can provide

effective help because they need not have responsibility for helping one another, unlike in tutoring situations. However, this study shows that learners' perspectives on working together in pair work make them decide to take on the role of an expert, with responsibility for encouraging and assisting their partner in order to perform and complete an activity together.

In the *cooperative type* of peer interaction, learners engaged in activity performance actively and contributed activity completion equally, but unlike these described above as having a collaborative orientation, they hardly engaged with each other. They rarely invited their peer to join in the problem-solving process. Rather, they tended to solve the problems individually. They seem to have taken respective responsibility for each part of the activity. The reason for cooperative working can be related to the level of activity perceived by learners. In interview data, learners who engaged cooperatively revealed that when they perceived the activity to be easy, they did not know how to engage with their partner because not needing any help, they could successfully complete the activity by themselves. The loose engagement between the pair seemed to negatively influence both partners' learning opportunities. After performing in a non-collaborative orientation, learners were uncertain about their language development because with little negotiation or discussion, they focused on learning product rather than the learning process. In other words, when learners were more concerned about activity outcomes without collaborative dialogic in a *cooperative type* of interaction, learning opportunities seemed not to be provided.

An *expert/passive type* of pair interaction was observed once among 42 cases and that type changed to an expert/novice relationship during the same activity. In this case, June (pair 1) was passive when he perceived the given activity to be difficult for him, but his partner's persistent efforts to invite his participation made him participate actively. This case showed the important role of an expert peer in pair work. On the other hand,



a dominant/passive relationship was also observed only once, but the relationship changed from collaborative interaction on the same activity. After collaboratively discussing activity direction and the content of given dialogues, Chang (pair 6) did not involve himself in suggesting answers because he thought that finding answers was relatively easy. Instead, he passively listened to his partner who dealt with it entirely by herself. Therefore, both passive learners' talk illustrates that in each case, *expert/passive and dominant/passive types*, learners were affected by perceptions regarding the activity difficulty, but differed in the role taken by the non-passive partner. In the *expert/passive type*, the expert encouraged the passive partner to work together, whereas the dominant learner did not involve the passive peer in the activity. This suggests that the role taken by a partner might change the other partner's attitude.

Although the six pairs predominantly displayed the *collaborative and expert/novice types* of pair interaction with a collaborative orientation while performing the seven activities, all pairs except pair 4 displayed more than two types of pair interaction. Even most pairs presenting a *collaborative type* had differing levels of mutuality and equality across activities. Only pair 5 displayed enhanced mutuality and equality across activities over time. This finding implies that the established type of pair interaction might not be stable across activities. In other words, the type of activity type may affect the type of pair interaction. However, most pairs presented relatively higher equality and mutuality on the last three activities (activities of reconstructing text, making a story and adding a sentence) in comparison with the earlier activities and all six pairs displayed the *collaborative type* of pair work with the highest mutuality and equality on the last activity. This suggests that pair interaction is likely to be enhanced over time. Therefore, it suggests that the role of activity type and passage of time are possible influences on pair interaction.

In relation to activity, learners tended to regard activities 2, 5, 6 and 7 as more challenging and more difficult than activities 1, 3 and 4. The latter required learners to reach a single solution and did not allow them freedom to deal with the activities, while the former (except activity 5) gave them the opportunity to construct the answer using various expressions from their language resources. In the case of activity 5, learners perceived it as difficult because it was related to grammar. However, the activities perceived to be difficult did not demotivate the learners. They tended to pursue more difficult activities in pair work: they perceived themselves to be more appropriately challenged in activities that were slightly difficult for them. The reason might be related to learners' perception of pair interaction. Learners seem to be willing to do a challenging work because of the perceptions that pair work makes them share the responsibility for activity completion, and should be done by both learners, unlike individual work where they have sole responsibility. When learners engaged in activities perceived to be difficult, they revealed that it made them want to actively engage with their partner in order to complete the activity successfully and they felt more pleasure in the process of activity performance and more satisfaction in activity completion. This can be verified from a range of episodes with a high level of interaction in the last three activities. Learners believed that an active engagement in an activity with their partner would lead to an increase in the quality of the activity outcome. On the other hand, as already explained in the case of the *cooperative type* of pair interaction, when learners perceived the activity to be easy for them, they tended to loosely engage with their partner, solely resolving the problems as they would when engaging in individual work, and making them focus more on the learning product rather than the learning process.

In addition to the role of activity, the findings of this study indicate that time might influence pair interaction as being socially developed, as claimed by Brooks et al. (1997). As classmates sharing the same studies in tourism management, although the

learners were on terms of familiarity with each other, they were not accustomed to supporting each other in learning contexts at the beginning of the semester (before starting this research). However, over time they came to understand their partner's learning style, negotiated how to work together and then had an affiliation with their partner. For example, in the case of pair 3, Sung and Mia were close friends but they were not accustomed to working together. Sung had difficulty in expressing his thoughts about activity strategy and was struggling with Mia's fast approach when beginning activities. It took time for them to build a stable collaborative relation. Their peer relationship that developed in a learning context made them become more involved in each other's learning in pair work: by providing feedback over inaccuracies, negotiating uncertainties and co-constructing new linguistic knowledge. Baralt et al. (2016) present similar findings: that learners who trust each other and are friends tended to engage more often in social scaffolding, leading to more examples of cognitive engagement. On the other hand, these findings differ from Storch's (2004) finding, which focused on individual learners' orientation. She suggests that patterns of dyadic interactions remain stable over time because learners bring their prior experiences and preferences into the pair work contexts rather than building a peer-to-peer relationship. However, as Philp and Mackey (2010) argue, social factors may positively impact on peer interaction when working with a friend. This study shows that if learners have a social relationship with their partner in learning context, their own learning situation can be changed to a joint learning situation.

Furthermore, a socially built peer to peer relationship in learning contexts reflects a mutual respect and a trust in each other's knowledge about language. Even if expert partners generally had higher proficiency than their novice peers, they showed a respect for their peer's opinions by listening carefully. Such trust and respect developed over time can be explained by two factors: a teacher's instruction and learners'

perceptions regarding pair work. As the teacher in this study, I frequently explained to my students how important it was to respect one another while working together in order to promote collaborative interaction. I emphasised that learners need to be aware that their partner's knowledge might be complementary to their own lack of knowledge as 'no learner is universally more or less capable than a peer, but that each learner presents an array of strengths and weaknesses that may be complementary' (Ohta, 2001: 76). That is, my instruction was that learners should respect each other's opinions, whether their partner's English proficiency was viewed as higher or lower than their own. As previously explained, the learners perceived that pair work should be performed by both learners, meaning that they need to respect and trust their partner in order to work together; the perception seems to be underpinned by respect and trust. As Stone (1993) suggests, the shared respect and trust may influence the nature of pair interaction and learning. This may explain why in this study the character of a dominant learner was not significant.

The familiarity developed in learning contexts seems to affect using the target language. At the beginning of the activity, only pair 4 tried to converse in English to each other; the other pairs mostly spoke in their first language, Korean, because it felt strange and uncomfortable to speak in English to their partner. However, over time they seemed to use the target language more often while doing pair work. On the last two activities, all the pairs approached those activities as a form of free conversation and in the process, they did not express embarrassment over making errors when speaking in English. Rather they regarded the activities as opportunities to practice and enhance the target language, expressing their ideas in English and monitoring their own speech and their partner's. Therefore, this study suggests that it might take time for learners to develop their familiarity with one another. Enhanced familiarity can result in a naturalistic use of the target language in the context of sharing the same first language.

Besides the social factors discussed above, learners' different strengths and weaknesses seemed to influence their affective factors negatively and positively. In the case of Sun (pair 5), her partner's strengths made her lose confidence in English at the beginning of the activities. However, her partner's persistent efforts to encourage her helped to recover her confidence. In the case of June (pair 1), his partner's strengths helped him to be more actively engaged in activities because he trusted that his partner would assist him with his language difficulties. Different strengths and weaknesses definitely play a role in shaping peer interaction. However, a partner's attitude, in particular their collaborative attitude, may be more important than either strengths or weaknesses. As Watanabe (2008) reports, peer interaction showed a more collaborative pattern when learners work with peers who attempt to engage in collaborative dialogue regardless of proficiency; peers' attitude to pair work crucially influences pair interaction. In the final interview, most learners revealed that when their partner carefully listened to them and frequently invited suggestions and discussed by uncertainty or difficulty, they became more collaboratively engaged in interaction. Therefore, peer attitude and willingness to engage in collaborative interaction may strongly influence collaborative pair work.

According to the perceived level of activity, the peer-to-peer relationship and the characteristics of each peer, different types of pair interaction appeared. The findings show that pair interaction with a collaborative orientation, such as a *collaborative type* and an *expert/novice type*, has a qualitatively different learner engagement compared to pair interaction with a non-collaborative orientation. When learners engaged in pair interaction with a collaborative orientation, they were more engaged in LREs as an opportunity for language development. In a process of co-construction, learners pooled their language resources and created knowledge in a 'collective scaffold' which was Donato's (1994) term. The knowledge constructed dialogically by both learners tended

to have more opportunity to be internalised, as seen in the evidence of pair talk and learner interviews. Thus, it can be said that collaborative orientation is the key to the usefulness of pair interaction and the extent to which it provides an opportunity for language development.

What the findings of this study suggest is that learners need to have a willingness to collaboratively engage with their partner because language development seen as the internalisation of socially co-constructed or mutually accepted knowledge more frequently occurs in pair interaction with a collaborative orientation. Therefore, the important element that influences language learning is not pair work per se but engaging with a partner in *collaborative* and *expert/novice types* of pair interaction that embody a collaborative orientation. These are more likely to lead to the development of socially co-constructed and mutually accepted language knowledge.

#### **8.4. Research Contributions**

This study raises some issues that have theoretical and pedagogical implications. The theoretical framework used for this study is the sociocultural theory of cognitive development based largely on the work of Vygotsky that emphasises the importance of social interaction. Originally, the theory focuses on the cognitive development of children with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other in ZPD, such as parents or teachers, but researchers in a range of fields have applied it to cognitive development at all ages and in all contexts. SLA researchers also apply the idea to a broad range of language learning situations beyond novice-expert interaction (van Lier, 1991). The findings of this study provide support for claims that development need not only occur in asymmetrical pairs but also in symmetrical pairs. The findings illustrate that differential linguistic strengths and weaknesses among peers allowed ZPD to be addressed in

pairs even when experts were not present and when participants were pooled in order to be complementary; and they could scaffold each other by providing guidance in ZPD effectively through the use of various interactive strategies as many studies of peer interaction in SLA have suggested (e.g. Donato, 1994; Lantolf and Aljaafreh, 1995; Ohta, 2000; 2001; Swain, 2000).

In relation to Vygotsky's claim about the importance of social interactions between humans, this study has presented a detailed description of social relations, in particular, peer interactions in constructing knowledge. Illustrating that not all types of peer interaction facilitate language development equally, the study also suggests that the role of peer interaction type can be important in a learning context, as Storch (2002a) claims.

The other theoretical issue raised by this study is the role of language itself in language development. In sociocultural perspectives, language plays a crucial role in facilitating cognitive development and in reflecting the process of development. In this study, the findings show that via verbalisation such as requests, suggestions, explanations, the negotiation of uncertainty or disagreement, and repetition of others, knowledge of the target language was consolidated and co-constructed and provided more opportunities for internalisation.

Apart from theoretical contributions, the findings of this study regarding types of pair interaction and its potential effects on language development have important implications for second/foreign language pedagogy. The findings suggest that pair work provides opportunities for practising the target language presented in the lesson, testing out current linguistic knowledge and co-constructing new knowledge. In the process, the data showed that learners could consolidate some knowledge already developed, enhance their fluency and build up uncertain knowledge. In EFL contexts where language learners have few chances to use the target language outside the classroom,

pair work provides a good opportunity for learners to be exposed to the language and to enhance their fluency, as Philp and Iwashita (2013) argue. However, as this study has pointed out a few times, pair work per se does not influence opportunities for language learning, but active learner engagement with a peer does lead to opportunities for language learning. Thus, teachers need to consider how to promote peer engagement in pair work.

The findings of this study suggest some implications for classroom instruction. The findings relating to learners' perceived activity level that influenced pair interaction highlight the need to choose activity carefully. As Philp et al. (2010) argue, activity selection has an impact on the quality of interaction and the type of LREs; the activity itself can play a role in affecting what happens during pair interaction. Activities perceived to be difficult by learners were regarded as being beneficial for practising and consolidating learners' current knowledge or the target language presented during that lesson. On the other hand, in activities perceived to be easy, learners tended to lose engagement with their partner. Thus, if teachers chose slightly challenging activities, it might make learners actively engage with each other.

Another implication of this study is the need to encourage learners to develop a social relationship in learning contexts. Learners are not accustomed to be involved in another's learning, but a developed relationship is the key factor for collaborative engagement with their peer. Developing the relationship might take time. Therefore, if teachers provide enough time for learners, it would be helpful for them to build the relationship in learning contexts.

Furthermore, teachers need to understand that pair interaction with a collaborative orientation can provide more opportunities for language development. As a strategy to be employed, many researchers suggest pretask modelling (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Kim and McDonough, 2011; Willis and Willis, 2007). The provision of pretask activities such as



models of activity performance by the teacher may help learners understand the object of the activity and identify ways of collaborative interaction with a high level of equality and mutuality. Such prior preparation may be effective in promoting collaboration during activity performance.

### **8.5. Limitations of This Study**

There are some limitations of this study. Among them, an important limitation that should be acknowledged relates to the learner interview. After each activity, participants engaged in a stimulated recall session and a post-activity interview: they were asked to listen to their audio-recorded pair work and reflect upon their behaviour. Participating in those interviews could provide learners with opportunities to reflect on their own interactions. As Watanabe (2008) argues, participating in those interviews might help raise the learners' awareness of the values of collaborative interaction by providing them with opportunities to perceive how they actually interact with their partner during pair work. Furthermore, in the process of verbalising their thoughts, the verbalisation itself could influence their thoughts (Swain, 2006). Participating in stimulated recall and interview sessions, therefore, might have influenced the nature of learners' interaction in subsequent activities.

Another limitation was due to preselected participants. As for the qualitative research, the fact that participants were selected according to their willingness to communicate to produce the best data possible for pair interaction may limit the findings for diverse types of pair interaction. The selected participants were active learners who showed willingness to communicate with their partner and were expected to provide diverse situations of pair interaction, including fruitful data of pair interaction. As a result, pair work with collaborative orientation was predominantly found in this study. The

preselection of active participants might have precluded the discovery of a passive type of pair interaction.

The last limitation to be acknowledged was the dual roles of myself as a teacher and as a researcher. After implementing student interviews, their talk may have influenced my subsequent lesson. In interview, learners revealed why they collaboratively worked together or what prevented their collaborative work, and their comments might have therefore influenced my class instruction. I planned to explain how to collaboratively work together during pair work in a lesson before starting this study, but the explanation continued until the end of the semester, emphasising how important it was to work together and respect each other's opinions. This continuous explanation may have influenced the learners' pair work as Sato and Viveros (2016) emphasise. Their study shows how a teacher's attitude may affect learners' engagement in peer interaction. If a teacher circulated among students and provided help when necessary, the class tended to become more collaborative, in comparison with a class where the teacher remained seated while learners were doing work together. The findings suggest that the teacher's role in creating a collaborative environment would be important in supporting collaborative work among learners.

## **8.6. Suggestions for Further Research**

Although this research has yielded a range of valuable findings and insights in relation to pair interaction in classroom learning contexts, it is also the case that there are other aspects that need further investigation and consideration.

This study investigated how pair work influences language learning in EFL lessons. In order to investigate the relationship between the type of pair interaction and language learning opportunities, a process-product approach based on pair talk data was

adopted. In the process, given that the data was limited because only items corresponding with previous activities and subsequent activities were available as pointed out in Chapter 7, there is a need to extend this line of research to a range of activities produce more corresponding items in a longer period of data collection. Activities used in this study were connected with the curriculum, but some activities were not directly linked with previous activities and did not provide opportunities for learners to use the target language presented in previous activities and what they focused on in the activities. If activities used were to promote more diverse corresponding language items in language-related episodes with previous activities and subsequent activities, findings from such research could present much clearer and stronger relationships between pair interaction and opportunities for language learning. This study was limited to pair work as a subject of peer interaction. As benefits of pair work, when interviewed the learners suggested a high quality of activity outcome, the use of complex and diverse content and active engagement in activities. However, group work may be very different. Philp and Mackey's (2010) study suggests a flip side to peer interaction in a group of three learners. Although this study suggests the importance of peer to peer relationship in influencing pair work, the nature of peer interaction in group work may be more complicated than pair work in that more learners may bring a range of social factors that may influence group work, and types of peer interaction may therefore be more diverse. If further research covered group work using the same research questions, such research could provide additional fruitful information about peer interaction in the language classroom.

The identification of areas that need further research is based to some extent on the limitations of this study. Nevertheless, the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the complicated nature of peer interaction. As a teacher in an ongoing language classroom, this study provided me with a better understanding of the

relationship between theory and practice by presenting practical evidence to support aspects of sociocultural perspectives. This study highlights learners as agents and draws attention to social considerations of peer interaction that have been neglected in the cognitively oriented interaction research in the field of SLA. Based on the evidence from this study, suggestions are made to create classroom environment of pair interaction with collaborative orientation and to achieve an optimal collaborative interaction. Ultimately, this study provides practitioners and researchers with the reinforced confirmation that collaborative pair interaction has rich potential for language learning in the context of foreign language classrooms.

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## Appendix A: Activities

### Week 1

#### Activity 1: Filling in the Blanks<sup>7</sup>

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly vocabulary

Instruction: fill in each blank with a suitable word or words from the box and complete the dialogue in pairs.

business class, open ticket, open seats, waiting list, fixed date, class, round-trip, return date

R: Reservation Staff

P: Passenger

P: I'd like to book a ( ) ticket to London. Please see if you have any ( ) for this Saturday.

R: I'm sorry, sir. All seats are booked up for the Saturday, but we have seats available for Sunday.

P: Just my luck. Then put me on your ( ) for Saturday and book me for Sunday, please.

R: Certainly, sir. What about the ( )? Do you have a ( ) in mind or do you want an ( )?

P: An open ticket, please.

R: All right. Let me check to see if there is a seat available. Oh, that's fine. What ( ) would you like?

P: ( ), please.

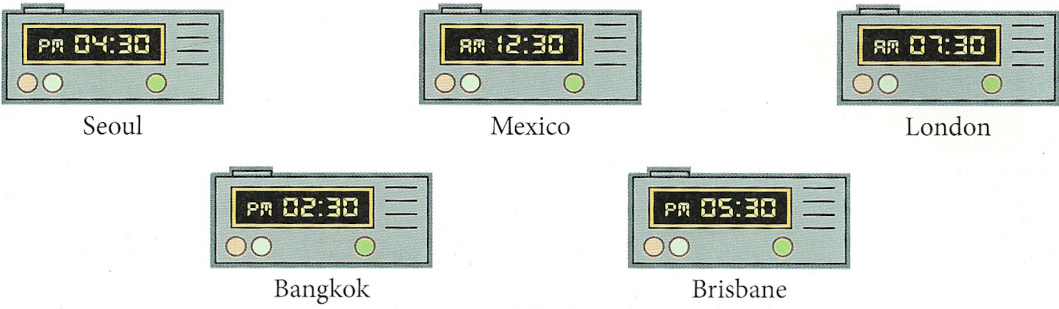
Answer: round-trip, open seats, waiting list, return date, fixed date, open ticket, class, Business class

<sup>7</sup> Reference) Han, C. Y. and Lee, K. S. (2009) *Tourism English*. PowerBook. P.11-Dialogue 4.

**Week 2****Activity 2: The Different Time Zones<sup>8</sup>**

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly vocabulary and speaking

Instruction: use each city's name in the underlined parts and then practise using the different time zones by using the clocks. After practising the expressions, make a dialogue with your partner using a different time zone.



The image shows five digital clocks arranged in two rows. The top row contains three clocks: Seoul (04:30 PM), Mexico (12:30 AM), and London (07:30 AM). The bottom row contains two clocks: Bangkok (02:30 PM) and Brisbane (05:30 PM). Each clock is a simple rectangular device with a small screen and three buttons below it.

A: You are flying from Seoul to Brisbane, right?

B: Yes, the flight takes several hours.

A: Right. But what about the time change? Aren't they in different time zone?

B: Actually, Brisbane is one hour ahead of Seoul.

A: Oh, I didn't realize that.

B: But I have to fly from Seoul to Bangkok next week.

A: Bangkok is two hours behind Seoul.

<sup>8</sup> Reference) Kim, Y. M. and Son, K. P. (2008) *Air Travel and Tourism*. Darakwon. P.19-A.

**Week 3****Activity 3: Information<sup>9</sup>**

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly reading

Instruction: the notice has some information about restricted items on flights. Read the notice and answer each question working in pairs.

**Restrictions on Liquids, Gels, and Aerosols in Carry-on Bags**

- Passengers must carry all liquids in containers less than 100ml. These containers must fit in a one (1)-liter, transparent, re-sealable plastic bag.
- Passengers may only carry one plastic bag each. Passengers must put all containers bigger than 100ml in their checked luggage, or airport security may take and destroy them.
- Medications and baby foods for use during the flight may be in containers bigger than 100ml.

1. What should passengers do with containers with more than 100ml of a liquid?
2. What can passengers do with containers with less than 100ml of a liquid?
3. What items bigger than 100ml can people carry on flights?

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<sup>9</sup> Reference) Kim, Y. M. and Son, K. P. (2008) *Air Travel and Tourism*. Darakwon. P.23-B.

**Week 4****Activity 4: Jumbled Dialogues<sup>10</sup>**

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly reading

Instruction: sequencing the two jumbled dialogues. First skimming for meaning to establish the order quickly, then scanning for detail to confirm its accuracy.

- 1) Do you have any empty seats together?
- 2) Just a moment while I check that for you. ... Thank you for waiting. I'm sorry, but all window seats are occupied today.
- 3) Would that be all right, sir?
- 4) I'm sorry again, ma'am.
- 5) Yes, that'll be fine. Thank you.
- 6) No, thanks
- 7) Excuse me, stewardess. My friend and I were assigned separate seats.
- 8) Is there anything I can do for you?
- 9) Excuse me. Do you have any empty seats by the window?
- 10) I'll check for you ... Thank you for waiting. There are some empty seats in the back of the cabin.

Answer: 7-1-10-3-5 / 9-2-8-6-4

**Week 5****Activity 5: Reconstruction of text<sup>11</sup>**

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly grammar

Instruction: reconstruct the following announcement, inserting all the necessary grammatical words (e.g. articles, prepositions, linking words, etc.) and changing word forms, where necessary, to produce a meaningful and grammatically correct text (there are 9 errors). Students are allowed to use a dictionary.

The immigration card must be complete by all passenger include children. The immigration card may complete accurately and on particular the question relation to an address in Australia. The customs and Quarantine Form must also be complete by all passenger. Moreover, married couple travelling together with children under the age of 18 years only complete one Form.

<sup>10</sup> Reference) Kim, Y. M. and Son, K. P. (2008) *Air Travel and Tourism*. Darakwon. P.30-B, C.

<sup>11</sup> Reference) Han, C. Y. and Lee, K. S. (2009) *Tourism English*. PowerBook. P.94.



Answer:

The immigration card must be completed by all passengers including children. The immigration card must be completed accurately and in particular the question relation to an address in Australia. The Customs and Quarantine Form must also be completed by all passengers. However, married couple travelling together with children under the age of 18 years only complete one Form.

### **Week 6**

#### **Activity 6: Making a story**

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly speaking

Instruction: look at the word cards. Choose at least 5 cards and make a story using the chosen words, working in pairs.

Flight	Study	Aisle	Destination	Homestay
Travel	Busines	Passpor	Round-trip	Hotel
Make a reservation		England	New York	Connect

### **Week 7**

#### **Activity 7: Adding a sentence**

Language point focused on in the activity: mainly writing

Instruction: write a sentence connected with the topic of 'Holiday' and then add a sentence that is in some way connected to the first sentence. Continue the chain of sentences for at least 10 sentences.

## Appendix B: Post-activity Interview Schedule

### Post-activity interview outline (Original was in Korean)

Inform students about the aim of this session: reflect on pair work through stimulated recall and provide additional comments on it. Examples given in parentheses are used to clarify questions if the interviewee shows signs of lack of comprehension.

*General reflection on the activity completed in pairs:*

- What did you think about the activity?
- Did you feel that you learned something from doing the activity?
- What do you think about interaction between you and your partner? (e.g., do you think the pair work went well? Why? Why not?)
- Did you feel that you learned something from engaging in pair work?

## Appendix C: Final Interview Schedule

### The final interview outline (Original was in Korean)

Please think about your experience with pair work over seven weeks and comment on how you felt during those activities:

- How did you feel about working on the activities in pairs?
- Would you prefer to do the activities individually or with a partner? Why?
- What do you think about your contribution/participation in the activities?
- What affected the degree of your participation in and contribution to the activities?
- What do you think about your partner's contribution/participation?
- Did you feel that pair work helped your learning in terms of English knowledge or any other aspects? Why?
- Do you think pair work led to any changes in your learning over seven weeks?
- Any other comments?

## Appendix D: Transcription Symbols

The following transcription symbols were used by the researcher when transcribing audio taped pair talk and translating the talk into English.

...	short pause
OKAY	words said very loudly compared to other utterances of this speaker
?	A question mark indicates rising intonation at the end of a word, phrase, or sentence
!	strong emphasis with falling intonation
=	rapid change of turn of speakers (used at end of utterance of one speaker and beginning of next speaker's utterance)
w-o-r-d	The speaker is spelling out the word
[zu:]	Square brackets indicate phonetic transcription
e:r, the:::, etc.	: one or more colons indicate lengthening of the preceding sound
'hello'	Single quotation marks denote that the speaker is reading the given text.
"hello"	Double quotation marks denote that the speaker is translating the given text in English into Korean
... [ ] ...	Parts of transcript omitted – not relevant to point discussed in this research
(in English)	Brackets indicate translation made by the researcher
( 'hi' )	Single quotation marks in brackets indicate original language of the speaker, which is usually English.
( "hi: Korean translation" )	Double quotation marks with the words, Korean translation, in brackets mean to re-translate from translation made by the speaker into Korean to English by the researcher.

## Appendix E: Consent Form

### Project Title

#### Pair interaction among adult EFL learners: A South Korean case study

*Please complete and return to me, Youn Hee KIM, by (date).*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have been informed about all aspects of the above research project and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this project, realising that I may withdraw at any time.

I am happy for classroom observation to be video/audio recorded and my interview to be audio recorded.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

I understand that I can contact the researcher, Youn Hee KIM, at any time.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_