

The effect of interlocutor proficiency on the collaborative dialogue between Korean as a second language learners

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Previous research has shown that second language (L2) learners reflect on language form when carrying out collaborative activities in L2 classrooms. This study explored which language forms Korean as a second language (KSL) learners focused on and how their linguistic issues were resolved when collaborating with interlocutors from different proficiency levels. Eight intermediate Korean L2 learners interacted with an intermediate interlocutor ($n = 8$) and with an advanced interlocutor ($n = 8$). Their collaborative dialogue was analyzed in terms of (a) the occurrence and resolution of lexical and grammatical language-related episodes (LREs) and (b) the patterns of interaction with their interlocutors. Results showed that the collaborative dialogue with advanced interlocutors contained significantly more lexical LREs and correctly resolved LREs. In terms of their patterns of interaction, the learners showed different pair dynamics when collaborating with interlocutors from different proficiency levels. The findings are discussed in terms of the pedagogical implications for the use of collaborative tasks in L2 classrooms.

Keywords: Collaborative dialogue, Korean as a second language, LRE, pair dynamics, proficiency

The claim that output is important for second language acquisition arose from the findings of research carried out in Canadian French immersion programs, which reported that immersion students' French was markedly non-native, especially in terms of grammatical features (Genesee, 1987; Swain, 1985). Based on these findings, Swain (1985) argued that the rich comprehensible input that the immersion students were exposed to may have been insufficient to support the acquisition of all features of the target language. She suggested that language production, which was largely absent in the immersion context at that time, may serve important functions in L2 learning that complement the role of input. More specifically, Swain (1985, 1993, 1995) argued that language production may facilitate acquisition by creating opportunities for learners to notice a gap between their interlanguage and target language forms, test their hypotheses about the target

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language, and use language to reflect on language. In her more recent work, Swain (2000, 2005) has focused on the role of collaborative dialogue in L2 learning, suggesting that language production mediates the language learning process. She has adopted the term *linguaging*, as opposed to output or language production, which she has defined as the process of using language to make meaning and to shape knowledge and experience (Swain, in press).

Researchers have investigated the learning opportunities that arise during collaborative dialogue by focusing on the occurrence of language-related episodes (LREs), which Swain and Lapkin (1995) defined as any part of a dialogue in which students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or other-or self-correct their language production. Many collaborative dialogue studies have shown that learners discuss both lexical items and grammatical forms when they carry out a variety of pair and small group activities (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Leiser, 2004; Storch, 1998; Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Williams, 1999). One important issue related to the use of collaborative activities in L2 classrooms is the impact of learner characteristics, such as proficiency, socio-economic status, gender, motivation, and cultural background, on the occurrence of LREs during collaborative dialogue. Previous task-based research has demonstrated that these variables can affect the interaction between interlocutors in terms of interactional feedback, modified output, and the resolution of referential conflicts (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Gass & Varonis, 1985; Iwashita, 2001; Ross-Feldman, 2007; Yule & Macdonald, 1990).

From a pedagogical point of view, proficiency is of particular interest for instructors who teach classes with learners with varying abilities, especially when organizing learners into pairs and small groups (Hess, 2001). Some researchers have claimed that more proficient learners may learn by teaching their less-proficient peers (van Lier, 1996), but others have pointed out that the more proficient partner may feel disappointed by or ignore the less able partner's input or feedback (Hedge, 2000; Yule & Macdonald, 1990). Pairing a higher proficiency learner with a lower proficiency partner may result in greater collaboration than pairing learners from similar levels (Storch, 2001), but lower-proficiency learners may feel more comfortable interacting with peers rather than with more-advanced partners (Kowal & Swain, 1997). Proficiency may also influence the relationship between learners, or pair dynamics, during collaborative dialogue, which can affect the degree to which they question their language use or accept each other's input and feedback.

In terms of the dynamics between learners, Storch (2001, 2002a, 2002b) has identified four types of pair dynamics that may influence the degree of collaboration that occurs during pair activities. More specifically, she has suggested that while collaborative pairs work together and assist each other throughout the task, dominant/dominant pairs are unlikely to value each other's contribution. And while dominant/passive pairs involve one learner taking control while the other largely concedes, expert/novice pairs consist of

a more knowledgeable learner helping a less knowledgeable partner. She has suggested that collaborative pair dynamics and expert/novice pair dynamics may be more facilitative of L2 learning.

The collaborative dialogue studies to date have revealed interesting relationships among learners' proficiency, pair dynamics, and the occurrence and resolution of LREs. For example, Williams (1999, 2001) investigated whether English L2 learners from varying proficiency levels enrolled in learner-centered, communicative classrooms differed in terms of the occurrence and resolution of LREs during collaborative activities. She analyzed 65 hours of collaboration between eight learners from four proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, high-intermediate, advanced). She found that the learners tended to discuss lexical items more often than grammatical forms, and that the overall occurrence of LREs increased as the learners' proficiency increased. In addition, the learners were able to correctly resolve their LREs more frequently as their proficiency increased. Her findings suggest that learners from higher proficiency levels may be more likely to discuss language form during collaborative activities, and more likely to reach correct resolutions to their linguistic problems than less proficient learners.

Leeser (2004) similarly investigated the effect of proficiency on the occurrence and resolution of LREs, but he focused on collaboration between L2 Spanish learners enrolled in a content-based course. Based on the instructor's ratings, the learners were classified as high or low proficiency relative to other learners in the class. They were assigned to carry out a dictogloss task in one of three pairings: two high-proficiency learners, two low-proficiency learners, or one high-proficiency learner with one low-proficiency learner. Their collaborative dialogue was analyzed in terms of the number of LREs, the type of LREs (lexical or grammatical) and the resolution of those LREs (correct, unresolved, or incorrect). The results indicated that high-high dyads produced the greatest number of LREs, followed by high-low dyads and low-low dyads. In terms of LRE types, high-high dyads focused on grammatical forms most often while high-low dyads focused on grammatical and lexical LREs almost equally. In contrast, low-low dyads focused on lexical items more often than grammatical forms. While correct resolution was the most frequent outcome across dyad types, low-low dyads were more likely to leave LREs unresolved, which suggests that lower-level learners may not be as able to resolve their linguistic problems as more-proficient learners.

Finally, Watanabe and Swain (2007) have pointed out that previous studies adopted a between-groups comparison to explore how learners from different proficiency levels collaborated. In contrast, they focused on individual learners who interacted with both more- and less-proficient interlocutors. They explored whether the occurrence of LREs differed when four English L2 learners interacted with lower-and higher-level interlocutors. The learners carried out multi-stage tasks consisting of pair writing, reformulation, noticing differences between the original text and the reformulation, and

individual text reconstruction. They found that the learners produced more LREs during the pair writing stage when they interacted with a higher-level interlocutor. However, the learners produced more LREs with a lower-level interlocutor during the noticing stage, which was most likely due to the greater number of reformulations, and had higher scores on the text reconstruction following collaboration with lower-level interlocutors. Unlike previous studies, the analysis also considered the pattern of interaction between the learners, and found that learners who adopted a collaborative style of interaction had more LREs and higher scores for the text reconstruction. Their findings suggest that learners can benefit from interacting with both lower-level interlocutors and higher-level interlocutors, providing that the nature of their interaction is collaborative.

In summary, previous collaborative dialogue research has shown that proficiency may influence the occurrence and outcome of LREs during collaborative dialogue, and that pair dynamics may also influence the degree to which learners collaborate, which raises interesting questions about the relationships among these factors. For example, are advanced learners more likely to assume a dominant role when interacting with less-proficient learners? Or are less-proficient learners more likely to collaborate when they interact with peers at their level rather than with more-advanced interlocutors? In addition to exploring these questions, the current study also aims to broaden the empirical base of collaborative dialogue research, which has largely focused on intensive ESL programs (Ross-Feldman, 2007; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Williams, 1999, 2001), content-based Spanish course (Leeser, 2004), and French immersion programs (Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2000, 2001). Therefore, the current study focuses on the collaborative dialogue between Korean as a second language (KSL) learners who were enrolled in an intensive language program in South Korea.

Compared to more commonly taught languages like English, Korean as a second or foreign language has a short history. Although Korean did not begin to receive attention as a second or foreign language among language learners until the latter half of the 1970s, it is now widely studied, particularly by learners from neighboring Asian countries (Sohn, 1999). In the past decade, a number of universities in Korea have created intensive Korean language programs and devised teacher education programs for KSL instructors. While a few studies have investigated Korean L2 learners in the USA (Jeon, 2007; Strauss, Lee, & Ahn, 2006), relatively little research has focused on this population, particularly in classroom contexts. Like any other language, Korean has its own unique features which provide learning challenges. For example, while some languages, such as English, tend to place important information near the beginning of the sentence, in Korean it typically appears at the end of the sentence (Lee & Ramsey, 2000). Morpho-syntactic features that indicate important information include a wide variety of particles and verb endings. As an agglutinative language, Korean attaches bound morphemes to

nouns and verbs such as plurals, relational particles, conjunctions, tense, honorifics (Strauss, 2003). In short, due to the linguistic differences between Korean and more commonly taught languages such as English, Spanish, and French, KSL learners may attend to language form differently than the learners who have been targeted in previous collaborative dialogue studies.

By targeting a less commonly taught language in a different instructional context, an intensive KSL program, we hope to broaden the empirical basis of collaborative research and to provide pedagogical implications for Korean instructors, especially with regard to teaching classes that have students from different proficiency levels. The purpose of the study was to determine whether the occurrence and resolution of LREs differed when intermediate KSL learners carried out dictogloss tasks with an intermediate interlocutor compared with an advanced interlocutor, and to explore whether their pair dynamics differed in the two interactive contexts. The research questions were as follows:

- 1) How does the occurrence and resolution of LREs differ when intermediate KSL learners collaborate with an intermediate interlocutor compared with an advanced interlocutor?
- 2) How do the pair dynamics differ when intermediate KSL learners collaborate with an intermediate interlocutor compared with an advanced interlocutor?

I Method

1 Participants

The participants were 24 KSL learners (16 women and 8 men) enrolled in an intensive Korean program at Southwestern University in South Korea. They ranged in age from 19 to 25 years (average = 23 years) and came from the following countries: China (12), Japan (5), Kazakhstan (3), Nepal (1), Ukraine (2) and Vietnam (1). Based on their scores on the university placement exam, which consisted of reading comprehension questions, a written essay, and an oral interview, 16 learners were placed into an intermediate class and 8 learners were placed into an advanced class. The intermediate learners had studied Korean for an average of nine months (range = 5 to 13 months) and had lived in Korea for an average of eight months (range = 5 to 12 months). In contrast, the advanced learners had studied Korean for an average of 20 months (range = 14 to 27 months), and had lived in Korea an average of 14 months (range = 7 to 22 months). The majority of the learners intended to enroll in undergraduate or graduate degree programs in Korea after completing the intensive language program.

2 Materials

The collaborative tasks used in this study were two dictogloss tasks that were based on the biographies of two scientists that are famous in Korea. Both

texts followed the same discourse structure (chronological organization) and were the same length (167 words). The first text, ‘Butterfly Scholar Jumyong Suk’, described the life of a Korean scholar who collected butterflies and published several books about butterflies. The second text, ‘Poor Doctor Kilye Jang’, described the life of a surgeon who made several medical advancements in Korea. Both texts were adapted from a supplementary reading textbook for sixth grade students in Korea. With the help of the Korean L2 instructors, the first author modified the original texts so that they were equivalent in complexity to the materials used in the intermediate class. For instance, infrequent vocabulary words were changed to high-frequency items, and complex sentences were simplified or modified.

Two questionnaires containing Likert-scale and open-ended response items were created by the researchers to elicit the learners’ perceptions about the usefulness of collaborative activities and their opinions about interacting with interlocutors from different proficiency levels. The first questionnaire included two Likert-scale questions regarding pair activities and one multiple-choice question about the aspects of Korean they learned while interacting with another learner (see Appendix A). The second questionnaire contained three questions about students’ experiences on working with both lower- and higher-level interlocutors (see Appendix B).

3 Procedure

The experiment was conducted over a two-week period as illustrated in Table 1. Since the learners had not carried out dictogloss tasks previously, they were provided with three practice sessions in their regularly scheduled Korean classes. During the first two practice sessions, the KSL instructors demonstrated how to carry out a dictogloss task, after which the learners completed a practice task. In the third practice session, the learners carried out another practice dictogloss task, which was recorded in order to familiarize them with the recording equipment.

Table 1 Procedure

Day	Procedure
Day 1	Instructor demonstration & practice dictogloss
Day 2	Instructor demonstration & practice dictogloss
Day 4	Practice dictogloss with audio-recording
Day 9	Pre-listening activity Biography dictogloss task no.1 with intermediate interlocutor First questionnaire
Day 12	Pre-listening activity Biography dictogloss task no. 2 with advanced interlocutor Second questionnaire

On day nine in their respective classrooms, the learners completed a background information questionnaire with questions about their previous and current Korean instructional experiences and their educational goals. Then they completed a pre-listening activity which was designed to activate their schemata regarding the content of the biography and related vocabulary. After the pre-listening activity, they listened to the text three times, twice at natural speed and once with pauses at phrase and clause breaks. After listening to the text and taking notes, they were given 30 minutes to reconstruct the listening text with a partner. They were encouraged to say aloud everything that they were writing down and reflect aloud as to why they chose certain vocabulary items and grammatical forms over others. When they finished composing the text, they completed a short questionnaire (Questionnaire I) about their impressions of collaborating with a partner. On day 12, eight randomly selected intermediate learners carried out the second target dictogloss task with an advanced interlocutor following the same procedure used on day nine. When they finished writing the text, the intermediate learners completed another questionnaire (Questionnaire II) addressing their preference on the interlocutor proficiency level and had a short interview with the instructor.

4 Analysis

a LREs: The recordings from the eight intermediate learners who completed the dictogloss tasks with an intermediate and advanced interlocutor were transcribed by the first author. The transcripts were analyzed for the occurrence of lexical and grammatical LREs based on Swain and Lapkin's (1995) definitions. Grammatical LREs were defined as LREs in which learners discussed grammatical features of Korean, including verb endings, verb tenses, case particles, special particles, honorifics, and word order. Following Lee and Ramsey (2000), verb endings were operationalized as grammatical forms that express sentence type, mode, conjunction, and semantic commutations. Case particles were defined as particles that express the syntactic role of the noun or noun phrase to which they are attached, while special particles were operationalized as particles which specify the meaning of the noun or noun phrase. A grammatical LRE is illustrated in (1). When the first learner produced the ungrammatical sentence ('Father is a teacher?'), his interlocutor provided the appropriate forms and explained that past tense was needed.

(1) Grammatical LRE

1 S1: 아버지가 선생님이다?

(A-bu-ji-ga sun-saeng-nim-i-da?)

[Father is a teacher?]

- 2 S2: 아버지는 선생님이었다 현재 아니고과거

(a-bu-ji-nun sun-saeng-nim-i-et-da. hyun-jae a-ni-go, gwa-guh)

[Father was a teacher, not present, past]

Lexical LREs were defined as LREs in which the learners discussed the meaning, pronunciation or spelling of lexical items, as illustrated in (2). The learners were discussing what happened next in the narrative when learner one used the lexical item ‘땅콩 (ddang-kong) [peanut]’ and learner two asked for the meaning and spelling of that word.

(2) Lexical LRE

- 1 S1: 땅콩 먹었어.

(ddang-kong muck-ut-suh.)

[ate peanuts]

- 2 S2: 뭐? 무슨 말? 어떻게 써?

(muo? moo-sun-mal? ud-duk-keh ssuh)

[What? Meaning? How do you spell it?]

- 3 S1: 花生 (Chinese), 이렇게.

(huasheng (Chinese), i-lut-geh.)

[peanut (Chinese), see (showing how to spell it)]

Next, the resolution of the LREs was coded following Swain (1998) and Leaser (2004) as correctly resolved (Type 1), unresolved (Type 2), and incorrectly resolved (Type 3). Correctly resolved was defined as an LRE in which the problem or question was solved correctly through self or other correction, or through the provision of a correct answer to a question, as illustrated previously in (1) and (2). Unresolved was defined as an LRE in which neither learner could solve the problem or knew the answer to the question. An unresolved LRE is illustrated in (3). When the first learner asked whether the phrase ‘일본에서 (Il-bon-eh-suh) [in Japan]’ was a correct expression, her interlocutor did not know the answer. The learners could not resolve this linguistic problem, which was related to the special particle ‘에서 (eh-suh) [in]’.

(3) Unresolved LRE

- 1 S1: 연구하기로 해서 일본에서, 맞아요?

(Yun-goo ha-gi-ro hae-suh, Il-bon-eh-suh, Ma-ja-yo?)

[decided to research (about butterflies) in Japan, Is it correct?]

- 2 S2: 일본에서? 음, 마음대로 쓰세요.
(Il-bon-eh-suh? Umm, Ma-um-dai-ro ssu-sae-yo.)
[In Japan? Umm, Write whatever you want.]

- 3 S1: 나도 몰라.
(Na-do Mo-la.)
[I do not know either.]

Incorrectly resolved was defined as an LRE in which a problem was solved incorrectly or an incorrect answer was provided to a question, as shown in (4). In this example, the learners were deciding which phrase was appropriate: ‘가까워서 (ga-gga-wo-suh) [almost, in relation to time]’ or ‘아까워서 (ah-gga-wo-suh) [precious]’. Although the learners decided to use the first phrase, the latter phrase was correct.

(4) Incorrectly resolved LRE

- 1 S1: 밥을 먹을때, 시간이, 시간이
(Bab-bul mu-gul-ddae, shi-gan-ni, sa-gan-ni)
[When (he) eats, time, time]
- 2 S2: 가까워서, 가까워서
(ga-gga-wo-suh, ga-gga-wo-suh)
[It is close to the time (to eat)]
- 3 S1: 시간이 가까워서? 아까워서? 뭐? 땅콩을 먹고
(shi-gan-ni ga-gga-wo-suh? Ah-gga-wo-suh? Muo? ddang-kong-ul mu-ggo?)
[It is almost time (to eat)? (time is) precious? what? ate peanut?]
- 4 S2: 가까워서
(ga-gga-wo-suh...)
[It is almost to the time (to eat)]

If a lexical item or grammatical form was discussed multiple times during a single conversation, it was coded only once, and the resolution was coded based on the outcome of the last discussion. If an LRE involved discussion about different aspects of a lexical item (such as its meaning and spelling) or two different grammatical features (such as honorifics and tense), each aspect

was coded separately. Two experienced KSL instructors independently identified the LREs and coded them as either having a lexical or grammatical focus. There was 93% exact agreement between the two raters for lexical LREs, 90% for grammatical LREs, and 93% for resolution of LREs. The two raters resolved the disagreements through discussion.

b Pair dynamics: The transcripts from the eight intermediate learners who completed dictogloss tasks with an intermediate and advanced interlocutor were also analyzed in terms of the pair dynamics between the learners. Following Storch's framework (2001, 2002a, 2002b), each pair was classified according to the four patterns of interaction mentioned previously: collaborative pairs, dominant/dominant pairs, dominant/passive pairs, and expert/novice pairs. Storch described the four distinct patterns of interaction in terms of the learners' contribution of information, their decision-making behavior, their provision of assistance, as well as discourse and linguistic features (see Table 2).

Interrater reliability was calculated on a subset of the data (50%) by comparing the researcher's classification of pair dynamics with the classification of an independent rater, who had been given the descriptive categories shown Table 2. There was 88% exact agreement between the researcher and the independent rater. Disagreements between the researcher and the independent rater were resolved through discussion.

II Results

1 Occurrence and resolution of LREs

The first research question asked whether the occurrence and resolution of LREs differed when intermediate learners interacted with an intermediate

Table 2 Patterns of dyadic interaction

Patterns	Description
Collaborative	Both learners work together on all parts of the task, and they are willing to offer ideas and engage with each other's ideas
Dominant/dominant	Both learners contribute to the task, but they have a high level of disagreement and are often unable to reach consensus
Dominant/passive	One learner takes an authoritarian stance while the other learner adopts a more passive, subservient role. Little negotiation occurs because the passive learner rarely contributes ideas or challenges the ideas of the dominant learner
Expert/novice	One learner takes control of the task by acting as an expert who encourages the other learner to offer ideas and provides suggestions

interlocutor versus an advanced interlocutor. The number of grammatical and lexical LREs that were resolved correctly, unresolved, and resolved incorrectly are shown in Table 3. In terms of grammatical LREs, the learners had more grammatical LREs (78) when they collaborated with an advanced interlocutor than with an intermediate interlocutor (68). They resolved 78% (61/78) of their grammatical LREs correctly when collaborating with an advanced interlocutor, with the remainder incorrectly resolved (12%, 9/78) or unresolved (10%, 8/78). In contrast, when the learners collaborated with an intermediate interlocutor, they correctly resolved 56% (38/68) of their grammatical LREs, leaving 28% (19/68) unresolved and 16% (11/68) incorrectly resolved. A similar pattern was found for lexical LREs, also shown in Table 3. The learners had more lexical LREs when they collaborated with an advanced interlocutor (64) than with an intermediate interlocutor (40). When collaborating with an advanced interlocutor, they resolved 70% (45/64) of the lexical LREs correctly, with only 17% (11/64) resolved incorrectly and 13% (8/64) unresolved. However, when the learners collaborated with an intermediate interlocutor, they correctly resolved only 58% (23/40) of their lexical LREs. They incorrectly resolved 15% (6/40) of the lexical LREs and were unable to resolve the remaining 28% (11/40).

Individual Wilcoxon Signed Ranks tests were carried out to compare the number of grammatical LREs, lexical LREs, and correctly resolved LREs that occurred when the learners collaborated with different interlocutors. Only these three categories were considered in order to reduce the possibility of Type 1 error that can be introduced by multiple comparisons of the same data. The results indicated that the difference in the number of grammatical LREs was not significant, $Z = 0.94$, $p > 0.05$. However, significantly more lexical LREs occurred when the learners collaborated with advanced interlocutors than with intermediate interlocutors, $Z = 2.38$, $p < 0.05$. The number of correct resolutions was significantly higher when the learners collaborated with advanced interlocutors, $Z = 2.53$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 3 Occurrence and resolution of LREs by interlocutor

	Intermediate interlocutor			Advanced interlocutor		
	Sum	M	SD	Sum	M	SD
<i>Grammatical LREs</i>	68	8.5	2.26	78	9.75	3.58
Correctly resolved	38	4.75	1.34	61	7.64	2.56
Unresolved	19	2.38	0.94	8	1.54	0.92
Incorrectly resolved	11	1.38	0.88	9	1.04	0.59
<i>Lexical LREs</i>	40	5	1.60	64	8	1.07
Correctly resolved	23	2.88	1.78	45	5.63	2.86
Unresolved	11	1.38	0.76	11	1.38	0.92
Incorrectly resolved	6	0.75	0.82	8	1	0.67
Total LREs	108	13.5	3.21	142	17.75	4.30

Since group totals can obscure important individual differences, the total number of grammatical LREs, lexical LREs, and correctly resolved LREs for each learner were examined (see Table 4). While some previous studies (e.g. Storch, 2001; Watanabe & Swain, 2007) have reported considerable variation in the total number of LREs for each pair, the dyads in the current study were fairly consistent. As shown in Table 4, the total number of LREs ranged from 10 to 18 when the learners collaborated with an intermediate interlocutor, and ranged from 12 to 24 when they collaborated with an advanced interlocutor. In terms of the resolution of LREs, all eight learners resolved more LREs correctly when they collaborated with an advanced interlocutor than with an intermediate interlocutor.

In order to supplement the quantitative findings about the occurrence and resolution of LREs, the learners' responses on the two questionnaires were examined. Interestingly, when asked how they benefited from collaboration, five of the eight learners indicated that working with a partner was most useful for listening comprehension. They said that working with a partner helped them make the content of the dictogloss texts more comprehensible, as they could ask their partner questions about the narrative. Only one learner indicated that collaboration was useful for learning grammar, while the remaining two learners stated that collaboration was beneficial for learning vocabulary. In terms of their preference for working with an intermediate or advanced interlocutor, six out of the eight learners stated that they preferred interacting with advanced interlocutors who had better listening comprehension skills, which allowed them to reconstruct the text more easily. They also stated that the advanced interlocutors were able to provide the meaning and spelling of unfamiliar vocabulary items and explain grammatical rules. In contrast, they reported that collaborating with an intermediate interlocutor was often frustrating because the immediate interlocutors were unable to resolve questions about unfamiliar vocabulary and word order. Furthermore, they did not feel confident in their resolution of linguistic problems and questions when collaborating with interlocutors from similar levels.

Table 4 Grammatical, lexical and correctly resolved LREs by learner

	Intermediate interlocutor			Advanced interlocutor		
	Grammatical LREs	Lexical LREs	LREs resolved correctly	Grammatical LREs	Lexical LREs	LREs resolved correctly
Han	7	3	6 (60%)	12	8	16 (80%)
Jung	9	6	9 (60%)	6	8	9 (64%)
Sohn	7	7	9 (64%)	10	8	14 (78%)
Chung	13	5	8 (44%)	15	9	19 (79%)
Jane	7	3	6 (60%)	14	9	17 (81%)
Dong	9	5	9 (64%)	7	9	12 (75%)
Ye	10	7	9 (53%)	8	7	10 (67%)
Mai	6	4	5 (50%)	6	6	8 (67%)

2 Relationship between proficiency and pair dynamics

The second research question asked whether pair dynamics differed when intermediate Korean L2 learners collaborated with an intermediate interlocutor versus an advanced interlocutor. As illustrated in Table 5, when the learners collaborated with an intermediate interlocutor, four learners showed a collaborative pattern, three learners were dominant (two in a dominant/dominant pair and one in a dominant/passive pair) and one was a novice. However, only two learners maintained the same role when they collaborated with an advanced interlocutor: Jane as a novice in an expert/novice pattern and Dong in a collaborative pattern.

For the other learners who had been collaborative with an intermediate interlocutor, two showed a passive role with the advanced interlocutor (Jung and Mai) while one (Chung) took a novice role. Jung and Mai's comments on the second questionnaire indicated that they had a negative perception about working with an advanced interlocutor. More specifically, they claimed that the advanced interlocutor tended to dominate the conversation, which prevented them from participating in the task. Jung and Mai felt that they could not express their ideas while working with a more fluent interlocutor and that they did not feel confident enough to make suggestions.

In another interesting finding, three learners who were dominant when collaborating with an intermediate interlocutor adopted a collaborative orientation when they interacted with an advanced interlocutor. As illustrated in Table 5, when Han, Sohn, and Ye collaborated with an intermediate interlocutor, they were dominant (Sohn and Ye in a dominant/dominant pair and Han in a dominant/passive pair). However, all of them were collaborative

Table 5 LREs and pair dynamics by interlocutor

	Intermediate interlocutor			Advanced interlocutor		
	No LREs	% resolved correctly	Patterns of interaction	No LREs	% resolved correctly	Patterns of interaction
Han	10	60	Dominant/ Passive	20	80	Collaborative
Jung	15	60	Collaborative	14	64	Dominant/ Passive
Sohn	14	64	Dominant/ Dominant	18	78	Collaborative
Chung	18	44	Collaborative	24	79	Expert/ Novice
Jane	10	60	Expert/ Novice	23	81	Expert/ Novice
Dong	14	64	Collaborative	16	75	Collaborative
Ye	17	53	Dominant/ Dominant	15	67	Collaborative
Mai	10	50	Collaborative	12	67	Dominant/ Passive

Note: bold indicates the role of intermediate learners.

when working with advanced interlocutors. All three learners indicated on the second questionnaire that they had a difficult time completing the dictogloss task with an intermediate interlocutor because their partners could not remember the text well and could not resolve their linguistic questions. The learners instead preferred to work with advanced interlocutors due to their superior linguistic knowledge of Korean.

III Discussion

To summarize the findings, significantly more lexical LREs occurred when the learners collaborated with an advanced interlocutor than with an intermediate interlocutor, which supports the findings of previous research that examined collaborative dialogue with learners from different proficiency levels (Leeser, 2004; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Williams, 2001). However, unlike the findings of previous studies, there was no significant difference in the number of grammatical LREs, which may be due to differences in the target languages. The resolution of LREs also varied according to the interlocutor's proficiency level, with significantly more correctly resolved LREs occurring in the collaborative dialogue with an advanced interlocutor, again supporting the findings of previous studies (Leeser, 2004; Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Williams, 2001). Despite the frequent occurrence of both grammatical and lexical LREs in their collaborative dialogue, the learners reported that interaction was most useful for facilitating listening comprehension. Few learners indicated that collaboration was beneficial for learning vocabulary or grammar, but most of them reported that collaborating with an advanced interlocutor was particularly beneficial, as it helped them to understand the text better and obtain answers to their questions about vocabulary and grammar. In terms of the pair dynamics, learners' role during a collaborative task seemed to be influenced by the interlocutor's proficiency. In particular, the results indicated that several learners who had been collaborative with an intermediate interlocutor were passive or novice with an advanced interlocutor, while several learners who had been dominant with an intermediate interlocutor were collaborative with an advanced interlocutor. These changes in pair dynamics may have been triggered by the learners' perception that their linguistic skills were less developed than those of their advanced interlocutor, leading them to adopt less dominant or active roles.

As mentioned previously, collaborative dialogue studies to date have largely explored more commonly taught languages such as English, French and Spanish, and one aim of the current study was to investigate which features Korean learners attend to. For lexical LREs, the learners discussed pronunciation and spelling more frequently than has been reported in previous studies, particularly when collaborating with advanced interlocutors. The focus on pronunciation and spelling in the learners' lexical LREs may also be related to the characteristics of Korean. In phonologically regular orthographies, such as Korean Hangul, phonological codes are assembled prior to

lexical access through a highly systematic analysis of intra-word segmental information (Koda, 1996). Since the sound–spelling relationship in Korean is transparent, learners may be aware of the importance of correct pronunciation for correct spelling. Example (5) illustrates a situation in which an advanced learner expressed that he could not remember which verb had occurred after the noun ‘salvation’ (see line 1). In line 2, the intermediate learner (Dong) suggested a verb with wrong pronunciation. The advanced learner corrected the pronunciation and provided a base form of the correct verb as well as its meaning. The attention to pronunciation may be particularly useful for KSL learners due to Korean’s transparent sound–spelling relationship.

(5) Lexical LRE with an advanced interlocutor

- 1 Advanced interlocutor: 구제? 모르겠다. 내가 뭐 들었는데.
(gu-jeh? mo-lu-gget-da. nae-ga muo dul-lut-nun-deh).
[salvation? I do not know. I have heard something.]
- 2 Dong: 강고하였다? 아니예요?
(Gan-go-ha-yet-da? ah-ni-ye-yo?)
[demanded strongly? (with wrong pronunciation) Isn’t it correct?]
- 3 Advanced interlocutor: 아! 그거 아니예요. 강구하다 아마 요구하다. 강하게?
(Ah! Gu-guh Ah-ni-ye-yo. gang-gu-ha-da (with correct pronunciation)? Ah-ma yo-goo-ha-da. gang-ha-geh?)
[Ah! That’s (the pronunciation) not correct. “gang-gu-ha-da (with correct pronunciation)”. maybe demand (something) strongly?]

For the grammatical LREs, these KSL learners focused on many grammatical features that are not present in the more commonly taught languages examined in previous collaborative dialogue research. Korean has a variety of particles whose usage is determined by phonological factors and by the features of individual nouns (Lee & Ramsey, 2000). When collaborating with intermediate interlocutors, learners frequently discussed these particles in their grammatical LREs, as illustrated in (6). In this example, when the learner (Jung) produced the noun ‘book’ with an incorrect particle ‘에 (eh)’, her intermediate interlocutor provided the correct accusative particle ‘을 (ul)’.

(6) Grammatical LRE with an intermediate interlocutor

- 1 Jung: 나비대환에, 책에
(na-bi-dae-han-eh, chek-eh)
[about butterflies, in the book]

- 2 Intermediate interlocutor: 아니, 나비에 대한 책을 잘 완성했어.

(ani. na-bi-eh dae-han chek-ul jal won-sung-haet-suh.)

[No. finished the book about butterflies].

The particles were often focused on even when the learners interacted with an advanced interlocutor, as illustrated in (7). In this example, Ye and his advanced interlocutor discussed two different types of particles and tried to decide whether they could be used together. In line 1, Ye produced the dependence noun ‘것 (gut)’ with the particle ‘에 (ey)’ in front of an idiomatic expressions ‘대해 (tay-hay) [i.e. concerning, about]’, which in this context was correct. The advanced interlocutor suggested the accusative particle ‘을 (ul)’ on the noun ‘것 (gut)’ which was incorrect with that idiomatic expression in this context. Ye then expressed uncertainty about using another particle ‘한테 (han-ttey)’ on the noun ‘환자들(hwan-ja-dul)’ in the same sentence (line 3). In line 4, the advanced learner finally suggested a clause which includes the correct particles for this context. As examples (6) and (7) illustrate, grammatical features of Korean, such as particles, may be challenging for both intermediate and advanced learners, which may have accounted for the similar number of grammatical LREs in both contexts.

(7) Grammatical LRE with an advanced interlocutor

- 1 Ye: 아, 환자들한테, 환자들한테 병원비를 내는 것에 대해

(Ah, hwan-ja-dul-han-ttey, hwan-ja-dul-han-ttey, byong-won-bi-rul nay-nun-gut-ey tay-hay)

[Ah, (Dr Jang told) to patients, to patients about paying hospital fee]

- 2 Advanced interlocutor: 내는 것을

(nay-nun gut-ul)

[paying (hospital fee)-(accusative particle)]

- 3 Ye: 아닌데, 그렇다면 환자들한테 아닌데.

(ah-nin-dae, gu-lut-da-myon hwan-ja-dul-han-ttey ah-nin-dae)

[No, then ‘to patients’ is not correct.]

- 4 Advanced interlocutor: 아마 환자들이 의사선생님한테 입원비를 내는 것을

(Ah-ma hwan-ja-dul-yee uy-sa-sun-sang-nim-han-ttey ib-won-bi-rul nay-nun gut-ul)

[Maybe (Dr Jang did not want) patients to pay him (Dr. Jang) hospital fee]

In terms of the pattern of interaction, the interlocutor’s proficiency appeared to influence the pattern of interaction for these KSL learners, which confirms

previous research that also found variation in pair dynamics based on proficiency differences (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). More specifically, learners who were collaborative with an intermediate interlocutor tended to be more passive with an advanced interlocutor while learners who were dominant with an intermediate interlocutor were more collaborative with an advanced interlocutor. In Example (8), Sohn was working with an intermediate interlocutor and they both took dominant roles (a dominant/dominant dynamic) when they were trying to decide the age of the butterfly scholar.

(8) Dominant/Dominant pair dynamics

- 1 Sohn: 사십이, 사십일 살?
(sa-sip-ee, sa-sip-il sal?)
[forty-two, forty-one years old?]
- 2 Intermediate interlocutor: 사십 이 살, 사십이 살
(sa-sip ee sal, sa-sip-ee sal)
[forty-two years old, forty-two years old]
- 3 Sohn: 아니. 사십 일 살
(ah-ni. sa-sip il sal)
[no. forty-one years old]
- 4 Intermediate interlocutor: 사십 이 살 이었을 때
(sa-sip ee sal ee-ut-ulq ttay)
[when (he) was forty-two years old]

However, when Sohn worked with an advanced interlocutor, the interaction pattern became collaborative, as illustrated in (9). In this example, they were trying to decide what type of clause was appropriate. Sohn tried to make an independent clause (line 3); however, after the advanced interlocutor explained why they need a subordinate clause indicating reasoning (line 4), Sohn accepted the interlocutor's suggestion (line 5).

(9) Collaborative pair dynamics

- 1 Sohn: 사람들이, 가난한 사람들이
(sa-ram-dul-ee, ka-nan-han sa-ram-dul-ee)
[people, poor people]

- 2 Advanced interlocutor: 치료비, 치료비를 낼 수 없어서
(chi-ryo-bi, chi-ryo-bi-rul nael su up-uh-suh)
[Because (poor people) could not pay their hospital fee]
- 3 Sohn: 치료비를 낼 수 없었다.
(chi-ryo-bi-rul nael su ups-ut-da.)
[(People) could not pay (their) hospital fee.]
- 4 Advanced interlocutor: 치료비를 낼 수 없어서, 이유
(chi-ryo-bi-rul nael su ups-u-suh, ee-yoo)
[Because (people) could not pay for (their) hospital fee, (it is the) reasoning]
- 5 Sohn: 낼 수 없어서
(nael su ups-u-suh)
[Because (people) could not pay]

As illustrated in examples (8) and (9), these learners overall seemed to recognize that more advanced interlocutors had greater linguistic resources and could support their interlanguage development.

Given the prevalence of group and pair work in the L2 classrooms, the results of the current study suggest several implications for L2 pedagogy. Teachers are often concerned about grouping learners especially when they teach classes that have students from different proficiency levels. Overall, similar to Storch (2001), the current study also highlighted that when both learners were collaborative or when advanced learners took an expert role in expert/novice pattern, pairing a higher proficiency learner with a lower proficiency partner resulted in greater collaboration than pairing learners from similar levels. The current study provides additional support for the importance of pair dynamics in collaborative learning, suggesting that intermediate learners can benefit from interacting with either intermediate or advanced interlocutors if a collaborative pair dynamic occurs. Although the current study did not measure the learning outcomes associated with different types of pair dynamics, previous research has shown that collaborative pairings facilitated greater learning than non-collaborative pairings (Watanabe & Swain, 2007). In order to facilitate constructive pair work in L2 classrooms, teachers may need to prepare learners more carefully for group and pair work. Prior to assigning learners to work in groups or pairs, teachers may need to engage them in discussions about the advantages of group work and model collaborative dialogue. In addition, teachers need to pay attention to pair dynamics in class and should allow or encourage learners to change partners if dominant/dominant

or dominant/passive patterns become prevalent. Furthermore, less-proficient learners may feel more comfortable interacting with advanced learners if the more-advanced learners assume an expert role rather than a dominant role. Therefore, teachers may need to encourage more-advanced learners to become more of a facilitator when interacting with their less-proficient peers.

The current study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the current study was situated in a specific instructional context, an intensive KSL program, so the findings may be applicable only in similar contexts. Learners may focus on different language forms during collaborative dialogue based on the linguistic characteristics of the target language; therefore, research that investigates additional languages is needed. Another limitation of the study is that it explored only one kind of collaborative task, a dictogloss task, so future studies might examine other task types and the relationships among task types, interlocutor variables, and LREs. In addition, while some insight into learners' perceptions about collaboration were obtained through the questionnaires, future studies could employ multiple data elicitation methods to gain a better understanding of the relationships among learners' perceptions, the nature of interaction, and learning outcomes. In particular, learners' perceptions about collaborating with interlocutors from a variety of L1 backgrounds could provide insight into how the use of the L1 supports L2 learning.

Also, it should be noted that this study focused narrowly on intermediate Korean L2 learners' interaction with intermediate and advanced interlocutors. The advanced learners' interaction with advanced interlocutors was not considered in the analysis, and their perceptions about interaction were not elicited. Therefore, the question of how working with intermediate learners influence advanced learners' language learning is still an open question. Additional studies should also explore advanced learners' perceptions about collaboration with interlocutors from different proficiency levels. Moreover, the results may have been influenced by the order in which the learners interacted with the intermediate and advanced interlocutors. Future studies might examine whether collaborative dialogue differs when learners interact with advanced interlocutors before interacting with intermediate interlocutors. Finally, while the current analysis focused on the frequency of lexical and grammatical LREs, additional analyses, such as the length of LREs and number of turns within LREs, could provide additional information about the impact of interlocutor variables and collaborative dialogue. And while some collaborative dialogue studies have examined the relationship between LREs and learning outcomes (Adams, 2007; McDonough & Sunitham, 2007; Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001; Watanabe & Swain, 2007), additional research is needed to identify the long-term impact of collaborative dialogue on L2 learning. Furthermore as Jeon (2007) suggested, interaction may affect certain linguistic domains more than others. Therefore, the developmental outcomes associated with different types of LREs in the acquisition of KSL should be investigated.

In conclusion, this small-scale investigation revealed that intermediate Korean L2 learners focus on language forms differently when collaborating with intermediate and advanced interlocutors, and that they were more successful at resolving their linguistic problems and obtaining correct answers to their questions when they collaborated with more advanced interlocutors. The findings have pedagogical implications for the use of pair or group activities in L2 classes, suggesting that learners can resolve their linguistic problems through peer support and assistance. In terms of pairing learners to carry out collaborative tasks, instructors should consider factors such as proficiency and pair dynamics in order to create collaborative interactions that encourage learners to focus on a variety of language forms.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire I (translated to English from Korean)

1. How helpful was it to work with your partner during the dictogloss task?
Choose one.
 - 1) _____ Very helpful
 - 2) _____ Helpful
 - 3) _____ Neither helpful nor unhelpful
 - 4) _____ Not so helpful
 - 5) _____ Not helpful at all

2. If you found it helpful to work with a partner, which linguistic area did it help? Choose one.
 - 1) _____ Vocabulary
 - 2) _____ Writing
 - 3) _____ Grammar
 - 4) _____ Listening comprehension
 - 5) _____ Other (explain) _____

3. In general, how do you like working in groups in your Korean class?
Choose one.
 - 1) _____ Like it a lot
 - 2) _____ Like it
 - 3) _____ Neither like nor dislike it
 - 4) _____ Dislike it
 - 5) _____ Dislike it a lot

Appendix B: Questionnaire II

1. How did you feel about working with advanced-level students? You may answer in your first language.
 - 1) _____ He/she helped me to complete the task so it was very effective
 - 2) _____ He/she did not help me at all so it was not effective
 - 3) Comments?

2. When you worked with an advanced learner, which linguistic area did you think it helped the most? Choose one.

- 1) _____ Vocabulary
- 2) _____ Writing
- 3) _____ Grammar
- 4) _____ Listening comprehension
- 5) _____ Other (explain) _____

3. Which one was more helpful – working with an intermediate-level student or an advanced-level student?

- 1) _____ With an intermediate-level student

Why? Please be as detailed as possible in your answer

- 2) _____ With an advanced-level student

Why? Please be as detailed as possible in your answer

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