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# Using pretask modelling to encourage collaborative learning opportunities

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## Abstract

The current study examines the impact of pretask modelling on the collaborative learning opportunities that occurred when Korean learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) carried out three tasks: dictogloss, decision-making, and information-gap. Forty-four adolescents who were enrolled in a required English course at a middle school in Korea completed the tasks over a two-week period. Half of the learners viewed videotaped models of collaborative interaction prior to carrying out the tasks, while the other learners did not receive pretask modelling. The interaction between the learners was analysed in terms of the type and resolution of language related episodes (LREs) and the learners' pair dynamics. Results indicated that learners who received pretask modelling produced more LREs and correctly resolved a greater proportion of those LREs than learners who did not receive any models. They also demonstrated more collaborative pair dynamics than learners who did not receive models. Trends in the data are discussed in terms of the potential benefits of pretask modelling for encouraging collaboration between young learners in EFL settings.

## Keywords

pretask modelling, learning opportunities, collaborative tasks, pair work, interaction, pair dynamics

## I Introduction

Over the past decade a growing number of studies have examined whether task-based interaction creates opportunities for second language (L2) learning. Reflecting diversity in their theoretical orientations, these studies have defined learning opportunities

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differently, including interactional feedback (e.g. McDonough, 2004; Adams, 2007), focus on form/form-focused episodes (e.g. Williams, 1999; Zhao & Bitchener, 2007; Alcón Soler & García Mayo, 2008), and language-related episodes (LREs; e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Leeson, 2004). Setting aside their theoretical and methodological differences, the overall findings of these studies have indicated that learners:

- direct their attention to language form while carrying out collaborative tasks with their peers;
- are largely successful at providing each other with feedback and obtaining answers to their questions; and
- remember or subsequently produce the language forms that they discussed while collaborating.

Previous research has also demonstrated that the occurrence of interactional feedback and LREs during collaborative tasks is mediated by a variety of factors, including proficiency (Leeson, 2004; Watanabe & Swain, 2007, 2008; Kim & McDonough, 2008), pair dynamics between learners (Storch, 2002a, 2002b; Watanabe & Swain, 2007), level of engagement (McDonough, 2004; Storch, 2008), planning time (Philp et al., 2006), and task type (Swain & Lapkin, 2001; García Mayo, 2002; Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2007; Suzuki & Itagaki, 2007). In general, these studies have reported positive findings for interaction that is characterized by collaborative pair dynamics, high levels of engagement, and interaction that includes high proficiency learners.

However, some studies have suggested that the overall frequency of interactional feedback and LREs may be low and largely confined to a few learners (Foster, 1998; Slimani-Rolls, 2005). Furthermore, teachers and learners in some foreign language contexts have questioned whether collaborative tasks directly contribute to L2 learning (Carless, 2003; McDonough, 2004). These findings highlight the need to identify effective strategies for implementing tasks so that learners are aware of the types of interaction that are beneficial for L2 learning. Because previous research has indicated that pair tasks are beneficial when they elicit collaborative pair dynamics and high levels of engagement, it is important to identify successful techniques for eliciting learner interaction with these characteristics. This is particularly important in instructional contexts where learners may be unfamiliar with collaborative tasks or may be inclined to rely on the first language (L1) rather than communicate in the target language (e.g. English as a foreign language classroom contexts). In previous studies, researchers encouraged beneficial interaction during collaborative tasks by providing explicit information about grammatical forms before learners carried out the tasks (Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Lapkin et al., 2002; Leeson, 2004), training learners to notice and repair their language errors (Bouffard & Sarkar, 2008), and modelling how learners should interact with each other (Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001; Kim & McDonough, 2008). Relatively few of these studies, however, have specifically examined the impact of these pedagogical techniques on learners' subsequent task performance.

In the current study, we examine whether pretask modelling is an effective pedagogical technique for encouraging learners to adopt collaborative pair dynamics and generate LREs. In terms of interaction patterns, we have conceptualized pair dynamics following

Storch's framework (2002a, 2002b), which consists of four patterns of interaction characterized by varying degrees of mutuality and equality. Mutuality refers to level of engagement between the learners, with high mutuality characterized by reciprocal feedback, consistent response and idea-sharing. Equality refers to the degree of control that each learner has over the direction of a task, with high equality characterized by interactions where both learners direct each other towards the successful completion of tasks. In this framework, high mutuality, which is found in expert/novice and collaborative pairs, is beneficial for L2 learning because both learners are engaged in task performance. In contrast, low mutuality, which is associated with dominant/dominant and dominant/passive pairs, may be less beneficial for L2 learning because they involve little interaction. As our focus is on mutuality (rather than equality) we have grouped collaborative and expert/novice pair dynamics as 'collaborative' and classified dominant/dominant and dominate/passive pair dynamics as 'non-collaborative'.

In terms of learning opportunities, following Swain and Lapkin (1998), we have operationalized them as LREs, which are segments of conversation in which language learners 'talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves or others' (p. 326). This definition includes several different interactional features that have been claimed to encourage L2 learning, ranging from very implicit interactional feedback moves (such as recasts) to metalinguistic discussions (such as 'do we need present progressive?'). It allows for the inclusion of segments of conversation in which learners use the L1 to discuss the target language, which is likely to occur in our instructional context because it involves low-proficiency learners who share the same L1 (Brooks & Donato, 1994; Antón & DiCamilla, 1999; Swain & Lapkin, 2000; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Suzuki & Itagaki, 2007; McDonough & Sunitham, 2009). Prior to describing the details of the current study, we discuss the previous studies that have used pretask modelling to encourage the occurrence of LREs during collaborative tasks.

Swain and Lapkin (1998) showed adolescents in a French immersion class a videotape in which two students worked together to create a story based on picture prompts. Their interaction included segments of conversation in which the students talked about grammatical forms and lexical items. The video was intended to serve as a model of what the immersion students should do when they received a set of pictures to narrate. In a subsequent study that compared the effectiveness of two task types (jigsaw and dictogloss) in the same instructional context (Swain & Lapkin, 2001) the teacher also showed a video of two students talking about grammatical forms and lexical items while carrying out a collaborative task. The teacher also led students in whole-class activity that resembled the task the participants would subsequently complete in pairs. In these studies, pretask modelling was used along with other pedagogical techniques, such as a mini-lesson about relevant forms and practice activities, in order to prepare students for the collaborative tasks. Because the role of pretask modelling was not the primary focus of the research, these studies did not examine whether the learners' collaboration was positively impacted by the video models.

One study that directly tested whether pretask modelling influenced the occurrence of learning opportunities during collaborative tasks was also carried out in the French immersion context (LaPierre, 1994, as cited in Swain, 1998). In this study, French immersion students completed one dictogloss task per week over a three-week period. Half of the students watched their teacher and the researcher demonstrate how to talk

about grammatical form using metalinguistic terms before carrying out the task. The other students watched their teacher and the researcher talk about grammatical form without mentioning any explicit rules or metalinguistic terms. Analysis of the students' collaboration during the dictogloss tasks showed that the students who received modelling with metalinguistic terms generated more LREs than students who received modelling without metalinguistic terms. The findings highlight the potential benefit of pretask modelling for encouraging learners to discuss language forms during collaborative tasks. Since the focus of the study was to compare the effectiveness of different types of pretask modelling, the findings do not provide insight into whether learners who receive pretask models benefit more than learners who do not.

In sum, pretask modelling has been used to help learners generate LREs during collaborative tasks. However, studies to date have not explored whether pretask modelling encourages collaborative pair dynamics, which are believed to promote learning opportunities and outcomes. Since questions have been raised as to the benefits of collaborative tasks for L2 learning, additional efforts to identify effective pedagogical techniques that promote beneficial interactions between learners are needed. In instructional contexts where learners may be unaccustomed to communicating with their peers in L2 due to the shared L1, pretask modelling may help them learn how to carry out pedagogic tasks collaboratively in L2, solve their linguistic problems during task performance, and provide appropriate answers to their questions. The current study explores this possibility, and was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does pretask modelling encourage the occurrence LREs during collaborative tasks?
2. Does pretask modelling promote collaborative pair dynamics?

## II Method

### I Participants

The participants were female Korean middle school students ( $n = 44$ ) who were enrolled in two classes of a required English course at a private all-girls school in South Korea. They ranged in age from 13 to 14 years, with a mean age of 13.82 years ( $SD = .39$ ) for class one and 13.64 ( $SD = .49$ ) for class two. All of the participants had four years of previous English instruction in the form of required classes in English as a foreign language (EFL) in elementary school. Most of the students reported taking extra English lessons in their free time, with a mean of 3.37 hours per week for students class one ( $SD = 1.53$ ) and 3.91 hours per week for students in class two ( $SD = 2.02$ ). Overall, the students in both classes reported few, if any, opportunities to use English outside their required English class and extra English lessons. The textbook used in their required English course was organized by different topics, and each unit presented different target grammatical features, functional expressions, and vocabulary. During a typical class period, the students completed listening and reading activities and listened to their teacher explain grammatical forms and functions. In terms of oral communication skills, they carried out drill activities and role-plays that involved manipulating conversations

in the textbook. In general, the required English course provided students with few opportunities to communicate using spoken or written English.

## 2 Materials

*a Communicative tasks:* Three communicative tasks were created in an effort to appeal to the students' interests and develop their ability to talk about Korea in English: Korean holidays, entertainment in Seoul, and attractions in Seoul. The primary focus of all three tasks was to elicit oral interaction between the learners, but one task involved paragraph-level writing (dictogloss task) while the other two tasks involved note-taking in the form of entering information into graphic organizers (the decision-making and information-gap tasks). The first task, 'Korean holidays', was a dictogloss activity based on a short passage (136 words) about the Korean Thanksgiving holiday (ChuSeok) created by the researchers. The students heard the passage twice (once at a natural speed and once with pauses at phrasal and clausal breaks) and then worked in pairs to reconstruct the passage in writing. Each pair was asked to work on only one version of reconstructed text, which required them to collaborate during task performance. The second task, 'entertainment in Seoul', was a decision-making task in which each student received information about a shopping centre, an amusement park, an aquarium, and a movie theatre. Because each student had information about different venues in each category, they were required to exchange information before reaching consensus about which venue they preferred. The students were provided with a worksheet that included graphic organizers designed to help them obtain relevant information, such as admission fees, hours, and attractions. They were encouraged to take notes while exchanging information and to refer to their notes when making a decision.

Finally, the third task, 'attractions in Seoul', was an information gap task in which each student received information about different tourist attractions in Seoul, such as palaces, museums, and traditional villages. They worked together to exchange information about the tourist attractions to create a visitor's guide, which highlighted important information for each place. They were given graphic organizers designed to help them obtain relevant information, such as admission fees, special exhibitions, and locations, while exchanging information. They could then refer to their notes when completing the visitor's guide.

*b Pretask modelling materials:* In order to provide pretask modelling, three short video clips (approximately two minutes each) were created in which the first author and the students' English teacher carried out each task. Video scripts were written by the first author prior to the recording in order to ensure that each task model:

- provided examples of correctly resolved LREs targeting both vocabulary and grammar; and
- demonstrated collaborative pair dynamics with both interlocutors providing feedback, responding to questions, and sharing ideas.

As illustrated in Example 1, the task models included different types of feedback (line 2, line 5) and explicit discussion of language form (line 7).

Example 1: Pretask modelling video segment

- 1 A: What we can do in 63 building?
- 2 B: What can we do there?
- 3 A: Yes. Do you have information?
- 4 B: I have some information here. They have an aquarium.
- 5 A: aquarium?
- 6 B: 수족관 (Korean translation)
- 7 A: How ... How? 이거 얼마나고를 어떻게 말하지? ('How do you say when you want to ask for price?')
- 8 B: Do you mean how much it is to go there? 주어와 동사를 바꿔야지. ('You need to invert the subject and the verb.'). You should say 'How much is it to go there?'
- 9 A: Yes ... how much is it to go to the aquarium?

In sum, the pretask modelling videos demonstrated how to carry out the tasks collaboratively through idea-sharing, asking and answering questions, and providing feedback, and how to successfully resolve linguistic questions and problems during interactive tasks.

### 3 Design and procedure

The current study employed a between-groups design to investigate the impact of pretask modelling on LREs and pair dynamics during peer interaction. The dependent variables were (1) the number and resolution of LREs and (2) pair dynamics, which was defined previously in the introduction. The independent variable was pretask modelling, which was operationalized as explicit instructions about task implementation and videotape models of collaborative task interaction. One class was randomly assigned to the pretask modelling group while the other class was assigned to the control group, which did not receive explicit instructions about how to carry out the tasks and did not view the videotape models for collaborative task performance.

The tasks were administered during three regularly-scheduled English classes over a two-week period. Each task was carried out during a 45-minute class period, which consisted of short pretask activities, the main task, and post-task activities. For the modelling group, the pretask activities consisted of explicit instructions about how to interact with their partner by providing feedback and asking questions followed by a videotape model of the researcher and the teacher carrying out the task. As previously illustrated in Example 1, the interaction depicted in the video included multiple instances of both interlocutors initiating discussions of language form, requests for information and feedback episodes. For the control group, the pretask activities consisted of instructions about the purpose of the task and the task outcome, without any explicit instructions about how to interact with their partners or task models. After carrying out the main task, students shared their task outcomes with the class (e.g. characteristics of Korean Thanksgiving, their choice of entertainment in Seoul, description of attractions in Seoul). The learners' interaction while carrying out each task was audio-recorded using digital recorders. On the fourth day, the students gave oral presentation in pairs to report their entertainment and attractions recommendations to the class as the final task outcome.

## 4 Coding and analysis

*a LREs:* The audio-recordings were transcribed by the researchers and coded in terms of the occurrence of LREs, as previously defined. Each LRE was then classified in terms of its linguistic focus (grammar or vocabulary). Grammatical LREs were defined as LREs in which students discussed grammatical features of English, including verb tenses, use of prepositions, and subject/verb agreement. A grammatical LRE is illustrated in Example 2, in which a student asks her partner what verb form should be used with the subject *American children*.

### Example 2: Grammatical LRE

- 1 *Learner 1:* American children 해. (Say 'American children'.)
- 2 *Learner 2:* 'Is' 라고 써야해, 'are' 라고 써야해? (Should I write 'is' or 'are'?)
- 3 *Learner 1:* Children 이니깐, are 라고 써야지. (Because it is 'children', you should use 'are'.)

Lexical LREs were defined as LREs in which the students discussed the meaning, pronunciation or spelling of individual words, as illustrated in Example 3. In this example, a student asked about the meaning of the word *harvest*, and his partner provided the Korean translation and referred to a Korean brand of cookies with that word.

### Example 3: Lexical LRE

- 1 *Learner 1:* 'Harvest' 가 무슨 뜻이야? (what is the meaning of 'harvest'?)
- 2 *Learner 2:* 추추 ... '하비스트' 과자도 있잖아. ('chusu' ... There are cookies called 'harvest' [in Korea].)

Following previous research, the resolution of the students' LREs was also classified as correctly resolved, unresolved, and incorrectly resolved (Swain, 1998; Leeser, 2004; Kim & McDonough, 2008; McDonough & Sunitham, 2009). 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. Unresolved was defined as an LRE in which neither learner could solve the problem nor knew the answer to the question. Incorrectly resolved was defined as an LRE in which a problem was solved incorrectly or an incorrect answer was provided to a question.

*b Pair dynamics:* The transcripts were also analysed in terms of pair dynamics following Storch's framework (2001, 2002a, 2002b). Because students may demonstrate variation in their interaction patterns based on task type, pair dynamics were coded separately for each task. As described previously, mutuality was considered the key factor for identifying different levels of collaboration. Based on Storch's model of dyadic interaction (2002a, p. 128), the criteria for collaborative pair dynamics were as follows:

1. offering consistent interactional feedback throughout task performance;
2. engaging each other's ideas;

3. maintaining similar contributions to task accomplishment;
4. encouraging a partner's participation.

As Storch (2002a) has acknowledged, the categorization of pair dynamics can be imprecise because multiple patterns may emerge during a single conversation. If students changed interaction pattern during a single task performance, the pattern that was predominant for the majority of their conversation was coded.

The following two examples (Examples 4 and 5) illustrate collaborative and non-collaborative patterns of interaction that occurred when different pairs carried out the Korean Thanksgiving dictogloss task. In Example 4, both students contributed jointly to the reconstruction of the text and engaged each other's ideas. Their interaction contained segments in which both students provided implicit feedback, such as a recast (line 40), or asked explicit questions about language (line 22). They requested and provided information, engaged each other's ideas, and made contributions to task completion.

Example 4: Collaborative pattern of interaction during a dictogloss task

- 1 *Learner 1:* I would like to introduce Chuseok to you
- 2 *Learner 2:* Chuseok is one of the big
- 3 *Learner 1:* biggest 라고 들었는데 ([I] heard biggest.)
- 4 *Learner 2:* 맞다 ([you are] right.). biggest holiday in Korea
- 5 *Learner 1:* It is time for
- 6 *Learner 2:* expressing? expressing ([I do not know what 'expressing' is])
- 7 *Learner 1:* expressing 이 이건가? 이거 이거? (Is this 'expressing'? This one? This one?)
- 8 *Learner 2:* 어. for expressing ... for expressing the  
(yes)  
[...]
- 19 *Learner 1:* The full harvest
- 20 *Learner 2:* harvest 어떻게 써? (How do you spell harvest?)
- 21 *Learner 1:* ha ha ha ... harvest 맞아? (Is this correct?)
- 22 *Learner 2:* ok. festival is on ... on 이야? (Is 'on' correct?)
- 23 *Learner 1:* on August 15th in the fall
- 24 *Learner 2:* family member ... member 이야? (Is 'member' correct?)
- 25 *Learner 1:* members
- 26 *Learner 2:* members show ... express ... living ... and ...
- 27 *Learner 1:* 이게 뭐야? (What is this?)
- 28 *Learner 2:* relatives?
- 29 *Learner 1:* 그게 뭐야? (What is that?)
- 30 *Learner 2:* 친척 (Relative; Korean translation)  
[...]
- 39 *Learner 2:* exchange gifts and playing
- 40 *Learner 1:* play
- 41 *Learner 2:* play more exciting
- 42 *Learner 1:* exciting game
- 43 *Learner 2:* games ... exciting games

In contrast, Example 5 illustrates non-collaborative pattern of interaction in which students did not show evidence of working together to accomplish the task goal. These students asked each other questions, but they did not consistently answer those questions (line 6, lines 14–15). The salient characteristics of their non-collaborative pattern of interaction included the occurrence of disagreements (lines 8–11), failure to engage their partner's suggestions or ideas (line 2; lines 19–20), and the inability or unwillingness to reach consensus (lines 25–28).

Example 5: Non-collaborative pattern of interaction during a dictogloss task

- 1 *Learner 1*: I would like to introduce Chuseok to you
- 2 *Learner 2*: 야 ... 같이 해 ... 같이 해 ... (Hey ... Let's do it together ... Let's do it together)
- 3 *Learner 1*: 이 거 아니야. 뭐 있어. (This is not right. There was something else.)
- 4 *Learner 2*: Chuseok is traditional holiday in Korea
- 5 *Learner 1*: in Korea 라고? 상의를 좀 하자고 ... 추석 ... 왜 한글로 써? ([did you say] in Korea? Let's discuss it first? Chuseok. Why did you write in Korean?)
- 6 *Learner 2*: biggest가 뭐야? (What does 'biggest' mean?)
- 7 *Learner 1*: 어떻게 써? A로 써? (How do you spell it? Do I include 'A'?)
- 8 *Learner 2*: kid있었어. (There was 'kid')
- 9 *Learner 1*: kids아냐? 어린애들이야. kids (Isn't it 'kids'? kids [emphasizing the use of plural] ... kids)
- 10 *Learner 2*: 작은 어린애들이 ... kid (little kids [providing Korean translation] ... kid)
- 11 *Learner 1*: 아까 저기서 kids라고 했어. (It said 'kids' earlier.)
- 12 *Learner 2*: Chuseok is 뭐 뭐 뭐 traditional holiday in Korea. (Chuseok is something, something, something traditional holiday in Korea.)  
[...]
- 18 *Learner 1*: Chuseok is biggest traditional holiday in Korea ... American holiday of Thanksgiving. American ...
- 19 *Learner 2*: traditional 어떻게 써? (How do you spell it?)
- 20 *Learner 1*: American holiday ... 미국에서의 휴일은 Thanksgiving이라고 이거 어떻게 말해? (How do you say 'America's holiday is Thanksgiving' in English?)
- 21 *Learner 2*: American holiday
- 22 *Learner 1*: of가 들어갔어 (There was 'of' here.)
- 23 *Learner 2*: American holiday아냐? (Isn't 'American holiday'?)
- 24 *Learner 1*: 그러니깐, 이렇게 해야돼 ... 뭐지 ... 한국의 추석 같은 미국의 휴일은 Thanksgiving (So, we have to say something like this: The American holiday which is similar to Chuseok in Korea is Thanksgiving)
- 25 *Learner 2*: Thanksgiving day가 추수감사절 아냐? (Isn't Thanksgiving day 'chusugamsajul; Korean translation'?)
- 26 *Learner 1*: 그러니까 ... (That's what I am saying.)
- 27 *Learner 2*: 한국의 추수감사절이 Thanksgiving이랑 같다는 말이야? (So do you mean that Korean's Chuseok is the same as Thanksgiving?)
- 28 *Learner 1*: 비슷하다고 ... 넘어가 그냥 ([what I am saying is] similar. Let's move on.)

## 5 Reliability and analysis

A subset of the data (23%) was coded by an independent rater who identified and classified LREs according to the linguistic focus (grammar or vocabulary) and resolution (correctly resolved, unresolved, or resolved incorrectly). The Pearson's  $r$  for interrater reliability was .89 for the classification of LREs, and .92 for the resolution of LREs. For pair dynamics, 23% of the data was coded by a second rater, and simple percentage agreement between the researcher's coding and the independent rater's coding was 80% (Cohen's kappa = .72). Any disagreements were resolved through discussion, typically deferring to the person who had been present when the interaction took place. Individual Mann–Whitney tests, non-parametric independent samples  $t$ -tests, were used to compare the number of LREs generated by learners in the pretask modelling group and the control group. As it was expected that the pretask modelling group would outperform the control group, one-tailed significance tests were used. Alpha was set at .05 for all statistical tests.

## III Results

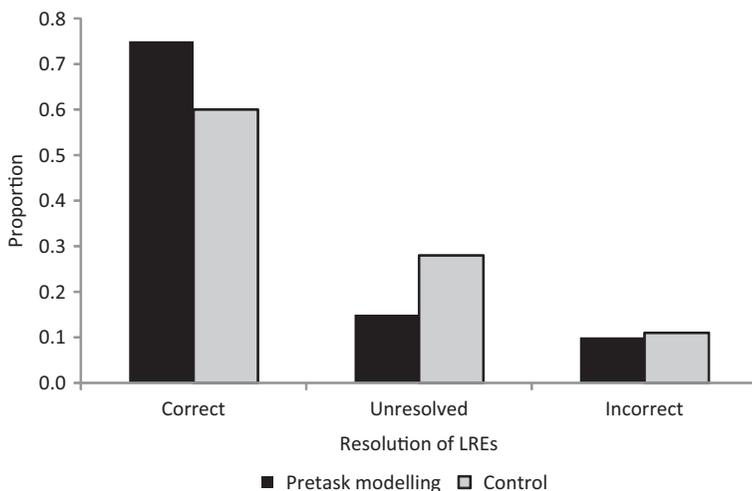
### 1 Occurrence of LREs

The first research question asked whether pretask modelling impacted the occurrence of LREs during collaborative tasks. Table 1 shows the number of grammatical and lexical LREs that occurred in the pretask modelling and control groups for each of the three tasks.

In terms of the total number LREs, pretask modelling group produced a greater number of both grammatical and lexical LREs than the control group. Across all three tasks, the pretask modelling group had a mean of 8.45 grammatical and 19.91 lexical LREs, whereas the control group produced a mean of 4.36 grammatical and 13.18 lexical LREs. When considering the occurrence of grammatical LREs by each task separately, the pretask modelling group produced more grammatical LREs than the control group during the dictogloss task and the information gap task, but they had a similar number of grammatical LREs for the decision making task. In terms of lexical LREs, the pretask modelling group produced more LREs than the control group for all three tasks.

**Table 1** LREs by task and modelling

Task/LRE type	Pretask modelling ( $n = 11$ )				Control ( $n = 11$ )			
	Grammatical		Lexical		Grammatical		Lexical	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Korean holidays (Dictogloss)	4.09	1.45	6.73	1.85	1.91	1.76	4.73	2.10
Entertainment in Seoul (Decision-making)	1.82	1.60	6.36	3.38	1.64	1.86	5.45	2.21
Attractions in Seoul (Information gap)	2.36	2.54	7.45	4.29	1.00	1.00	3.36	3.39
Total	8.45	3.27	19.91	5.99	4.36	3.33	13.18	5.69



**Figure 1** Resolution of LREs by group

In order to reduce the number of statistical comparisons undertaken on the same dataset, only the total numbers of lexical and grammatical LREs across all three tasks were compared using Mann–Whitney tests (non-parametric independent samples *t*-tests). The results indicated that pretask modelling group produced significantly more lexical LREs ( $Z = 2.34, p = .019$ ) and grammatical LREs ( $Z = 2.75, p = .006$ ) than the control group.

The first research question was also addressed by comparing how learners in the pretask modelling and control groups resolved their LREs. Because there were significant differences in the number of grammatical and lexical LREs produced by the two groups, the learners' resolution of LREs was calculated as a proportion score (number of LREs in each resolution category divided by the total number of LREs). As illustrated in Figure 1, the pretask modelling group correctly resolved a greater proportion of LREs ( $M = .75, SD = .09$ ) than the control group ( $M = .60, SD = .10$ ), and had fewer unresolved LREs ( $M = .15$  and  $.28$ , respectively). The number of incorrectly resolved LREs was very similar between the two groups, with  $.10$  ( $SD = 0.64$ ) for the pretask modelling group and  $.11$  ( $SD = .10$ ) for the control group. The distribution of correct, unresolved, and incorrectly resolved LREs was consistent for all three tasks for both the pretask modelling and control groups.

In order to reduce the number of statistical comparisons, only the correct resolution of LREs was compared using a Mann–Whitney test, which indicated that the pretask modelling group correctly resolved a greater proportion of LREs than the control group ( $Z = 2.89, p = .002$ ).

## 2 Pair dynamics

The second research question asked whether pretask modelling encouraged collaborative pair dynamics. As shown in Table 2, the students in the pretask modelling group had more

**Table 2** Pair Dynamics by group

	Pretask modelling ( <i>n</i> = 11)		Control ( <i>n</i> = 11)	
	Collaborative	Non-collaborative	Collaborative	Non-collaborative
Korean holidays (Dictogloss)	7	4	4	7
Entertainment in Seoul (Decision-making)	9	2	4	7
Attractions in Seoul (Information gap)	9	2	7	4

collaborative interactions than students in the control group for all three tasks. For the dictogloss tasks, seven pairs in the pretask modelling group had collaborative interaction while only four pairs in the control group demonstrated collaborative pair dynamics. For the decision-making task, the difference between the groups was greater, with nine collaborative pairs in the pretask modelling group but only four collaborative pairs in the control group. The difference between the groups was much smaller for the information gap task, with nine collaborative pairs in the pretask modelling group and seven in the control group.

In sum, the descriptive statistics indicate that students who received pretask modelling showed more collaborative interaction than the control group. The differences between the two groups were more noticeable for the dictogloss and decision making tasks than the information gap task. Due to violations of between-cell and within-cell independence, it was not possible to determine whether the relationship between pretask modelling and pair dynamics was significant.

## IV Discussion

To summarize the findings, Korean middle school students who received pretask models produced significantly more LREs and correctly resolved those LREs more often than students who did not receive models. They also demonstrated greater collaboration than students who had not viewed models prior to task performance. In short, the findings suggest that pretask modelling may be a useful tool for encouraging students to interact in ways that are believed to promote L2 learning during peer interaction. Advocates of task-based language teaching (e.g. Willis & Willis, 2007) have suggested that L2 teachers provide students with models of task performance, and the current findings indicate that this may be an effective technique for eliciting LREs and facilitating collaboration.

Although questions have been raised as to whether collaborative tasks are appropriate in foreign language contexts where learners speak the same L1, the current study suggests that these middle school Korean EFL students successfully discussed language form at rates comparable adult L2 learners (Williams, 1999, 2001; Leaser, 2004; Kim & McDonough, 2008). When considering different task types, pretask modelling appeared to have a greater impact on grammatical LREs for the dictogloss task and on lexical LREs for the information gap task. This suggests that the pretask modelling may impact learners' performance differently depending on task type, which provides additional insight into the

role of task type on learners' performance (e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 2001; García Mayo, 2002; Slimani-Rolls, 2005; Alegría de la Colina & García Mayo, 2007; Suzuki & Itagaki, 2007). Finally, the findings also suggest that pretask models may encourage collaborative interaction, which has been shown to facilitate greater development than non-collaborative interaction (e.g. Watanabe & Swain, 2007; Kim & McDonough, 2008). However, the findings for the information gap task suggested that some tasks may elicit more collaborative interaction, regardless of pretask modelling. Such findings are in line with early research indicating that information gap tasks generally promoted high learner involvement (e.g. Pica & Doughty, 1985; Newton, 1991; Foster, 1998).

As mentioned in the introduction, learners in a foreign language context typically share the same L1, which they may use to discuss features of the L2 during collaborative tasks. In order to encourage use of the L2, the pretask video models demonstrated collaborative task performance in which the researcher and the teacher discussed linguistic forms in English and had very limited use of Korean. Although the current study was not designed to measure the impact of pretask modelling on learners' L1 and L2 use, trends in the data suggest that the pretask modelling group may have attempted greater English use during LREs than the control group. In Example 6, two learners in the pretask modelling group were carrying out the information-gap task. As shown in lines 3 and 5, these learners used interaction features similar to those targeted in the pretask modelling video, such as clarification requests and explicit correction.

Example 6: Two learners in the pretask modelling group

- 1 *Learner 1*: What is disadvantage?
- 2 *Learner 2*: Disadvantage is ... ChangDukGong is closed on Mondays and closed ... very fast?
- 3 *Learner 1*: What you say?
- 4 *Learner 2*: really?
- 5 *Learner 1*: no no ... early
- 6 *Learner 2*: yes ... very very ... early ...

In contrast, learners in the control group tended to use more L1 when carrying out the tasks. In Example 7, two learners in the control group were discussing the same segment of the information-gap task previously illustrated in Example 6. In this segment, both learners relied on Korean more than English to generate questions and provide answers.

Example 7: Two learners in the control group

- 1 *Learner 1*: 단점? 단점이 뭐야? (disadvantage? What is disadvantage?)
- 2 *Learner 2*: disadvantage는 Monday closed.
- 3 *Learner 1*: 그럼 좋은 점은? (Then, what is advantage?)
- 4 *Learner 2*: 좋은 점 ... 뭐지? (advantage ... What can that be?)
- 5 *Learner 1*: tradition. Korean tradition이라고 해 (tradition. Say 'Korean tradition'.)
- 6 *Learner 2*: Korean tradition 뭐라고? (Korean tradition what?)

Another trend in the data relates to the use of information provided in the task prompts, which Boston (2008) has referred to as 'mining'. In the pretask modelling videos, the

researcher and the teacher generated their own sentences using information provided rather than reading complete sentences from the materials. Trends in the data suggest that students in the pretask modelling group generated sentences using the information provided in the task materials, while students in the control group tended to use that information verbatim. As shown in Example 8, students in the control group exchanged information about two stores, DongDaeMoon (line 1) and Lotte department store (line 2), by reading information from the task materials without any modifications (exact phrases from the task prompts are indicated in italics). Previous studies have reported that taking linguistic input directly from written task materials was common among low-level learners (Boston, 2008)

Example 8: Two learners from the control group

- 1 *Learner 1:* I would like to introduce DongDaeMoon market. *DongDaeMoon market is Korean's largest shopping ... And you can buy buy many fashion items at cheap prices. It has many things famous ...*
- 2 *Learner 2:* Lotte Department store is ... uh? *Lotte Department store there are a lot of fashion items and we have six shopping mall.*
- 3 *Learner 1:* DongDaeMoon market is open twelve four hours. *You cannot return the product you buy. You can find all imported product.*

However, learners in the pretask modelling group were more likely to incorporate language from the task materials into their own utterances. In Example 9, two learners were making a decision where to take their American friends for shopping. These learners used words and phrases from the task prompts to complete the task (indicated in italics), but incorporated these items into their own sentences rather than taking entire clauses and sentences from the task materials.

Example 9: Two learners in the pretask modelling group

- 1 *Learner 1:* Tell me about DongDaeMoon.
- 2 *Learner 2:* DongDaeMoon market is good. We can buy very 싸다? (cheap [in English?])
- 3 *Learner 1:* *cheap*
- 4 *Learner 2:* Right ... Again ... we can buy *cheap* clothes.
- 5 *Learner 1:* Lotte Department store has six shopping malls. Very good items. You can buy *imported product*. Imported?
- 6 *Learner 2:* 수입품 (Korean translation)

The impact of pretask modelling on task mining could be explored more systematically by examining how students use visual (pictures, cartoons, videos) and textual (reading passages, words, expressions) input to discuss language form, answer questions, and respond to ideas or suggestions.

## V Conclusions

Numerous researchers have highlighted the importance of the pretask activities in drawing learners' attention to the language forms and interactional features that are useful for

task accomplishment (e.g. Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). The current study suggests that pretask modelling may be one way to encourage discussion about language form and promote collaboration during task performance. The provision of pretask activities, such as models of task performance, may help students understand the goal of the task and identify ways of interacting that will facilitate task performance while generating learning opportunities.

Although the findings indicate that pretask modelling may be an effective pedagogical technique for helping young EFL students discuss language form and adopt collaborative pair dynamics, the current study has limitations that should be acknowledged. Due to its descriptive nature, the current study did not investigate potentially causal relationships among pretask modelling, the occurrence of LREs, and L2 development. Previous studies have used tailor-made post-tests to determine the longer-term impact of LREs, on linguistic development (Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998, 2001; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2007; Kim, 2008; McDonough & Sunitham, 2009), and future studies should continue to develop additional methods for assessing the relationships among pretask modelling, LREs, and L2 development. In the current study, the pretask modelling video models illustrated interaction between a researcher and a teacher, both of whom had considerably higher proficiency in English than the students. Future studies might explore whether specific characteristics of pretask models, such as the interlocutors' proficiency level, age, and familiarity with the students, has any impact on task performance.

And since the current study focused on a specific instructional context – i.e. middle school students in Korea – the findings are not generalizable to other contexts or L2 populations. Future studies should continue to expand the empirical basis of task research by including more diverse contexts and learners. Finally, future studies should reflect greater diversity in their research orientation by including both quantitative and qualitative analyses, which could shed light on the relationship between learners' individual characteristics (e.g. motivation, proficiency, beliefs about L2 learning) and the effectiveness collaborative tasks. These issues need to be addressed in future research in order to provide teachers with the information they need to design and implement tasks that maximize L2 learning.

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