Negotiation about Form across L2 Proficiency Levels and Its Role in Second Language Learning

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This study looks at the employment of negotiation about form by a pair of advanced English L2 users engaged in collaborative composition tasks, and compares their negotiation with that of a beginner English L2 pair. Contrary to the increasing interest in negotiation for meaning within the L2 literature, there is little research that investigates how learners interact in negotiation about form contexts, where learners are required to explicitly talk about the form that they encounter. In particular, few studies have been conducted with learners at different proficiency levels in such contexts. Recognizing this paucity, the study presents a holistic analysis of learners’ negotiation about form generated by learners at different proficiency levels. This means that first, the negotiation about form was quantified in terms of language-related episodes (LREs); second, the same data was examined via an in-depth, descriptive analysis; third, delayed post-tests were conducted on specific linguistic items produced via negotiation about form. The study does not find much difference in LREs between the two proficiency levels of learners or convincing evidence that LREs lead to L2 learning at all. The results also reveal limitations in the relationship between the interactions engaged in and eventual learning. (196 words)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Negotiation about Form and Its Theoretical Rationale

Tackling the central role of attention in learning, recent SLA research has explored whether and how the learners’ attentional processes may be specifically promoted via output for the learners’ L2 development. Such consideration is indeed at the core of an
influential pedagogic proposal known as focus on form. Focus on form\(^1\), which was originally proposed by Long (1991, 1996), is an instructional treatment that “overtly draws students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (Long, 1991, pp. 45-46). As clarified by Long (1991), what should be noted is that the primary weight within the notion of focus on form is still on meaning; and the attention to form ought to arise out of meaning-centred activity.

One particular kind of interaction, known as negotiation for meaning has been proposed in relation to focus on form. Long (1996) characterised this term as follows: “negotiation for meaning by definition involves denser than usual frequencies of semantically contingent speech of various kinds (i.e., utterance by a competent speaker, such as repetitions, extensions, reformulations, rephrasings, expansions, and recasts), which immediately follow learner utterances and maintain reference to their meaning” (p. 452). However, negotiation for meaning faces a crucial limitation, which is that such a pedagogical intervention cannot always easily be noticed by a learner as the priority to resolve communicative problems puts the focus on meaning rather than form; as a consequence, it does not always successfully lead learners to modify their output.

In this vein, in contrast to the notion of negotiation for meaning, negotiation about form was suggested by Swain (1995). She proposes:

[i]n order to investigate what learners make explicit and how this contributes to language development, we need tasks which encourage reflection on language form while still being oriented to getting meaning across. In most of the research, tasks [are] principally focused on meaning rather than form...However, it is certainly feasible for a communicative task to be one in which learners communicate about language, in the context of trying to produce something they want to say in the target language. Learners negotiate meaning, but the content of that negotiation is language form, and its relation to the meaning they are trying to express; they produce language and then reflect upon it. They use language to ‘negotiate about form’ (Swain, 1995, pp. 132-133).

As explained by Swain (1995), negotiation about form allows for a pedagogical context where learners can have their attention drawn to their own utterances and reformulate errors, if there are any, by explicitly talking about the form of the target language while doing a communicative task.

The notion of negotiation about form entails two different theoretical perspectives, i.e.

\(^1\) See Doughty and Williams (1998) for a full terminological discussion of focus on form.
cognitive and sociocultural. From a cognitive perspective, it is said that talking about
language indicates attention to something about the learner’s own or the interlocutor’s use
of language, and this attention plays a facilitative role in L2 development. In contrast, from
a sociocultural perspective, it is seen as serving a somewhat different function. According
to this perspective, talking about language makes a learner reflect on language produced
by the self or the interlocutor, and these processes of talking about language and reflecting
on it mediate L2 learning. In other words, learners use language as a tool to reflect their
thinking and for communication. Using language mediates L2 learning, especially when
learners solve a linguistic problem and collaboratively “build knowledge about language”
(Swain, 2005). In this, they engage in dialogues, and such dialogues are “a tool of
cognitive activity that mediates L2 learning” (Watanabe and Swain, 2007, p. 124). This
sociocultural perspective has been constructed based upon the work of Vygotsky (1978,
1987), whose central position lies in social interaction as the origin of human development
and learning.

2. Previous Studies on Negotiation and L2 Proficiency Level

Several studies have attempted to investigate how learners focus on and talk about form
and how this negotiation generated by learners affects L2 learning. Regardless of their
theoretical basis or methodology, such studies often appear to suggest that there is some
kind of relationship between learners’ negotiation and L2 learning (e.g., Basturkmen, et al.,
2002; Fortune, 2005; Leeser, 2004; Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Williams, 1999,
2001). However, variability in learners’ talking about form at different proficiency levels
has also been noticed (Fortune, 2005; Qi & Lapkin, 2001; Swain, 1998). Some researchers
(e.g., Storch, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1998) even claim that not all learners, notably not
those with low levels of language proficiency, are able to focus on and talk about form.

In the L2 literature, some researchers have examined a relationship between focus on
form and L2 proficiency levels. For example, taking a cognitive perspective, Williams
(1999, 2001) conducted two studies, and both studies compared the amount of focus on
form produced by eight ESL learners from three proficiency levels. A common finding of
both studies was that the amount of focus on form increased as proficiency levels
increased. That is, learners at lower levels produced less focus on form than learners at
higher levels. More recently, Leeser (2004) also examined the impact of learners’
proficiency on focus on form. He analysed the frequency, language focus, and outcome of
the talk about form (i.e., metatalk) produced by three different pairs: high-high, high-low,
and low-low, in an adult L2 Spanish class. Results of the study were that as the proficiency
of a pair increased, the learners produced a greater amount of metatalk, more correctly
resolved metatalk, and focused more on syntactic than on lexical items. These findings
seem to support those of Williams (1999, 2000), which also found a similar trend – that learners at higher proficiency levels produced more metatalk than those at lower levels.

However, it is important to note the following points. First, the previous studies conducted within the framework of cognitive theory were based on meaning-driven contexts, where learners’ primary focus tends to be on trying to communicate with the interlocutors rather than the linguistic item of the communication. In such contexts, therefore, less proficient learners may have difficulty in talking about form when they struggle to understand meaning. In fact, little research has been conducted in the context of negotiation about form, where learners are required to explicitly talk about the form. Second, those previous studies did not examine how the focus on form generated by learners at different proficiency levels was related to L2 learning. They merely provided the frequency of learner-generated focus on form, without providing any further account of the learning outcomes. Measuring the amount of focus on form generated by a pair of learners did not provide evidence of L2 learning of each learner. Third, the previous studies analysed learners’ talk quantitatively only. As Williams (2001) acknowledges, the quantitative analysis does not tell much about the nature of interaction occurring in focus on form, which might be important in determining its effectiveness.

Sociocultural theory-based research has also examined a relationship between proficiency levels and learner-generated focus on form, but from a perspective different to cognitive approaches. The focus of such research is mainly on how learners of different proficiency levels co-construct knowledge via so-called scaffolding. Within the research framework, it is hypothesised that the learner with the higher proficiency level takes the role of ‘expert’ and leads the interaction, with the other student in the role of ‘novice’. However, recently the focus of theoretical and empirical descriptions of scaffolding has moved from what ‘the more knowledgeable other’ (parent, teacher, native speaker, or native-like advanced learner) does in assisting the learning of ‘the less knowledgeable one’ (e.g., Wood, et al., 1976) to how ‘peers’ help each other develop L2 learning through collaboration at a social level (e.g., Antón, 1999; de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994, 2000; Donato, 1994; Ko, et al., 2003; Ohta, 1995; Storch, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). In fact, several studies of so-called mutual scaffolding have been carried out to examine how two learners with different L2 proficiency levels scaffold each other in interactional tasks. Questioning the existing notion of scaffolding, the results of these studies indicate that both students, though with different proficiency levels, allowed each other to experiment with and refine their own language and played with the target utterance until they were able to say it alone. Based upon these findings, researchers argue that L2 proficiency levels between novice and expert are a ‘fluid concept’. This means that the same learner can function as both an expert and a novice at different times in a conversation, and even a less proficient learner can assist a more proficient learner, not always vice versa (Brooks et al.,
Therefore, for these researchers, what seems important is the role learners assume in doing the task, not just their proficiency levels.

Despite these valuable insights, however, the previous sociocultural-based research also has some shortcomings. One of the limitations with the research is that it seems to restrict the notion of learner-learner interaction. In other words, collaborative interaction often seems evident in the data of such research. However, the reality of interaction in problem solving as a joint activity may not be that it is a smooth, scripted dialogue between two consenting students; but be messy or incoherent exchanges between individuals. Another limitation with sociocultural-based studies is that they do not directly address the issue of L2 learning. In fact, sociocultural-based studies to date have focused on examining L2 \textit{use} rather than L2 \textit{acquisition}. Ellis (1999) provides a fine analysis of this limitation, stating that “this [limitation] is an inevitable outcome of a method that relies on the study of the microgenesis\(^2\) of language abilities. In fact, the distinction between ‘use’ and ‘acquisition’ is not altogether clear from the perspective of sociocultural theory…There has clearly been inadequate discussion among sociocultural researchers of how ‘use’ and ‘acquisition’ should be distinguished both conceptually and operationally” (p.25).

\section{II. RESEARCH QUESTION}

As examined so far, despite their significance, few studies on focus on form have been conducted in the context of negotiation about form. Furthermore, the few studies that have been conducted in negotiation about form contexts have rarely dealt with the issue of the relationship with proficiency levels. Also, they have mainly examined the quantity of learners’ focus on form rather than the quality. In particular, they have rarely asked the more difficult question of whether or not learners’ negotiation about form is conducive to L2 learning. The current study is conducted in an attempt to provide insights into these unexplored areas, addressing the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between these learners’ proficiency differences and any aspects of their negotiation about form in the tasks?
2. How is the quality of the negotiations about form? Do any salient features of

\footnotetext{2}{The term \textit{microgenesis} refers to “particular mental functions over shorter periods of time” (Thorne, 2005, p. 398), and it is one of Vygotsky’s three categories of human learning as mediated by collaborative dialogue. The processes by which learning occurs in \textit{microgenesis} are held to be the same as those in: (a) the \textit{phylogensis} of \textit{Homo Sapiens} as a species, (b) the \textit{ontogenesis} of individuals over the life span (Thorne, ibid.).}
learner interaction emerge from these negotiations?

3. Do the negotiations about form prompted by the tasks facilitate second language learning for these learners? That is, is there a relationship between such negotiations and the results of post-tests?

III. METHOD

1. Participants

Four Korean learners of English were recruited from a credit EFL class at a Korean university. A revised version of a TOEIC (Test of English International Communication) model test (Wesley, 1996) was administered to select and group the participants. Only the structure and reading parts were used since the listening part seemed irrelevant to ascertaining learners' knowledge of grammar. The scores showed the percentages of the correct answers that students gained. I established a pair of two advanced learners, whose scores were above 80% (High-High) and a pair of two beginners, whose scores were below 60% (Low-Low). Learners in both pairs were not familiar with each other. Table 1 presents each participant’s name (pseudonym), gender, and test score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High-High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Eun (female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified TOEIC</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Cho (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modified TOEIC</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Task

The task used in this study was collaborative composition task, a type of collaborative output task (COT). COT's originally appeared in Swain and Lapkin’s (1995) early work and have been adopted or re-labelled in several studies (e.g. Fortune and Thorp, 2001; Muranoi, 2000; Nassaji, 2000; Storch, 1998; Swain, 1998, 2000).

Storch (1998) simply defines a COT as a “task which requires learners to produce output collaboratively” (p.179). However, what is crucial is that a COT not only “would encourage output... but that would also result in students’ focusing their attention on form
while in the process of expressing their intended meaning” (Swain, 1998, pp. 69-70). In other words, a COT is seen as a task drawing learners’ attention to form during the activity of producing output. However, Swain has re-labelled a COT as a *joint linguistic problem-solving task/activity* in her later work (2000, 2005). The rationale for a *joint linguistic problem-solving* has been claimed that the verbalisation of the language problems which they encounter in producing output collaboratively may not only enhance their attention to form but also cause them to reflect on their own language use, and such processes may lead the learners to develop their L2, especially their grammatical accuracy.

Within this paradigm of COT, collaborative composition tasks were assigned to participants. The *collaborative composition task* involved students in pair writing one or two short paragraphs on a specific topic; talking explicitly about any linguistic matters of either form or meaning while they were jointly composing on the topic; and solving the linguistic problems. While the participants were carrying out the tasks, as in Swain and Lapkin’s (1995) and Qi and Lapkin’s (2001) studies, the participants in this study were advised that neither would they have access to a dictionary or any other aid, nor would I be able to help them. However, they were allowed to use L1 (Korean) during the task because it seemed too difficult for low-level proficiency learners to use only L2 to discuss and solve their linguistic problems; also, I expected that by using the L1, the participants would maintain their interest in the task throughout its performance.

3. Data Collection

The data was collected in a university classroom after classes. Learners’ dialogue during collaborative composition tasks was audio-recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The transcribed data presented in this paper come from *Stage 3*, including translated data from Korean language to English. Table 2 describes the timeframe and events of the data collection procedure.

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3 See Appendix A for the writing topics.
### Table 2
Data Collection Timeframe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description of events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>A revised TOEIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Familiarisation session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Collaborative composition session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Collaborative composition session 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Post-test 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Collaborative composition session 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Collaborative composition session 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Post-test 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stage 1 Pre-test:** In the first week, as discussed above, a revised version of a TOEIC was conducted. Four students were selected and grouped based upon the scores.

**Stage 2 Familiarisation:** In the second week, the participants had an orientation session. During this familiarisation session, a transcription of dialogue recorded in my last pilot study was handed out to the students; I reviewed the transcribed dialogue with the students to explain how to perform a collaborative composition task. Following this, the researcher provided the students with a practice session using a sample writing topic. I monitored the activity. In general, the participants seemed to perform it appropriately: they talked about their linguistic problems and resolved them while they were jointly composing a passage.

**Stage 3 Task:** As stated above, this is the stage where data was collected. Participants had four sessions of collaborative composition tasks, in the third, fourth, sixth, and seventh weeks, as shown in Table 2. In order to make the collaborative task session more interesting and to allow the learners some familiarity with the writing topic, the students were given a reading text and a discussion phase about the topic which they would work on in the collaborative composition task. They spent between 15 and 20 minutes in this reading and discussion. Based upon their reading and discussion, the participants in pair

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4 The pilot study was conducted in the same university where the main study was carried out. The overall research framework of the pilot study was identical to that of the main study in terms of the participant selection; familiarization session; post-tests design. However, task sessions in the pilot study were relatively smaller than in the main study. While in the main study participants had four sessions, only two task sessions were given to the students in the pilot study.

5 See also Appendix A for a sample of the reading texts.
produced a short text.

**Stage 4 Post-tests:** In order to measure whether or not learners acquired linguistic knowledge related to the language features that surfaced in the metatalk of individual pairs, tailor-made specific post-tests were conducted in this study. Participants took such post-tests covering the first two task sessions in the fifth week of the study, and similar post-tests covering the second two task sessions on the eighth week. Similar to Swain’s (1998) study, the process of test development for my research involved: first, transcribing the talk of the two pairs of students as they performed their tasks; secondly, selecting language-related episodes (LREs) for the test; then, making questions based on the language items discussed in the LREs. Not only because the identification of LREs in the conversations of L2 speakers is a very time consuming task as pointed out by Swain and Lapkin (1998, p.320) but also because the smallest number of LREs occurring in some sessions was two, only two LREs per session were selected for post-test. However, in order to compensate for a small number of linguistic items for the post-tests, three questions were devised for each language feature while other studies (e.g. Swain, 1998; Williams, 2001) developed only one question for each LRE. The types of question used in the test varied depending on the particular language item. Examples of the questions are presented in Appendix B.

4. Data Analysis Framework

The data in this study was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Using quantitative methods, I examined how frequently learners focused on and talked about their linguistic problems with their interlocutors; what kind of linguistic issues seemed most problematic to the learners; whether or not learners solved their linguistic problems correctly; to what extent they talked in the linguistic problem solving. Also, I aimed to explore whether their talking about the linguistic matters varied depending upon different proficiency levels. Furthermore, by utilising post-tests, I explored how the processes of negotiation about form related to L2 learning. At the same time, I looked at the same data beyond using qualitative analysis. As clarified earlier, the data was analysed using an in-depth descriptive analysis. With these methods I explored how learners actually interacted with each other, instead of merely identifying the events of collaborative interaction.

1) Defining Language-related Episodes (LREs)

The data transformation of pairs’ dialogue was a prerequisite for conducting the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. For the first step of the data transformation, I transcribed the pair talk and coded the transcribed pair talk for language-related episodes (LREs), which were the basic analytical unit for the current study. An LRE usually refers
to “any part of a dialogue where the students talk about the language they are producing, question their language use, or correct themselves [my emphasis] or others” (Swain & Lapkin, 1998, p. 326). Taking Fortune and Thorp’s (2001) point, if an LRE is viewed as an identifiable unit in a collaborative activity, self-corrections in this study are not be regarded as LREs. But there are some instances where self-correction is acknowledged or confirmed by the interlocutor without any further talk on the language item. In such instances, self-correction is regarded as an LRE for this study.

Excerpt 1. LRE with acknowledged self-correction (High-High pair, Session 3)

92 E generation who, is it who?
93 C generation who

Italic and bolded words (e.g. ‘generation who’ in the above excerpt) in the excerpts presented in this paper refer to the parts either for text production or from a text; roman words without bold (e.g. ‘is it’ in the above excerpt) refer to the data translated from Korean to English not for text production. See Table 3 for further information regarding the transcription system in this study.

TABLE 3
Transcription System for Translated Data in This Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-verbal in</th>
<th>&lt;</th>
<th>&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pauses (short -- long)</td>
<td>+ / ++ / +++</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s comments</td>
<td>{}</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcribed data from Korean to English [Roman] | English [Italic]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words translated from / to text product</th>
<th>Words not for text product</th>
<th>Words for/from text product</th>
<th>Words not for/from text product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Unstressed</td>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Unstressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Lower case</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Lower case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Quantitative Data Analysis

Once LREs were identified, they were sorted into categories and sub-categories in order to examine the research questions. Three major categories were employed as a basis: the language-based category (form-based and lexis-based LREs); the outcome-based category (correctly solved, incorrectly resolved, and unresolved LREs); the process-based category (with reason, with intuition, and no talk). These categories used for sorting the

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6 I do not exemplify the categories and sub-categories used for the data analysis due to space constraints of this paper. See Appendix C for the language-based categories and sub-categories for an example.
data was built after refining previous frameworks for LREs in the L2 literature (e.g. Fortune & Thorp, 2001; Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain, 1998; Leeser, 2004). However, the sub-categories were not pre-established; rather they were entirely data-dependent.

Based upon the categories, I first counted the frequency of LREs per pair in terms of the three categories (the linguistic foci of LREs, the outcomes of LREs, and the processes of LREs) with the overall number of LREs; then compared the frequency of LREs between High-High and Low-Low pairs. Because of the small sample size (N=4), this comparison could not be examined statistically. Next, the second raters identified and categorised 25% of the total transcribed data. The interrater reliability was 97% for the identification of LREs. On the types of language-based categories, the inter-rater reliability was 94%. The inter-rater reliability of the outcomes of LREs and the ways of solving LREs were 82% and 89% respectively. Lastly, the focus of the data analysis moves towards presenting the results of the dyad-specific delayed post-tests, to discuss a possible link between LREs generated by collaborative output tasks and L2 learning.

3) Qualitative Data Analysis

As several researchers (e.g. Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain, 1998) have pointed out, in order to show what is actually happening in LREs mere quantification of LREs is not enough; examining the quality of LREs is essential. In order to analyse the data qualitatively, this study uses an inductive approach whereby the analytical framework is grounded in the data. Distinct features of dyadic interaction emerged from a reiterative reading of the pair talk transcripts. Previous studies on learner-learner interaction, as discussed earlier, often seemed to seek evidence for effective and successful interaction in problem-solving, which may not always be present in real interactions. I also probed the relationship between LREs and L2 learning by looking into the quality of interaction emerging from the LREs. By doing so, I hoped to investigate further the LREs that lacked signs of L2 learning as observed from the quantitative analysis.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Results: Quantitative Analysis

1) The Frequency of LREs

The first research question in this study was whether adult Korean learners of English as an L2 focused on and talked about linguistic problems during collaborative composition
tasks. Table 4 summarises the results for quantified LREs by proficiency levels. Overall, 65 LREs were generated by the participants over the four task sessions. In addition, the Korean learners of English seemed to pay attention to lexical problems slightly more often than to grammatical ones. Over half of the total LREs (54% of the total: 35 LREs) were lexical-based linguistic items, and 30 LREs (46%) were form-based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Overall frequency</th>
<th>Language-focused</th>
<th>Outcomes of LREs</th>
<th>Resolution types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lexis</td>
<td>Outcome I</td>
<td>Outcome II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-High</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25 (54%)</td>
<td>32 (73%)</td>
<td>24 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Low</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10 (53%)</td>
<td>12 (75%)</td>
<td>5 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35 (54%)</td>
<td>44 (67%)</td>
<td>29 (45%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, over two-thirds of the linguistic problems which learners talked about were solved correctly (Outcome I: 67% of the total), and most of the remaining LREs were incorrectly solved (Outcome II: 25% of the total). Another aspect of LREs to be examined is the ways in which learners talked in solving their linguistic problems. This aspect of LREs is closely related to the source of knowledge learners used in resolving LREs. As the above table indicates, the instances where learners used metalanguage to reflect consciously and provide specific reasons for their linguistic problem-solving (with reason: 45% of the total LREs) occurred slightly more frequently than those utilised their intuition about the forms than they produced (with intuition: 42%). Also in some cases, learners did not say anything at all about how they reached resolution (no talk), but such cases only composed only 12% of the total LREs.

2) The Frequency of LREs by L2 Proficiency Levels

The second research question is about whether or not there is a difference in the LREs generated by different proficiency learners. As shown in Table 4, as for the overall quantity of LREs, higher proficiency learners produced far more LREs than lower proficiency

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7 The instances in which learners left the episodes unresolved (Outcome III: 8% of the total) occurred, but these were rare. Therefore, they are not included in the main discussion.
learners: 71% of the total LREs were produced by High-High (i.e. 46 LREs). However, there was no such pattern relating to proficiency levels and language-foci of LREs. Both pairs, regardless of their proficiency levels, produced more lexis-based LREs than form-based. Additionally, regarding the outcome of the LREs, the ratios of correctly resolved LREs (Outcome I) by both levels of learners were more or less the same. In fact, the proportions by the beginner pair were slightly greater (75%) than that of the advanced pair (73%). Unlike the results about the outcomes of LREs, higher proficiency learners tended to provide specific reasons in resolving LREs (High-High pair, 52%; Low-Low pair, 26%). In other words, advanced learners were likely to provide more explicit explanations when resolving LREs than low proficiency learners.

3) LREs and Their Learning Effects

The third research question asked whether there was a relationship between the LREs prompted by the collaborative composition task and the results of post-tests. I examined the post-test results through several steps. The first step was to analyse the responses on the dyad-specific tests in relationship to the outcomes of LREs. In order to do this, the questions were counted by the two major outcomes of LREs: Outcome I (correctly resolved LREs); Outcome II (incorrectly resolved LREs). The second step was to seek any possible relationships between correctly resolved LREs and responses to questions on the corresponding language features in the post-test items. The third step was to examine whether there was any link between LREs correctly resolved with reason and answers on the post-test items. This was to test the hypothesis that learners would respond correctly more often on post-test questions that corresponded with those correctly resolved LREs where they had provided specific reasons for their resolution.

A total of 48 questions\(^8\) were made for all the dyads. This included 34 questions (71% of the total) related to Outcome I; 14 (29%) related to Outcome II. Among the total of Outcome I (34), 19 (55%) were of LREs resolved with reason.

Table 5 gives the results of the post tests. First, the instances when learners answered correctly were not frequent: fewer than half of the total answers were responded to correctly (20 answers, 42% of the total answers; 54% for the first post-tests; 29% for the second post-tests).

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\(^8\) As discussed earlier, two post-tests were given to each dyad: two LREs were selected from each task session; three questions were made for each LRE item. Thus, 24 questions (8 LREs per dyad X 3 questions per LRE) were answered by the two students in each dyad; 48 questions were answered by the two dyads.
### TABLE 5
Post-test Results: A Summary of Correct Answers across Outcome Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High-High</th>
<th>Low-Low</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eun</td>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome I</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome II</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome I with reason</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect answers in post-test 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome I</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome II</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome I with reason</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorrect answers in post-test 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the results of the post-tests by the outcomes of LREs, 44% (15 out of 34 questions) of students’ responses were correct for Outcome I. These results imply that even when students reached a correct solution, more than half of their answers were incorrect on the post-test questions (56%). When students co-constructed an incorrect solution (Outcome II), the proportion of their correction answers in the post-test dropped to 34% of their total responses. This suggests that when students resolved their LREs incorrectly, they also tended to be inaccurate in their responses on the relevant post-test items (66%). As evidenced from these results, it could be suggested that when the work results in correct solutions, the task-based work of dyads results in incorrect conclusions about language, learners are likely to learn those incorrect conclusions, but learners’ subsequent performance on tests of the relevant language points fares no better than chance. Regarding the answers on the LREs correctly resolved with reason, only 57% (11 out of 19 questions) of students’ responses were correct. Therefore, it can be said that there seems to be no link between correct resolution with reason and correct responses on the post-test questions.

The previous studies which have used tailor-made dyad-specific post-tests (e.g., Swain, 1998; Williams, 2001) have found not only that correct answers to questions based on correctly resolved LREs were considerably higher than those based on incorrectly resolved
LREs; but also that questions on incorrectly resolved LREs were often answered incorrectly in the post-tests. Based upon these findings, the previous studies have suggested that the students tended to “stick with the knowledge they had constructed collaboratively during the pair task session” (Swain, 1998, p. 79); thus “LREs might be a source of language learning” (Swain, 1998, p. 79). However, the findings in this study do not support such views generated by the previous literature. Some possible reasons can be offered for the absence of link between LREs and students’ correct answers on the post-tests. One of the reasons may be related to a small number of LREs in the post-tests. I selected two LREs per session for the post-tests, and this means that about a quarter (16 LREs) of the total LREs were included in the post-tests. Had I included the total of 65 LREs in the post-tests, the results might have been different\(^9\).

Another explanation for the discrepancy in the findings between the current study and the previous literature may be related to the different question types in my post-tests. Notably, in devising questions, I avoided direct questions asking what learners talked about unlike the post-tests used in previous studies. For instance, in an example shown in Swain’s (1998) post-test, when two learners talked about whether or not ‘réve’ is masculine or feminine, the question for the LRE was to “indicate whether or not rêve is masculine or feminine.” This kind of question is more likely to merely prompt learners to remember what they talked about rather than testing whether or not negotiation about form has led to L2 learning. In contrast, my post-test questions aimed to test learners’ implicit knowledge. Therefore, it might be more challenging for my learners to answer the questions correctly. This may account for why the frequency of correct answers in my post-tests was low while previous L2 studies showed contrasting results.

2. Results: Qualitative Analysis

The fourth research question asked what interactional features emerged from LREs. The qualitative analysis indeed threw some light onto the real substance of LREs, which the quantitative analysis said little about. Several important findings were captured from the qualitative analysis of LREs as follows.

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\(^9\) Since I was the sole researcher for the study, it was not feasible to include all of the LREs generated throughout the research process to the post-test, which had to be constructed very rapidly in order to be administered a week after the last session.
1) Interactional Features

(1) The Depth of Engagement

First, the qualitative data analysis showed that the nature of interaction in LREs could be more or less collaborative depending upon how deeply learners engaged in responding to each other's utterances. Even though both learners in a dyad were required to perform a linguistic problem-solving task with each other, learners sometimes did not respond to each other's utterances, or their responses did not elicit further interaction. At other times, only one of the learners participated far more actively in initiating, negotiating and resolving LREs than the other. These cases are seen as less collaborative interaction. In contrast, both learners in a pair sometimes responded to each other's utterances and engaged in the interaction elaborately. On some of these occasions, the learners deliberated over linguistic problems by pooling their linguistic resources and reached a consolidated outcome. These interactional processes are seen as more collaborative interaction.

Excerpt 2 provides an example of an LRE with collaborative interaction. In this LRE, Learner Eun in the advanced pair (High-High) proposes a phrase ‘affect the generation’ (turn 78) in composing a passage with the partner. Learner Cho initiates an alternative LRE by questioning Eun about whether the preposition ‘on’ should be retained (turn 79) with the verb ‘affect’. Learner Eun responds to the initiation with an explanation of why ‘on’ is unnecessary. Eun’s response elicits the partner’s opinion (turn 80), and so can be seen as interactive. However, Cho’s attitude then seems to become tentative (‘I don’t know’ and ‘My feeling is just’ in turn 87) as Eun provides explicit reasoning for the choice of ‘affect’ without ‘on’ (turns 82, 88, 90). Finally, Cho accepts the correct phrase (‘affect the generation’ without ‘on’) by saying ‘OK’ and confirms by repeating the phrase (turn 91). Throughout the LRE, both of the learners engage in their pair work, deliberating over the linguistic item. Additionally, they make a decision, which then appears in the joint text which is further evidence of collaboration.

Excerpt 2: LRE with collaborative interaction (High-High pair, Session 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn</th>
<th>Learner</th>
<th>Utterance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Eun</td>
<td>Affect the generation to our, our next generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>Shouldn’t we write affect ON?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Eun</td>
<td>Because affect is a transitive verb, doesn’t it need an object? Affect, affect something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>Affect plus a preposition, and then an object, isn’t it right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Eun</td>
<td>Affect is followed by object not preposition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

10 The passage the advanced pair (High-High) was trying to compose in this episode was that ‘if homosexual is accepted in our society legally, the result will affect the generation who is growing.’
Negotiation about Form across L2 Proficiency Levels and Its Role in Second Language Learning

83 Cho Yes, but can’t we put the preposition right after on?
84 Eun Affect on?
85 Cho Yes. Affect on, does it look a bit strange?
86 Eun Yes.
87 Cho I think the preposition should be together {with the verb}. My feeling is just that we should use affect on.
88 Eun I think we shouldn’t use it. The preposition shouldn’t be added, I suppose. Because affect is a transitive verb, it needs an object right after it.
89 Cho Then, affect is a transitive verb, so if there is a preposition after the verb, the next word cannot be an object?
90 Eun It cannot be an object. A preposition cannot take an object.
91 Cho OK. Affect the generation.

Contrary to collaborative interaction, examples of non-collaborative interaction often show that one learner in a pair initiates an LRE and the other merely repeats, acknowledges or does not respond to the initiation. As a consequence, such an LRE does not contain much elaboration or negotiation. Furthermore, this type of interaction sometimes seems to be shorter than episodes with elaborate engagement, because they are usually composed of a smaller number of turns than LREs with collaborative responses. Excerpt 3 shows an episode with non-collaborative interaction. In this excerpt, Learner Rim initiates the LRE by imposing his idea rather than seeking a confirmation or help from the other (‘we should write these’). Further, the partner briefly responds to this initiation with ‘ok’. No further interaction occurs regarding this linguistic matter. As seen, the interaction in this excerpt is limited in terms of the level of learners’ engagement in the interaction, in contrast to the level of engagement in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 3: LRE with elaborative engagement (Low-Low pair, Session 1)
53 Kim They can solve the problems.
54 Rim We should write these.
55 Kim OK.

(2) The Fluid Concept of L2 Proficiency in Mutual Scaffolding

The current study shows several episodes, where the roles of expert and novice in the notion of scaffolding seem to be ‘fluid’. Unlike the typical processes of expert-novice scaffolding as defined by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976), the dichotomy of roles between expert and novice does not always exist in mutual scaffolding (see also p.4 for further discussion). As reported in the results of quantitative analysis, the only aspects of LREs which seemed to be related to L2 proficiency were the overall LRE quantity and resolution
type. This result may be explained with the ‘fluid’ concept of L2 proficiency. In other words, the results suggest that L2 proficiency may not be a pre-determined level, but a role which learners take on when doing a task. In fact, the data of the current study shows that, in some occasions, one of the advanced learners in the High-High pairing played the role of the ‘beginner’ while the other learner played the role of a more advanced learner assisting the ‘beginner’. At other times, the same advanced learner took the role of ‘expert’ and the other acted as the ‘novice’. This ‘fluid’ concept of proficiency may explain why proficiency was not found to have a great impact on LREs.

As seen in Excerpt 4, even though both learners in this pair were homogeneous in terms of L2 proficiency and were categorised as advanced learners. Learner Eun takes the role of novice learner at the beginning of the episode and asks the partner (Cho) a question (turn 48). However, she questions the knowledge rather than accepting the answer provided by the partner (turn 50). Then, Learner Cho is not able to help and merely repeats the question by the novice learner Eun (turn 51). At this moment, Learner Eun, who played the role of novice at the beginning of the episode, takes the role of expert and offers help (turns 52 and 54). These processes demonstrate that the roles of expert and novice are switched.

Excerpt 4: Mutual scaffolding (High-High pair, Session 1)

48 Eun And then, it wouldn’t be too late if they make a decision after that, after that?
49 Cho After that.
50 Eun After that?
51 Cho After that?
52 Eun After then.
53 Cho After THAN?
54 Eun E-n.
55 Cho I was a bit nervous.

2) The Quality of Interaction and L2 Learning

I aim to investigate further how LREs are related to L2 learning by examining the quality of interaction in LREs. This concerns the fifth research question. I began, for each pair of learners, with those language features that were examined in the post-tests, working back to investigate the patterns of interaction in the LREs that focused on those language features. The focus of the examination was mainly on the interactional patterns where LREs were correctly resolved. The major reason for filtering incorrectly resolved LREs out of the examination was simply because the initial findings of the quantitative analysis did not seem to support those of previous L2 research suggesting a strong link between
correctly resolved LREs and post-test results. Thus, as mentioned earlier, I hoped to seek supplementary explanations for this absence link by qualitatively examining the nature of interaction in the correctly resolved LREs.

Several interesting features in correctly resolved LREs have been revealed. Firstly, in some cases, the help given by the ‘expert’ to the ‘novice’ was not sufficient. This feature is presented via Excerpt 5. From a cursory look at the interaction, it seems to be a typical example of the expert-novice interaction. That is, Learner Rim taking the role of the novice requests help from the partner (Kim), who seemingly plays the role of the expert: Rim asks about the negative verb form of ‘need’ (turn 46); the expert provides Rim with a correct answer (turn 47). However, the results of the post-tests on this linguistic item are interesting: not only did the novice who received the assistance answer incorrectly, but also the expert who provided the explanation for the linguistic item answered all three questions incorrectly in the post-test.

Excerpt 5: insufficient explanation provided by the expert (Low-Low pair, Session 2)

46 Rim Then, can’t we write like this? *He need, he does not need to go.* What is the negative form for *need*?
47 Kim *Don’t, doesn’t need*
48 Rim I don’t even know such a thing. *Doesn’t need to.*
49 Kim Yes.

A closer look at the interaction occurring from this LRE provides an alternative explanation for the negative results of the post-test. It seems apparent that not only was there not much elaboration of the linguistic matter between the learners but also that the expert did not provide a proper explanation except for a short answer (turn 47). Therefore, it is not very clear that the short answer by the expert was sufficient to make the novice understand how ‘doesn’t need’ became the negative verb form for ‘need’ unless she had previous knowledge of the language feature. Assistance given by the expert might not be adequate for the novice to acquire the L2 item. In other words, the scaffolded help might not be within the novice’s ZPD. Furthermore, it is not even certain whether the expert himself had a solid and accurate knowledge of the grammar point. The expert may have based his judgement on a partial understanding of the rule during the interaction.

Secondly, in different cases, learners did not seem to be certain about their resolutions. An example is given in Excerpt 5. In this episode, neither of the learners seems to be sure whether ‘experience’ is countable or non-countable even though they choose the right linguistic form (‘experiences’). In particular, Learner Eun overtly expresses her uncertainty and frustration about the linguistic item (‘I am often confused’; ‘I am lost’; turns 30, 32). As in the results of the post-test in the previous example, in the post-test
questions relating to this LRE the one who expressed uncertainty and frustration (Eun) did not get any correct answers, whereas the other learner (Cho) got two correct answers.

Excerpt 6: Unclear resolution without much sufficient help from each other
(High-High pair, Session 4)

28 Eun  E-x-p-e-r-i-e-n-c-e. Shall I write?
29 Cho  I will write.
30 Eun  I am often confused, experience is countable? Is experience countable?
31 Cho  It is not countable.
32 Eun  That’s right. I am lost.
33 Cho  But do we usually say many experiences?
34 Eun  Then, it is countable.
37 Eun  Is this a countable noun?
38 Cho  But this experience.
39 Eun  A lot of experience.

Another interactional feature is that learners sometimes used inaccurate metalanguage in resolving LREs, and this may be a reason for learners’ wrong answers on the post-test item. Several studies in the L2 literature (de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Donato, 1994; Kuiken & Vedder, 2002; Storch, 2007) claim that mutual scaffolding with collaborative stance is facilitative of learning and consolidations for learners because it seems to make the learners “synthesize the prior knowledge that has been externalized during the interaction and simultaneously arrive at the correct construction” (Donato, 1994, p. 45). However, what should not be ignored is that, as Donato (1994) cautions, incorrect knowledge transfer can take place via mutual scaffolding, and this may lead to negative learning. The data in my study also shows that mutual scaffolding included instances of learning in an ‘undesired direction’. A good example of this can be found in an excerpt, Excerpt 2. In that excerpt, two learners intensively discuss the linguistic problem of whether the preposition ‘on’ should be retained in the phrase ‘affect the generation’. The collaboration is mutual, and the LRE is correctly resolved. However, the reason given by Eun and eventually accepted by Cho is not valid. Eun, who has provided the explanation, answers all the relevant questions correctly in the post-test. However, Cho answers only one of the three questions correctly. The reason for Cho’s wrong answers on the post-test item may be related to the incorrect use of metalanguage by the partner in the LRE, which might confuse the learner rather than inform, as suggested in Fortune’s study (2005).

A more interesting case has been uncovered. Even when learners elaborately discussed their linguistic problems, used accurate metalanguage, and provided sufficient clarification, they still chose wrong answers on the relevant items in the post-test. Excerpt 7 shows an
example of this case. In the excerpt, the learners in the beginner pair engaged in elaborating the LRE together. Particularly, Learner Rim’s contribution to the LRE was serious. However, the results of their post-test did not seem to be related to their collaborative interaction. Kim answered only one answer out of three correctly. Rim answered all three questions incorrectly. Reasons did not emerge from the data.

Excerpt 7: Incorrect answers in mutual scaffolding (Low-Low pair, Session 4)

| 53 Rim | You have many chance, chance has no plural? |
| 54 Kim | We can say chances. |
| 55 Rim | Can we count? |
| 56 Kim | Chances. |
| 57 Rim | We need to put s, right? |

V. CONCLUSION

The current study has revealed some valuable new findings and issues that the major cognitive based and sociocultural based research undertaken to date has neglected. First, as this study has showed that a LRE was more than the language learners talked about; it indeed entailed dynamic and complex features of interaction. The features of interaction also suggest that interaction was not always collaborative. In fact, LREs with collaborative interaction where both learners in a pair engaged in discussing their linguistic problems did not commonly occur. Non-collaborative interactional features were also observed in the data. This implies that the reality of interaction in problem solving as a joint activity may be very different from what has been described in the previous literature. Second, this study has questioned the role of LREs in L2 learning. Benefits of LREs have been emphasised in the L2 literature. However, the portrait of LREs emerging from my research seems to be less positive. Furthermore, even though learners engaged deeply in joint problem solving and seemed to co-construct their knowledge, what learners chose in their post-test was still mistaken.

These new findings will hopefully contribute to educators and researchers re-evaluating the value of interaction and importance of negotiation about form in L2 learning. Furthermore, I hope that this study will encourage researchers to discuss the value of LREs as an analytical unit for L2 output processes and to refine the analytical framework of LREs. Many of the previous studies on LREs (Leeser, 2004; Storch, 1998, 2001; Swain, 1998, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2001; Williams, 1999; 2001) imposed their categories and sub-categories on the data without having a close look at how students actually interacted in the LREs. However, the current study demonstrates that analysing LREs may be
meaningless if it is done without examining the value and nature of LREs. For instance, while the quantitative data analysis shows both dyads produced a high proportion of correctly resolved LREs, the qualitative analysis reveals not only that when neither partner in a pair was able to provide relevant feedback on the linguistic problems the learners encountered; or the learners quite often solved their problems, but with great uncertainty. These instances may indicate why learners seemed to not learn much from LREs. Apart from the above implications for researchers, there are some direct pedagogical benefits for teachers and students. One inference that can be drawn from the findings is that, even though the current study suggests that negotiation about form did not lead to L2 learning, it can be successfully and effectively integrated into the L2 language classroom in the sense of pushing learners to find gaps in their IL. In other words, such negotiation may still be useful in order to make learners pay special attention to the gaps. Thus, via negotiation about form, students can gain insights into their own linguistic shortcomings. Furthermore, teachers can gain insights into the hypotheses students uphold about language and content, helping them to orient their instruction towards erroneously held hypotheses or providing feedback on what students need.

While this study has yielded several valuable findings and insights, it has certain limitations. One of the limitations is related to the small number of subjects. Despite the in-depth analysis of using a mixed analytical method, this study investigating four students’ negotiation about form may be of limited generalisibility\footnote{Generalisability is about “the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied” (Robinson, 2002, p.93).} to other contextual situations. As Gerring (2007) points out, the restricted applicability of a study’s results to a broader population is a result of the limited representativeness of its sample. Therefore, the findings of the current study may suffer problems of external validity and generalisability, and they need to be restricted to the specific situation and individuals of this study’s subject group. Another limitation of this study concerns the non-existence of post-task interviews. Post-task interviews after the end of the tasks would help to understand how individual learners perceive collaborative output tasks, tasks as an explicit form-focused task as well as a joint activity, thereby affording greater insights into the motivations, beliefs and interests of students.

Bearing in mind these potential limits, in concluding this study, I would like to highlight three points, which were directly and indirectly brought up earlier. First, in spite of less positive effects of negotiation about form in L2 learning, it is still premature to reject the pedagogical value of such negotiations, because the success or failure of a pedagogical proposal depends on how the proposal is implemented. It is prudent to follow up students’ negotiation about form with teacher feedback or to allow students to access other learning
resources. Second, more endeavours to examine individual learners’ learning outcomes beyond pairs or groups seem to be required in L2 research literature. As discussed, previous studies have often claimed that negotiation about form has the potential to foster L2 development merely by showing pairs’ completion or processes of collaborative output task. These have often ignored how the individual learners as individuals performed and have not used post-tests. Finally, it would be valuable for future research to take an inductive approach or ‘bottom-up approach’ to analysing learners’ dialogue data, rather than a deductive approach since an inductive makes it possible to see what the data shows with little inbuilt bias. In this, the data about learners’ negotiation about form leads the analysis. Also, there would be more robust internal validity in showing how negotiation actually occurs.

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APPENDIX A
Example of Reading Materials and Writing Topics

_Reading material:_
Sachiko is a 22-year-old Japanese student who is spending her senior year at an American university in Los Angeles. She has met a special man named Amir. Read her diary.

_Dear Diary,_
Tonight Amir asked me to marry him. I knew he would. I love him so much. It is hard to believe that we have known each other only for eight month. But as much as I love him, I don’t know what to do. I mean where would we live? I think it would be very hard for me to live in India. Would I fit in to Indian society? I don’t think Amir would fit in to Japanese society, either. Maybe we could stay in the United States. Both of us will finish our studies in May. But even if we could stay here, I don’t know if I want to live away from Japan. I would miss my family and friends and everything. And what about our children? Would they be Japanese? Indian? What? It is all confusing. The more I write to you, the more problems I see. I think that marriage is difficult. And I think that international marriages are even more difficult! Oh, I am SO confused.

_Writing topic:_
Session 1> Do you think that Amir and Sachiko should marry or separate?
Session 2> Do you think that Paulo should go to the English team?
Session 3> Do you think that we should accept the gay couple?
Session 4> Do you think we should go to a university?

APPENDIX B
Sample of Post-test Questions on an LRE
1. Identify the incorrect or awkward part in this sentence. If you think all the parts are correct, do not choose any.
   Paulo is the person who his entire family depends on. The family depends on him financially, mentally and emotionally. Paulo’s family will feel very uncomfortable without him.
   a. in secure
   b. uncomfortable
   c. inconvenient
   d.  

2. Choose the best answer for the blank in the following context.
   When Jane was not with him, she felt unsafe and unhappy. She was worried about life. She felt ______ when he was not around her.
   a. insecure
   b. uncomfortable
   c. inconvenient
   d. 

3. Choose one sentence which does not make sense with the word comfortable or uncomfortable.
   a. Take a seat and make yourself comfortable, please.
   b. They didn’t feel comfortable about her travelling alone.
   c. I feel uncomfortable with him because he often stares at me.
   d. He is worried about losing his job and often becomes financially uncomfortable.

APPENDIX C
Language-based Category and Its Sub-category
A. Taxonomy of lexical-based LREs
   Lexical-based LREs refer to episodes where learners talk about lexical features. Lexical features emerging from my data are classified into the following four sub-categories of lexical-based
episodes:
- Word choice – searching for an L2 lexical item to construct the meaning, selecting an L2 word to construct and reconstruct the text by discussing the specific linguistic item.
- Collocation – denotation, connotation, collocations, colligations
- Choice of preposition
- Phonological and orthographic form – spelling or pronunciation of a L2 word

B. Taxonomy of form-based LREs
Form-based LREs are episodes where learners talk about grammatical features. Grammatical features occurring in the data can be broadly divided into issues of verbal and non-verbal grammar.
- The verbal grammar: tense, subject-verb agreement, passive, infinitive, modals (conditional and others)
- The non-verbal grammar: morphology, articles/determiners/quantifiers, clauses, negation. The rest of the grammatical issues are categorised as others.

Applicable levels: tertiary, adult
Key words: focus on form, negotiation about form, peer-peer interaction

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