Inter-language Development of Korean Learners of English through Interaction

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This article explores how learners' inter-language develops and how this development is revealed in various features, after having classroom interaction and participating CCDL(Cross-Cultural Distance Learning) program. The subjects consisted of 52 undergraduate students who were taking a class in "Current Issues in English" at Kang-won National University in the spring of 2003. The subjects did not have much exposure to English and confidence in dealing with English before taking this class, according to the survey which was done at the beginning of the semester. The requirement of this class is to participate in classroom interaction in English, and to interact with Japanese students at Waseda University through the CCDL program. To see how their inter-language skills developed, the subjects took a grammatical judgment test twice, once at the beginning of the semester, and then again during the semester. The sentences used for the test were derived from Ellis (1991). Subjects were asked to judge the grammaticality of the given sentences and, also write down the sentences which they thought were correct, if they considered them as ungrammatical.

1.0 Introduction

Most recent work has begun to focus on the establishment of a more direct relation between interaction and subsequent production or learning. Gass(1997) argues that the interaction is a priming device, allowing learners to focus attention on areas that they are working on. Many studies in thesecond language acquisition literature have been influential mainly on NS-NNS interaction, however,only a few studies emphasize the effect of NNS-NNS interaction. Also, There is very little research to show that meaning negotiation actually leads to grammatical development. This article explores how learners' inter-language develops and how this development is revealed in various features after having NNS-NNS interaction, mainly focusing on the grammatical features.

2.0 Theoretical Background
2.1 The Influence of Non Native Speaker – Non Native Speaker(NNS-NNS) Interaction on Second Language Acquisition

Only a few studies show the importance of NNS-NNS interaction. Park(2003) argues that the interaction between NNS-NNS is influential in SLA, in developing grammatical competence. Gass & Veronis (1994) pointed that when two non-native speakers are conversing and they produce different forms, if one accommodates to the other's speech, the change could be in the direction of a correct or an incorrect form. However, it appears that in the vast majority of cases, change occurs in the direction of the target language from and not in the direction of an incorrect form. It proves that the inter-language plays an important role in interaction and development of second language acquisition. Brumfit(1984) argues that the quality of inter language talk is of considerable importance. Also Porter(1986) emphasizes learners prompted each other five times more than the native speakers prompted non-native speakers.

2.2. Interaction and Grammatical development of inter-language
There is very little research to show the interaction actually leads to grammatical development of any kind. Braidi(1997) argues that researchers have failed to show that interaction promotes the acquisition of grammar. However, Studies that have been able to show that meaning negotiation facilitates grammar acquisition are beginning to appear. Mackey(1999) found that learners who took part in negotiated interaction showed greater developmental gains in English question forms than learners who did not do so. Nobuyoshi and Ellis(1993), in a small-scale study, showed that two adult learners who reformulated their deviant utterances as a result of negotiation subsequently improved their accuracy of past tense use. Ellis and Takashima (1999) also found that pushed output aided classroom learners' acquisition of past tense form

2.3. KWCCDLP
For facilitating the interaction between NNS-NNS interaction, Cross-Cultural Distance Learning Program(CCDLP) has been developed. The CCDLP is a project which introduces and applies multimedia and internet technologies such as VC system and chat systems into the classroom environment to develop mutual understanding and friendship between NNSs from different cultures. Many students in Korea University and Waseda University have participated in this project since 1998 . Park & Nakano(2003) pointed out that many students in Korea University and Waseda University have benefited from each other by interacting with NNSs closely together through CCDLP in acquiring English since past 5 years

3. Hypothesis
In this study, subjects had interactions between NNS-NNS with their inter

languages through classroom discussion and CCDLP. The hypothesis of this paper are as follows.

1.Interaction between NNS-NNS may be influential in second language acquisition.
2.Inter-language in interaction between NNS- NNS will promote the grammaticality judgments ability of NNSs.
3.Inter language in interaction between NNS-NNS will help learners to become confident in dealing with English.

4. Experiment
4.1 Subject
The subjects consisted of 52 undergraduate students who were taking a class in "Current Issues in
English" at Kang-won National University in the spring of 2003.

4.2 Procedures of Class activities
The requirement of this class is to participate in classroom discussion in English, and to interact with
Japanese students at Waseda University through the CCDL program. In class,
1) Students explain briefly the text and bring up the difficult part (vocabulary, expression, sentence,
   paragraph) while reading the articles.
2) Students have a group discussion for 10-15 minutes
3) Students have a class discussion about what was brought up during the group discussion.
4) Teacher asks questions which will prompt more group discussion.
5) Students participate in CCDL program after the class. They have chat with Non-native English
   speakers at Waseda University & Korea University.
6) Students summarize what they have talked during the CCDL program in "My Notebook". Teacher
   and classmates give the feedback on what they have written.
7) Evaluation includes participation in classroom discussion and CCDL participation.

4.3 Grammatical Judgment Test
To see how their inter-language skills developed, the subjects took a grammatical judgment test twice,
once at the beginning of the semester, and then again during the semester. The sentences used for the test

were derived from Ellis (1991). Ellis used 8 verbs in his judgment test: *send, offer, explain, buy, reserve,*
open, and design. Here in this experiment, these verbs were employed in this 4 categories.

Structure which is correct	Verbs used	Structures given	Grammaticality	Categorization
NP NP / NP PP	send, offer, buy, reserve	NP NP	Grammatical	Category 1
		NP PP	Grammatical	Category 2
NP PP	report,explain, open, design	NP NP	Ungrammatical	Category 3
		PASSIVE	Ungrammatical	Category 4

Subjects were asked to answer the grammaticality of the given sentences and, also write down the sentences which they thought correct, if they consider them as ungrammatical(see the Appendix).

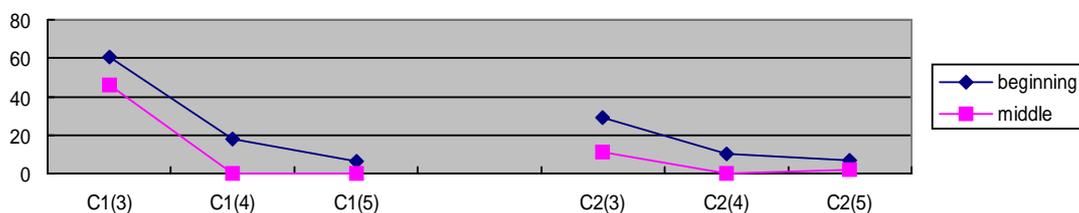## 5.0 Results
5.1 Category 1& 2

<Figure 1>
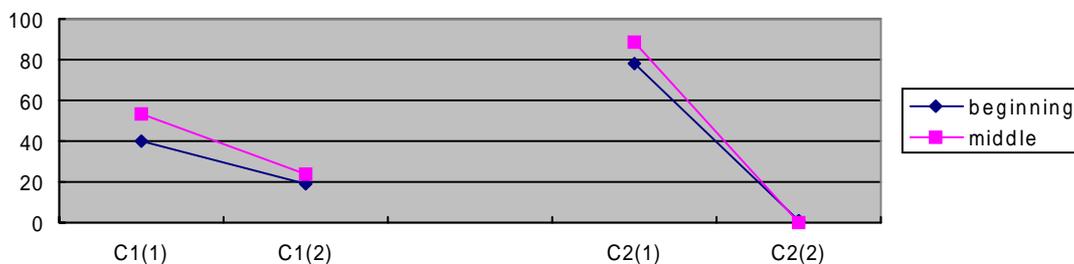
 C1(1) & C2(1) : The percentage that students answer as grammatical to the grammatical sentences
 C1(2) & C2(2) : The percentage that students answer as ungrammatical, but correct the sentences as
         a grammatical way

<Figure 2>

C1(3) & C2(3) : The percentage that students answer as ungrammatical
C1(4) & C2(4) : The percentage that students do not answer at all
C1(5) & C2 (5) : The percentage that students answer that they do not know.

As Figure 1 shows, the percentage that students answer as grammatical sentences to the grammatical sentences increased and the one that students answer as ungrammatical, but correct the sentence as a grammatical way also increased. It proves that the ability to perceive the grammatical sentences and correct the sentences as a grammatical way has developed. Figure 2 shows that the percentage that students answer as ungrammatical to the grammatical sentences has sharply dropped. What is interesting is that the percentage that students avoid answering by not answering at all or answering as "I do not know" also decreased.

Inter-language development is revealed in various features in a distinguished way, after saying that the sentences which suggested in a grammatical way were ungrammatical. With the verb at category 1, subjects tended to change NP1 NP2 structure to NP2 NP1 at the beginning of the Semester(ex. My wife sent me a letter. -> My wife sent a letter me). They also showed the feature that they change the verb form from active to passive one (ex. The committee offered my brother a gift.-> The committee was offered my brother a gift.) However at the middle of the semester, subjects seem to get the argument structure information, though they seem not to know what kind of prepositions will be used, and where to put NP and PP. The percentage of changing NP1 NP2 structure to NP2 PP structure has increased two times (ex. The shop sent my wife the dress. -> The shop sent the dress to my wife). Subjects showed the tendency of changing the structure to PP NP2, sometimes using unsuitable preposition(ex. My mother bought me a shirt. -> My mother bought to me a shirt). With the verb of Category 2, at the middle of the semester, subject change only lexical items of verbs and make sentences as a grammatical way(ex. He offered some money to my sister. -> He gave some money to my sister).

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5.2 Category 3
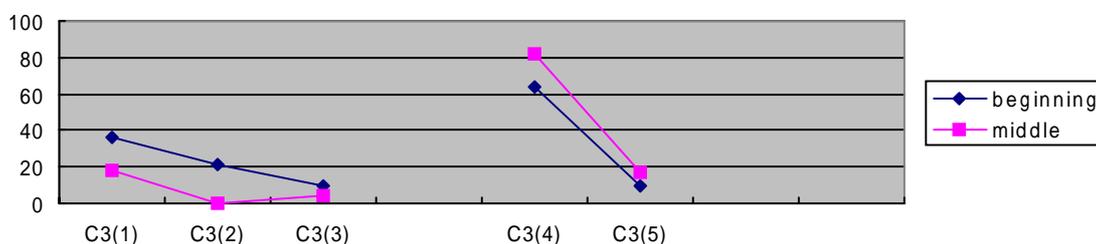
C3(1) : the percentage of judging the ungrammatical sentences as grammatical
C3(2) : the percentage that subjects did not answer the question
C3(3) : the percentage that subjects answers that they do no know the answer.
C3(4) : the percentage of judging the ungrammatical sentence as ungrammatical
C3(5) : the percentage of answering the grammatical sentence after they considered the ungrammatical sentences as grammatical way

Subject showed some distinguished features in the middle of the semester. They have perception that the verbs in category C has takes 2 arguments, not 3 arguments. The percentage of changing NPNP to NP PP or PP NP has increased. Even though they do not any clear idea about form, subjects seem to get theargument structure information (ex.. The bank opened an account for my son. -> The bank opened to my son an account.). The percentage of rearranging the sentences correctly has increased (ex. My son opened an account in the bank).

5.3 Category 4
The percentage to perceive the ungrammatical sentences as grammatical has increased in category 4. However, the ability of perceiving the argument structure information has increased. After judging the given sentences as ungrammatical, in the sentences which subjects made correction, the percentage which subjects took out "be" verbs from the sentences has increased (ex. He explained the problems.). Also, the percentage of changing the incorrect passive sentences to passive sentences has increased in the middle of the semester (ex. The problem was explained by him.).

6.0 Conclusion
NNS-NNS interaction helps learners to develop their English competence. First, interaction between learners promotes grammatical development. The percentage of perceiving the grammatical sentences as grammatical & the ungrammatical sentences as ungrammatical has increased. The distinguished features of diverse answers from subjects show that they got the basic information about the argument

structure in the middle of the semester, comparing to the beginning of the semester. Also the affective filter of the subjects has lowered in the middle of the semester. The percentage of not answering the questions and saying that they do not know the answer has dropped sharply. They do seems not to use the "avoidance" strategy in processing English. It also shows that interaction between NNS-NNS interaction help students to have the confidence.

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Appendix

1. My wife sent me a letter
2. The teacher explained me the answer.
3. The government bought its ministers new cars.
4. The manager reserved me a seat.
5, She was reported the accident.
6. The committee offered my brother a gift.
7. The factory designed the manager a new car.
8. He offered some money to my friend.
9. The little girl was opened the door.
10. She reserved a car for him.
11. He was explained the problem.
12. The shop sent my wife the dress.
13. The bank opened my son an account.
14. He offered some money to my sister.
15. She designed a new house for her mother.
16. The bank reported the police the accident.

17. My mother bought me a shirt.
18. She reserved a place in the queue for her mother.