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An investigation into the frequency of Language Related Episodes in the EFL learners' Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Dyadic Interaction

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Abstract

This study attempted to compare the relative frequency of the occurrence of Language Related Episodes (LREs) in the dyadic talks of pairs who were homogeneous and heterogeneous in terms of English proficiency. LREs are those parts of the conversations where the interlocutors explicitly focus on linguistic form. The study was carried out with 60 Iranian university students of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) who were divided into two groups of homogeneous and heterogeneous pairs based on their scores in a standardized English proficiency test (FCE). The pairs were required to collaborate and talk to carry out nine writing tasks. The participants' talks while they were doing the pair work were recorded and transcribed, and the relative frequency of LREs for each pair talk was found. The frequency values for the two groups were compared through the independent samples t-test, and it was found that the heterogeneous pairs had significantly more LREs in their dyadic interactions. The results of the study were explained in relation to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and several pedagogical implications were finally offered.

Keywords: Language Related Episodes, dyadic interaction, sociocultural theory

Introduction

The use of group and pair work is a widespread practice in second language (L2) classes. This practice is supported by both pedagogic arguments and research findings. Studies have shown that learners working in groups, particularly in cooperative groups, are exposed to a great variety of viewpoints, construct new ways of understanding, and develop greater critical skills (see, for example, Webb, 1989).

Psycholinguistic theories of L2 acquisition and in particular research findings based on Long's (1983, 1996) Interaction Hypothesis have provided additional support for the use of group and pair work in L2 classroom. Long argues that interaction promotes acquisition because interaction provides learners with the 'comprehensible input' (Krashen, 1982) needed for acquisition to take place. Long (1983) proposes that one way input is made comprehensible is through interactional modification that is through modifications to learners' input.

In his revised Interaction Hypothesis, Long (1996) emphasizes the importance of negative feedback and modified output to L2 learning. Negative feedback can be explicit (e.g., explicit correction) or implicit (e.g., clarification requests, recasts, …), and its role is to raise learners' awareness to the problematic aspects of their utterances. Long further emphasizes the role of negotiation to facilitate the kinds of conscious "noticing" in order for learners to process input for "intake." In this regard, Long writes:

> It is proposed that environmental contributions to acquisition are mediated by selective attention and the learner's developing L2 processing capacity,and that these resources are brought together more usefully, although not exclusively, during negotiation for meaning. (p. 414)

Research guided by this theoretical perspective (e.g., Pica, Young & Doughty, 1987) has shown that, if careful attention is paid to the tasks used and the strategic grouping of students in terms of gender, familiarity, and L2 proficiency level, small group work provides learners with opportunities to give and receive feedback. Thus, from this theoretical perspective, it is the interaction between learners that facilitates L2 learning.

Lightbown and Spada (1999), Doughty and Williams (1998), among others, have explored how interaction provides opportunities for learners not

only to negotiate the message of the input, but, in so doing, to focus on its form as well. Other researchers, for example, Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) and Nassaji and Swain (2000) have explored the nature and type of feedback that may be most helpful to learners during interaction at different stages of their acquisition of language form.

The negotiation research has recently taken a new approach to the study of interaction under the theoretical framework referred to as socio-cultural theory which is based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1981, 1986) and neo-Vygotskian scholars such as Leontiev (1981) and Wertsch (1985).

According to Vygotsky (1978, 1981), human cognitive development is inherently a socially situated activity. A child's (novice) cognitive development arises in social interactions with a more able member of society (e.g., parent, peer). The more able member (expert) enables the novice to reach a higher level of development by providing the novice with the appropriate level of assistance, often referred to as "scaffolding." The difference between the novice's actual level of development and the potential level reached with the assistance of the expert is termed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

In the field of L2 research, studies have shown that scaffolding and assistance can occur not only in teacher-learner interaction (e.g., Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994) but also in peer interaction, when learners work in small groups or pairs.

Studies comparing individual and pair work on writing and grammar-focused tasks have shown some advantage for pair-work. Storch (1999) compared individual and pair performance on a range of grammar-focused exercises (multiple-choice, cloze, text reconstruction) and found that pairs completed the exercises more accurately than the students who worked alone. But since the same students performed the exercises in pairs and individually, the results might have been confounded by a practice effect.

An important issue in the research concerning the nature of dyadic interaction may be the language proficiency level of peers in pair and small group works. Almost little research has documented how learners with different language proficiency levels interact with each other and whether homogenous groups and pairs are more advantageous than heterogeneous ones. Watanabe and Swain (2007) investigated the effects of L2 proficiency

differences in pairs and patterns of interaction on L2 learning. They found that proficiency differences do not necessarily affect the nature of peer assistance and L2 learning.

Given the small body of research on the effect of the learners' L2 proficiency level on their performance in peer interaction and their L2 learning, the present study aimed at comparing the frequency of the occurrence of the language related episodes (LREs) in the dyadic interaction of the homogeneous and heterogeneous pairs in performing some writing tasks.

LREs are those episodes in the dyadic talks where the focus of attention is on language form. An LRE is any segment of the pair talk where the participants talk about the language they are producing or have produced, where they correct their own or their partner's language use, or suggest grammatical, lexical, morphological, phonological, and spelling corrections. This unit of analysis has been used by other researchers working with similar data (small group or pair talk on language tasks), including Kowal and Swain (1994), Swain and Lapkin (1995) and Storch (2002a).

Leeser (2004) studied the impact of learner proficiency on LREs in an adult L2 Spanish class and analyzed the frequency, type (i.e., lexical or grammatical-based) and outcome of LREs (i.e., problem solved correctly, not solved, or solved incorrectly) produced by three different groupings: high-high, high-low, and low-low. Leeser found that as the overall proficiency of a pair increased, the learners produced a greater number of LREs, correctly resolved more LREs, and focused more on form than lexical items. Because the high-low pairs fell between the high-high and low-low peers in their performances, Leeser was led to wonder if the high-proficiency learners actually benefited from their interaction with their low-proficiency partners, and what the basis was of the improved performances of the low-proficiency partners (relative to those in low-low groupings). What role did the nature of the interactions within each pair play? These questions, however, could not be answered from the quantitative analyses of LREs alone.

In another study, Watanabe and Swain (2007) investigated the effect of L2 proficiency differences in pairs and patterns of interaction on L2 learning, making use of both qualitative and quantitative data. Their first two research questions addressed "how proficiency differences affect LREs and post-test

scores" (p. 137). In terms of LREs, the core-high pairs produced a greater frequency of LREs than that of the core-low pairs. This was consistent with the previous studies that as the overall L2 proficiency level of the pairs increased; learners produced a greater frequency of LREs (Leeser, 2004). Since several studies agreed that LREs represent L2 learning in progress (e.g., Leeser, 2004; Swain, 1998; Swain & Lapkin, 1998), this could suggest that the core participants benefited more from working with their higher proficiency partner. However, the trend indicated that the core participants achieved on average higher post-test scores when working with their lower proficiency partners than their higher proficiency partners. In other words, the core participants learned more when working with lower proficiency peers than higher proficiency peers, suggesting that there is certainly value for more proficient students to be paired with less proficient peers. This led to the third and fourth research questions, which addressed the effects of patterns of pair interaction on LREs and post-test scores.

As for the post-test scores, Watanabe and Swain (2007) found that both of the pair members achieved higher post-test scores when they engaged in the collaborative pattern of interaction, whereas both achieved lower scores when they engaged in the dominant/passive or expert/passive patterns. Kim and McDonough (2008) investigated the effect of interlocutor proficiency on the collaborative dialogue between Korean as second language learners. The researchers attempted to explore which language forms Korean as a second language learners focused on and how their linguistic issues were resolved when collaborating with interlocutors from different proficiency levels. Eight intermediate Korean L2 learners interacted with an intermediate interlocutor and with an advanced interlocutor. Their collaborative dialogue was analyzed in terms of (a) the occurrence and resolution of lexical and grammatical LREs, and (b) the patterns of interaction with their interlocutors. Results showed that the collaborative dialogue with advanced interlocutors contained significantly more lexical LREs and correctly resolved LREs. In terms of their patterns of interaction, the learners showed different pair dynamics when collaborating with interlocutors from different proficiency levels.

In terms of the pair dynamics, learners' role during a collaborative task seemed to be influenced by the interlocutor's proficiency. In particular, the results indicated that several learners who had been collaborative with an

intermediate interlocutor were passive or novice with an advanced interlocutor, while several learners who had been dominate with an intermediate interlocutor were collaborative with an advanced interlocutor.

To investigate further the effect of learners' L2 proficiency level on their performance during pair work, the present study attempted to analyze and compare the frequency of the occurrence of various types of LREs in the pair talk data obtained from the dyads who were homogeneous in terms of English language proficiency and those who were heterogeneous. The data were obtained from the dyads' oral interaction to complete three types of writing tasks including three picture descriptions, three table descriptions, and three topic-based composition tasks.

As research has shown that the learners' communicative behaviour during pair work and the nature of the interaction, which arises in pair work are considered as important determinants of second language learning the present study might offer significant insights and implications to the field of L2 pedagogy. The study aimed at answering the following research question: Do the homogeneous / heterogeneous dyads use the same number of Language Related Episodes (LREs) in their pair talk before performing writing tasks?

Based on the research question the following null hypothesis was developed: There is not any statistically significant difference between the relative frequency of the LREs in the homogeneous and heterogeneous pair talk.

Method

Participants

The participants in the study were sixty female students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in one of the universities in Iran. The participants were selected from among 98 candidates who took an English proficiency test. The age range of the participants was between 20 and 28 and they had already passed several basic courses in grammar, writing, reading, and conversation.

The participants were divided into two groups according to their English proficiency test scores. Fourteen candidates from the lowest part of the English proficiency test rank order were paired with the 14 high scorers from the rank

order to make the Heterogeneous Group (G-Het). The dyads in this group were heterogeneous or unequal in terms of English proficiency level. The second group included 16 pairs who were selected from the language proficiency rank order in a way that the participants' scores were similar to one another. In other words, the dyads in this group were homogeneous in the sense that their English proficiency levels were almost equal. This group was called Homogeneous Group (G-Hom).

Instrumentation

The First Certificate English (FCE) proficiency test was used in the present study to determine the participants' English proficiency levels. The test included five sections of Reading, Listening, Writing, Use of English, and Speaking. The Reading section included four parts with a total score of 35. The Writing Section included two parts with a total score of 30. The Use of English Section had five parts with a total score of 65. The Listening Section included four parts with a total score of 30, and finally, the Speaking section included four parts with the total score of 40. Thus, the total score of the test was 200.

The participants were assigned to carry out three types of writing tasks through collaboration and peer interaction. The writing task types included Picture Description, Table Description, and Topic-based Composition. The participants' oral interactions to prepare for the task were recorded on cassettes for later transcription and analysis. The tasks were performed in language laboratory, which was equipped with microphones and tape recorders. Each task had three isomorphic versions, thus each pair of the participants carried out nine tasks.

Procedure

The study began with the administration of the FCE proficiency test. Ninety eight candidates took the test and after their scores were ranked a sample of 60 people was selected and two groups were designed as homogeneous group (G-Hom) in which the pairs had almost equal English proficiency test scores and heterogeneous group (G-Het) where the pair members had different test scores. The pairs in both groups were assigned to perform the same type of writing tasks, and while writing their assignments they were required to talk, collaborate, and negotiate their ideas to complete the tasks. The pairs' dyadic talks were tape-recorded on cassettes. The researcher for further analysis later

transcribed the recorded data. The pairs in both groups performed nine tasks in six successive weeks. Thus, the data collection took about six weeks.

In transcribing the data special symbols were used to indicate such aspects as simultaneous talk, interruptions, pauses, emphasis applied by the speaker to certain words or phrases (see Appendix A). These symbols are based on notations which have been used by researchers who have transcribed similar data (e.g., de Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Hatch, 1992; Kowal & Swain, 1994; Storch 2002b). In this study, the spelling of words in the transcripts followed standard orthography. All words, which were pronounced in nonstandard or incorrect form were transcribed in the way they were produced. Capitals at the beginning of utterances were used only to indicate the beginning of a sentence from the given texts and periods indicated the end of the utterances. Question marks were used to indicate rising intonation at the end of an utterance. The transcriptions were then examined closely in order to count and, then, compare the frequency of the occurrence of LREs in G-Hom and G-Het.

Results

The transcriptions obtained from the participants' pair talk data were analyzed in terms of the frequency of the occurrence of LREs in their oral interaction. An LRE is any segment in the dyadic talks where the participants talked about the language they were producing or had produced. They tried to suggest corrections where a grammatical, lexical or phonological mistake was recognized. LREs may sometimes overlap with the other discourse features such as questions, repetitions, and explanations because an LRE may cause the participants to focus on a formal language feature through asking a question or offering an explanation. However, not all questions and explanations are LREs since they may not focus on a language related problem or mistake. The following examples represent various types of LREs in the pair talk data of the present study.

In Excerpt 1, there are three types of LRE. In line 1, when (Z) makes a mistake in the verb form *is,* (S) immediately corrects her and provides the correct form. (Z) gets the point and repeats the correct form. In lines 5-6, there is an example of lexis-based and pronunciation-based LRE in which (S) is

correcting a pronunciation mistake committed by (Z), and a lexical correction in the use of *major* instead of *field*.

Excerpt 1

1. Z: We talk about ten people apply for a loan … all of them is Iranian.
2. S: Are Iranian.
3. Z: Yes, sorry, are Iranian. But from the different cities.
4. S: Aha …
5. Z: And they have a different field /faild/ of study.
6. S: No, not from different fields /fildz/ of study. They are studying different majors.
7. Z: Different majors.

[Z. and S., G-Hom, Table Description (1), utterances 1-7]

In Excerpt 2, (J) reminds her partner of a grammatical error in the redundant use of *is*. Lines 13-14 also contain a morphological LRE where (J) is suggesting *certificate* instead of *certification*.

Excerpt 2

1. A: Both of them is graduate from the university.
2. J: Both of them graduate … not 'is graduate'.
3. A: At this age … look one of them is really old … they have their certifications in their hands.
4. J: Their certificate … not certification.
5. A: Why certification? …
6. J: 'Certificate' is a verb and 'certification' is a noun.

[J. and A., G-Het, Picture Description (2), utterances 10-14]

In Excerpt 3, there are two grammar-based LREs (lines 2 - 5) in correcting the wrong use of verb forms.

Excerpt 3

1. G: What do you see in this picture?
2. S: I see there are four people … they stand on top of the mountain.
3. G: There are four people who are standing. This is better.
4. S: Yes. They are very happy because they are reach to top of the mountain.
5. G: They have reached the summit of the mountain. No preposition is needed after 'reach'. Ok?
6. S: Yes.

[G. and S., G-Het, Picture Description (1), utterances 1-6]

The number of LREs produced by the pairs in two groups was counted and the number was divided by the number of turns in each pair talk to obtain relative frequency values. Tables 1 and 2 show the relative frequency data obtained from the pair talk of G-Hom and G-Het. The numbers in the cells show the relative frequency of the LREs obtained from nine tasks of Picture Description (PD), Table Description (TD), and Free Composition (FC). The letter A in some cells was used to show that the pair was absent in that data collection session.

Table 1

The Relative Frequency Values of LREs in G-Hom

No	Participants	PD1	PD2	PD3	TD1	TD2	TD3	FC1	FC2	FC3
1	M. & A.	.21	.15	.18	.08	.04	.07	0	A	0
2	H. & F.	0	0	0	0	0	.07	.07	.12	.05
3	H. & E.	.06	0	.02	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	N. & T.	0	0	0	0	0	A	.05	.04	A
5	V. & P.	0	0	0	.1	0	0	.08	.04	.08
6	E. & G.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	M. & Z.	0	0	0	0	.08	.08	0	0	.07
8	S. & E.	0	0	0	A	0	0	0	0	A
9	K. & G.	.11	.19	.17	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	K. & E.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	P. & T.	.1	.05	A	0	A	A	0	0	0
12	A. & H.	A	0	0	0	.08	.08	0	0	0
13	Z. & S.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	A
14	J. & P	0	0	.06	0	.07	.07	0	A	0
15	D. & M.	0	.04	0	0	0	0	.1	0	.06
16	B. & A.	.05	A	.07	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2

The Relative Frequency Values of LREs in G-Het

No	Participants	PD1	PD2	PD3	TD1	TD2	TD3	FC1	FC2	FC3
1	G. & S.	.26	.25	.15	.05	0	0	.06	0	A
2	J. & A.	.23	.15	.04	.12	0	.07	.04	.04	.09
3	B. & F.	.1	.08	.04	.17	.08	.17	A	.16	.31
4	I. & R.	.1	.1	.08	.06	.07	.07	.05	.03	.03
5	S. & A.	.16	.13	.04	.07	.16	.19	.03	.22	.06
6	H. & M.	.13	.14	.25	.03	.03	.08	.05	.08	.03
7	P. & N.	.12	.25	.15	.1	.1	.16	A	.03	.05
8	S. & S.	.05	.1	.27	0	.08	.05	0	.2	.3
9	J. & G.	0	0	.05	0	0	0	.13	.05	.21
10	V. & S.	0	0	.2	0	0	0	.1	.07	.07

11	N. & J.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	G. & F.	0	.08	0	0	0	0	0	.02	0
13	M. & H.	.4	.1	.16	.06	.04	.07	.16	.16	.2
14	T. & A.	.05	0	A	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the relative frequencies of the two groups. The mean scores of the relative frequency of LREs in G-Het and G-Hom were 0.078 and 0.023, respectively.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of the Relative Frequency of LREs in G-Hom and G-Het

	VAR00001	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00002	1.00 G-Hom	132	.0230	.04431	.00386
	2.00 G-Het	122	.0780	.08415	.00762

The independent-groups t-test results, in Table 4, show that the difference between the two means was statistically significant (P< .05). The null hypothesis stating that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of the frequency of LREs in two groups was, therefore, rejected. The answer to the research question was that the participants in G-Het and G-Hom used LREs in their talks with different frequency. The dyads in G-Het used more LREs in their dyadic interactions than those in G-Hom.

Table 4
Independent-groups t-test to Compare Relative Frequencies of LREs in G-Hom and G-Het

		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									lower	upper
VAR00002	Equal variances assumed	40.084	.000	-6.587	252	.000	-.05500	.00835	-.07145	-.03856
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.442	180.044	.000	-.05500	.00854	07185	-.03815

Discussion

The frequency count of LREs in the pair talk data showed that the mean relative frequency of the occurrence of LREs in G-Het (0.078) was almost four times greater than that of G-Hom (0.023). This finding strongly shows the fact that there was much more focus on form and attention to language use in G-Het. As it was demonstrated in some examples above, whenever there was a linguistic error or deviation, the participant who was more knowledgeable immediately took the role of an instructor and provided corrections, suggestions, as well as explanations, while the other member assumed the role of student who needed help and scaffolding.

Similar results have also been reported by researchers who have investigated the frequency of LREs in peer-peer collaborations. Kim and McDonough (2008), for example, found that the learners produced grammatical and lexical LREs more frequently when they collaborated with advanced interlocutors. Watanabe and Swain (2007), similarly, found more LREs and instances of L2 learning in their heterogeneous dyads. Leeser (2004) also analyzed the frequency, and type (i.e., lexical or grammar-based), of LREs produced by three different groupings: high-high, high-low and low-low. He found that as the overall proficiency of a pair increased, the learners produced a greater number of LREs, and focused more on form than lexical items.

The homogeneous dyads, whose participants were almost equal in terms of L2 proficiency level, showed characteristics that Storch (2002a) mainly associated with her dominant/passive, and dominant/dominant interaction patterns. Although the participants had almost high equality in terms of L2 proficiency, they were not willing to engage in giving correction or feedback to one another The two members in these dyads were more willing to speak in their own pace and paid little attention to what the other member said, and they had little focus on form through correction, suggestion, and LREs. The following excerpt taken from G-Hom may illustrate these points further.

Excerpt 4

1. M: This table has information about the seasons.
2. A: And accidents in the seasons. And accidents in winter is more than accident in summer, spring and autumn.
3. M: Which one?

4. A: Accident is more happen in winter.
5. M: Ok.
6. A: If you notice in summer the number of accident is less than the other seasons, and it shows that
7. M: Maybe people don't have energy to drive fast.
8. A: In winter the ground is smoothy. And the drivers can't control their automobiles … their cars.
9. M: Yes. Spring people are sleepy … but winter because of the snow and ice in the roads car crash with other.

[M. and A., G-Hom, Picture Description (3)]

As it is illustrated in Excerpt 4, each participant attempts to express her idea, and there is almost no attention to another participant's utterance. In lines (2) and (4), an error of disagreement between subject and verb is made twice, but they are simply ignored by the other participant. In fact, the participants in the homogeneous pairs paid little attention to their partners' linguistic errors. They were more concerned with the content of the messages and the ideas of their partners. This may explain why there were fewer LREs in their talks.

The findings of the present study can be explained in relation to Vygotsky's notion of ZPD. According to Vygotsky (1978, 1981), ZPD is the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from a more skillful person. The most accepted view about how ZPD is constructed is that ZPD necessarily involves interaction between an expert and a novice in which the expert eventually transmits ability to the novice through social interaction. Lantolf (2000) argues that "a more robust and useful way of thinking about ZPD is that people working jointly are able to co-construct contexts in which expertise emerges as a feature of the group" (p.17). In his view, then, ZPD is more appropriately conceived of as the collaborative construction of opportunities.

In the present study, this collaborative interpretation of ZPD can be taken as the basis to explain why the participants in heterogeneous pairs showed more collaborative behavior. When the participants who were more proficient were matched with those who were less proficient, the more proficient participants immediately took the role of instructor or expert and the less proficient participants took the role of student or novice. More importantly this role distribution was easily accepted by both participants in a way that the weaker

participant showed a great deal of acceptance and flexibility, and the stronger participant attempted to make her partner participate through a large number of requests and questions, and offered encouragement and support by providing more explanations and more LREs.

The findings of the present study are also in line with what Storch (2007) found in a study conducted to examine the effects of pair work on the learners' ability in an editing task. She found that the learners who did the tasks in pair spent longer on completing the task and could pool their linguistic knowledge. Although her study found no statistically significant differences in the accuracy of texts edited by pairs compared to those edited by students working individually, her pair talk analysis showed that a high proportion of the LREs were resolved interactively, where the learners had an opportunity to use and reflect about language use.

The present study also substantiates what Watanabe and Swain (2007) found in their study of the effects of L2 proficiency differences and patterns of interaction on L2 learning. They found that the learners matched with partners with higher L2 proficiency level showed more signs of learning because of more frequent LREs in their talks. Since several studies agreed that LREs represent L2 learning in progress (e.g., Basturkmen et al., 2002; Leeser, 2004; Swain, 1998; Swain and Lapkin, 1998; Williams, 2001), this could suggest that the participants benefited more from working with their higher proficiency partner.

The findings of the study suggest that tasks such as writing which encourage students to reflect on language form while still being oriented to meaning, that is, tasks which, in Swain's (2002) words, engage students in "collaborative dialogue" can be particularly useful for learning strategic processes, as well as lexical/grammatical aspects of the second language. In many of the tasks used in the study of negotiation, the focus has been on communication where "attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form" (Nunan, 1989, p. 10). However, it is certainly feasible for a communicative task to be one in which learners communicate about language while trying to produce something they want to say in the target language.

In order to facilitate constructive pair work in L2 classrooms, teachers may need to prepare learners more carefully for pair work. Prior to assigning

learners to work in groups or pairs, teachers may need to engage them in discussions about the advantages of collaboration and model collaborative dialogue. In addition, teachers need to pay attention to pair dynamics in class and should allow or encourage learners to change partners if dominant/dominant or dominant/passive patterns become prevalent. Furthermore, less proficient learners may feel more comfortable interacting with advanced learners if the more advanced learners assume an expert role rather than a dominant role. Therefore, teachers may need to encourage more advanced learners to become more of a facilitator when interacting with their less proficient peers.

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APPENDIX A

Transcription symbols used

The following transcription symbols were used by the researcher when transcribing audio-taped pair talk.

(mm)	Non-verbal sounds, fillers, or time gaining strategeies
…	Three dots indicate a pause between 0.5 – 3 seconds
[5]	longer pause. The number in the square barackets indicates the length of the pause in seconds
(( ))	Words/phrases difficult to decipher, talk which is unintelligible
_____	Underlining indicates speaker's emphasis
[	Beginning of overlapping talk
]	End of overlapping talk
!	An exclamation mark denotes a sharp rise at the end of a word or phrase
?	A question mark denotes rising intonation at the end of a word or phrase, not necessarily a question
" "	Quotation marks denote that the participant is reading something (e.g. instructions)
' '	Single quotations indicate that a word or phrase is referred to as a linguistic form, not as a meaningful word or phrase
Wor-	An incomplete word denotes that only part of a word is pronounced, utterances cut off or unfinished
w-o-r	The speaker is spelling out the word

Biodata

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